

Date and Time: Friday, May 3, 2024 4:33:00PM EEST

Job Number: 223447193

Documents (100)

1. Palestinians stop pushing U.N. report on Gaza war Diplomats say pressure by U.S. led to pullback from accusing Israel

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

2. <u>Palestinians stop pushing U.N. report on Gaza war Diplomats say pressure by U.S. led to pullback from accusing Israel</u>

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

3. AFGHANISTAN HAS MANY BUMPS, CONFUSION IN THE ROAD AHEAD FUTURE

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

4. Israel killed Palestinians waving white flags, report says

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

5. No fans of ours



Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

6. Give Canadians the choice of Al Jazeera TV

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

7. TERROR AT GUNPOINT SCOTS POSTIE ON GAZA MISSION TELLS OF STARING DOWN BARRELS OF COMMANDO GUNS AND HELL IN ISRAELI PRISON

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

8. Bees provide pain relief in beleaguered Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

9. Bees provide pain relief in beleaguered Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

10. Goldstone Urges Accountability for War Crimes; Insists Impunity Undermines Peace Process

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

11. To criticize Israel is a dangerous thing in today's Canada

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

12. Living with Cheney's poisonous legacy

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

13. 'Will you guarantee my safety?'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

14. Feminists who don't defend women

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

15. Many feminists are not stepping up to defend women

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

16. The families of Gaza profit from bunny business Cuddly, clean and nutritious, cottontails are solving the Palestinian food crisis. Donald Macintyre reports

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

17. MKs Eldad and Elkin want to keep Hebron road closed to Palestinian cars. Former terror-plagued road due to partially reopen at the end of the week

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

18. THE ART OF SURVIVAL

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

19. Israeli raid fails to derail West Bank calm ... so far Palestinian militants vow retaliation after this weekend's killing of three suspected militants in the West Bank city of Nablus, but residents there say that economic revival will curb the desire for revenge.

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

20. World Report

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

21. Yonath gives Israel, women and science a boost at Stockholm Nobel ceremony. As crystallographer becomes ninth Israeli to receive prize, past recipient slams inadequate state investment in research

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

22. Be wary of Tamils' terrorist history; But legitimate refugees on ship off West Coast deserve fair treatment

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

23. All hail the shameless neo-cons

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

24. 'Aspirational' award starts war on Obama's home front

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

25. Israeli military rabbis drawing some criticism

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

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Dec 31, 2009

26. Few surprises from Sweden

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

27. 'FAYYADISM' OFFERS NEW HOPE FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

28. Robinson tells 'Post': Two-state solution in danger

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

29. Green Shoots in Palestine

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

30. Sisterhood's silence over honour killings deafening

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

Narrowed by

31. Friedman: Hopeful green shoots are sprouting in Palestine

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

32. SEX IN THE CITY

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

33. Green shoots in Palestine

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

34. Israel 's barrier to progress

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

35. A word from Obama can raise Arab disquiet

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

36. Jordan: 'Between Islamists and tribal alliances, campus politics at a standstill'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

37. Powerful Islamic movement sees leadership struggle

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

38. Politics is dirty and difficult. And a noble calling...

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

39. Moderation - now there's some wishful thinking

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

40. Striding forward Artists forced to work underground now have a prize to publicise their work internationally.

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

41. Egypt scales back ties with Israel in another obstacle to US efforts on Mideast peace



Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

42. Clinton's push for Arab democracy overshadowed by Israel stance

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

43. It's delusional to see Mid-East future as anything but bleak

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Dec 31, 2009

44. It's delusional to see Mid-East future as anything but bleak

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

45. Comment & Debate: Obama isn't helping. At least the world argued with Bush: For all the global love-in, the new president has led rich nations to neglect principled action and row back from climate deals

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

46. The tragedy of the left's discourse on Iran (Part I)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

47. Religious dogma has no place in the IDF

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

48. In Jerusalem, battle of Palestinian day camps

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

49. If only life in Gaza was a movie

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

50. Light in the Israel - Palestine darkness

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

51. BRINGING SEXY BACK, EK SÊ

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

52. Letters

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

53. A cul de sac called J Street "The road to hell is paved with good intentions" - St. Bernard of Clairvaux, 12th

century.

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

54. The Holocaust, Ku Klux Klan, and other claims put to the test BNP ROW

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

55. Intolerance on the Temple Mount

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

56. Letters

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Dec 31, 2009

57. Protecting human rights is never 'interference'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

58. As a CIA spy, I saw in Iran what the West cannot ignore We must defend freedom in Iran soon - or deal with

nuclear-armed fanatics later.

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

59. As a CIA spy, I saw in Iran what the West cannot ignore

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

60. Too gung-ho? Israel 's military rabbis draw criticism

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

61. Playing Russian roulette

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

62. Gov't strikes back against 'biased' human rights NGOs. PMO likens fundraising for human rights in Riyadh to feminists 'asking Taliban for a donation'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

63. All in the worst possible taste FILM OF THE WEEK BR??NO (18) Larry Charles (83 mins) ** STARRING Sacha Baron Cohen, Gustaf Hammarsten

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

64. When are people going to wise up?; Letters to the editor

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

65. From Ruddock to the the front line current affairs

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

66. <u>International: Middle East: Comedy and cappuccinos: allure of normal life triumphs in West Bank 'ghost town': As checkpoints ease, Arab-Israelis are returning to Nablus as eager consumers</u>

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by



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

Dec 31, 2009

67. <u>International: Middle East: Comedy and cappuccinos: allure of normal life triumphs in West Bank 'ghost town':</u> As checkpoints ease, Arab-Israelis are returning to Nablus as eager consumers

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

News

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

68. Letters

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

69. Bangladesh : Democracy, hypocrisy

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

70. A topsy turvy year of living dangerously

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

71. A real miracle or the doing of extraordinary people?

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

72. Jordan :'Zeit ou laban, laban ou zeit'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

73. US - Israeli military ties

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

74. Egypt and Saudi : change looms Political shifts may be in the offing as ageing Mideast leaders give way to a

new guard, writes Jeffrey Fleishman

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Dec 31, 2009

75. Letters

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Dec 31, 2009

76. Letters

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Dec 31, 2009

77. The time may be right for a new cold war

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

78. YOUR VIEWS - LETTERS FROM OUR READERS OPINION

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

79. The nowhere people You might think Palestinian refugees would be welcomed by their Arab neighbours, yet they are denied basic rights and citizenship. A special report by Judith Miller and David Samuels

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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80. Iran policy reveals split between U.S. Jewish and Israeli left

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

81. 300,002 reasons why I'm voting Yes to Lisbon

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

82. Aiding the destroyers among us



Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

83. <u>SO MR MILIBAND THINKS TERRORISM IS 'JUSTIFIABLE'. THAT MAKES HIM EVEN MORE OF A</u> GRADE-A CHUMP THAN I ALREADY THOUGHT

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

84. Oratorio and Dubawi lead Europe's first season sires

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

85. Fighting fit

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

86. I accept only the best for my country

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

87. The all-new, same old Taliban?

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

88. Letters

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

89. It's a new world, Bibi

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

90. <u>brÜno 18 ceRt, 81 min cloud 9 15 ceRt, 100 min Review Offensive, puerile -and very funny There is unlikely to be a more screamadelically hilarious film this year than Sacha Baron Cohen's foray into the world of fashion</u>

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

91. <u>Tariq Ramadan Gets a Hero's Welcome, and Cold Shoulders, at Religion Scholars Confab LETTER FROM</u>
MONTREAL

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

92. ISRAEL DESERVES RESPECT IN GLOBAL FORUMS

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

93. LETTERS

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

94. Letters

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Dec 31, 2009

95. The Practice

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

96. Yearning for the Golan Heights: why Syria wants it back The disputed territory is key to the broader US goal of Arab- Israeli peace. On Monday, Washington hosted the first high-ranking Syrian official in five years.

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

97. The stranger who dwells among us

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

98. Letters

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

99. Managing anti-Semitism in Germany

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

100. World Report

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009



Palestinians stop pushing U.N. report on Gaza war; Diplomats say pressure by U.S. led to pullback from accusing Israel

The International Herald Tribune October 3, 2009 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 8

Length: 727 words

Byline: NEIL MacFARQUHAR **Dateline:** UNITED NATIONS

Body

ABSTRACT

The Americans argued that pressing for the report accusing Israel of possible war crimes to be considered by the Security Council would derail the Midast peace process, diplomats said Thursday.

FULL TEXT

In a startling shift, the Palestinian delegation to the U.N. Human Rights Council has dropped its efforts to forward a report accusing Israel of possible war crimes to the Security Council, under pressure from the United States, diplomats said.

The Americans argued that pushing the report would derail the Middle East peace process they were trying to revive, diplomats said Thursday.

"We don't want to create an obstacle for them," Ibrahim Khraishi, the Palestinian ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, where the Human Rights Council is based, said by telephone. "We want to get a strong resolution to deal with the report in a good manner to get a benefit from it."

The report - produced by a panel of investigators led by an internationally respected jurist, Richard Goldstone - found extensive evidence that both Israel and Palestinian militant groups had taken actions amounting to war crimes during the war in Gaza last winter. Israel says that it acted only to halt missile fire from Gaza that had terrorized Israeli civilians.

The position of the United States since the Goldstone report was released in early September has been that the Human Rights Council alone should deal with it. But in a compromise, the body was expected to pass a resolution Friday presented by the bloc of Arab and Muslim states that any action would be delayed until the next meeting in March.

The Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, warned the Palestinians and international powers on Thursday that any action to advance the report would be a denial of Israel's "right to self-defense" and would kill any chance of peace talks.

Palestinians stop pushing U.N. report on Gaza war Diplomats say pressure by U.S. led to pullback from accusing Israel

Mr. Netanyahu, speaking during a cabinet meeting in Jerusalem, said that any international endorsement of the report would "strike a severe blow to the war against terrorism."

But most immediately, he said, it would "strike a fatal blow to the peace process, because Israel will no longer be able to take additional steps and take risks for peace if its right to self-defense is denied."

Diplomats said the Americans had taken their position that the report would delay the peace process before Mr. Netanyahu made his remarks. Michael Posner, the new assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor, would not comment Thursday about the negotiations.

In a speech to the Human Rights Council during the past week, however, Mr. Posner called the report "deeply flawed" and criticized the council for what he called a fixation with Israel. But he concluded by saying that fair reviews on both sides would build confidence.

Israel says that it has a serious inquiry under way, with 100 complaints from Gaza already having been examined and 23 cases still pending court action. It says that about a third of the 36 incidents in the Goldstone report are already under investigation by the military, while others have been referred for investigation.

Mr. Khraishi, the Palestinian ambassador, said that if a resolution were passed now insisting that the General Assembly or the Security Council deal with the matter, as the report itself recommends, it would most likely face an American veto.

Israel and the Palestinians were expected to take a first, tentative step Friday toward swapping a captive Israeli soldier for hundreds of Palestinians held in Israeli jails, The Associated Press reported from Jerusalem.

In return for a recent videotape of the serviceman, Israel was to free 20 female Palestinian prisoners.

The videotape would be the first glimpse of Sgt. Gilad Schalit, 23, since he was captured in June 2006 by <u>Hamas</u>-linked militants based in the Gaza Strip who tunneled under the border into Israel, killed two other soldiers and dragged him bleeding into Palestinian territory.

If Israel confirmed the videotape was authentic and recent, the 20 Palestinian <u>women</u> were to be allowed to return home to the West Bank and Gaza.

A deal would mark the first tangible sign of movement in more than three years of talks aimed at a prisoner exchange. It could also herald an end to a crippling Israel-led blockade of Gaza that has prevented the territory from rebuilding after Israel's winter war there.

Load-Date: October 15, 2009

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Palestinians stop pushing U.N. report on Gaza war; Diplomats say pressure by U.S. led to pullback from accusing Israel

The International Herald Tribune October 3, 2009 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 8

Length: 727 words

Byline: NEIL MacFARQUHAR **Dateline:** UNITED NATIONS

Body

ABSTRACT

The Americans argued that pressing for the report accusing Israel of possible war crimes to be considered by the Security Council would derail the Midast peace process, diplomats said Thursday.

FULL TEXT

In a startling shift, the Palestinian delegation to the U.N. Human Rights Council has dropped its efforts to forward a report accusing Israel of possible war crimes to the Security Council, under pressure from the United States, diplomats said.

The Americans argued that pushing the report would derail the Middle East peace process they were trying to revive, diplomats said Thursday.

"We don't want to create an obstacle for them," Ibrahim Khraishi, the Palestinian ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, where the Human Rights Council is based, said by telephone. "We want to get a strong resolution to deal with the report in a good manner to get a benefit from it."

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Load-Date: October 7, 2009

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AFGHANISTAN HAS MANY BUMPS, CONFUSION IN THE ROAD AHEAD FUTURE

The Santa Fe New Mexican (New Mexico)

August 22, 2009 Saturday

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Section: MAIN; Pg. A-9

Length: 709 words

Byline: BILL STEWART

Body

Afghanistan held presidential elections this week. They were the second since the fall of the Taliban. The results are not yet known at the time of writing this column, but it is widely expected that either President Hamid Karzai has won outright or will be forced into a runoff with one of his opponents, presumably former Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah. How does the war impinge on the politics of Afghanistan and the attempt to build a nation?

Suffice it to say that the military situation is grave and getting worse, especially in Helmand and Kandahar provinces, scene in the past few months of some of the heaviest fighting of the war. NATO forces, including those of the U.S., are close to the point of those of the Soviet Union 25 years ago during its ill-fated war in Afghanistan: approximately the same number of troops and the same inability to hold ground or provide security for the Afghans. Kabul itself is increasingly in peril. The Taliban cannot inflict a military defeat upon NATO forces, but at this point they retain the ability to keep the fighting going indefinitely. They rely on the sale of narcotics to finance their operations and on the intimidation of the local population as well as Afghan ambivalence about the war. In the meantime, they hope to wear us out. In this sense, the war is a classic insurgency.

So far, we have not had a counterinsurgency strategy capable of containing the Taliban, much less defeating them. In part this is because we took our eye off the ball with the invasion of Iraq. That drained essential resources from the Afghanistan/Pakistan theater that lies at the heart of fundamentalist, Islamic terrorism. It allowed a military revival of the Taliban. Secondly, we are dealing with an immensely corrupt government that lacks very much credence with its own people. Third, we ourselves seem to have been uncertain of which direction to take: essentially military?; essentially nation-building?; a combination of both? Is the heart of the Afghan people in this war? Is our own heart in this war? One senses the answer to both questions is "no."

Yet we are there, and we cannot easily escape. The recent arrival of Gen. Stanley McChrystal, the new U.S. commander, is a positive sign. He is well-versed in insurgencies and counterinsurgencies and has already proposed some radical changes: the protection of Afghan citizens rather than killing Taliban. McChrystal wants to emphasize local security, meaning the security of Afghans and not that of U.S. and NATO forces. That's a good sign, because an increase in local security builds confidence in the ability of the Afghan government to govern. The country does not yet have that confidence, and until it does, we will continue to lose the war.

As Max Hastings, the military historian, notes, losses are an inevitable part of any war. During the past six years, U.S. casualties have been only a tiny fraction of those suffered during the Vietnam War, while those of Britain, our principal ally, are still less than incurred during the six weeks of the Falklands (Malvinas) war. The British are afraid

AFGHANISTAN HAS MANY BUMPS, CONFUSION IN THE ROAD AHEAD FUTURE

that McChrystal in his report this month "will understate the bottom-up Afghan political challenge and overemphasize top-down military and economic issues." They are much more pessimistic about Karzai than the Americans are. But the British, like the Russians, historically have been unsuccessful in Afghanistan. The U.S. knows this and is keen to avoid seeming like an old colonial power in a new guise.

The U.S. has an implicit faith in democratic processes and assumes the rest of the world does, too. But this is not always the case. Look at the genuinely free elections in the Palestinian Territories that brought <u>Hamas</u> to power. The conservative tribal culture of Afghanistan is simply not socially progressive, especially when it comes to <u>women</u>. We cannot make the Afghans into what they are not, and any attempt to do so will not only fail, it will backfire.

Free elections in Afghanistan are a good thing, but they will not win the war. That will depend on providing ever greater security for the Afghan people at the local level as well as greater integrity, competence and honesty in the government at all levels. That's an enormous challenge.

Graphic

See pdf's for exact rendition, caption, graphics and photographer info.

Load-Date: August 24, 2009

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Israel killed Palestinians waving white flags, report says

Christian Science Monitor August 13, 2009, Thursday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 6

Length: 736 words

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

Dateline: Jerusalem

Body

The New York-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) said Thursday that during Israel's offensive in Gaza earlier this year, its soldiers unlawfully shot and killed 11 Palestinian civilians, including five <u>women</u> and four children, who were in groups waving white flags to convey their civilian status.

In a new 63-page report, the human rights watchdog called on Israel to investigate seven separate incidents in which it said Israeli troops shot and killed innocent Palestinian civilians who were flying white flags to try to escape to safety.

Earlier this month, HRW published a separate report criticizing <u>Hamas</u>' rocket attacks against Israeli civilians, indicating that these acts amounted to war crimes.

In a statement released Thursday, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) responded to the latest HRW report, saying the group's research was "based on unreliable witness reports" and that its forces are trained to avoid hurting anyone who waves a white flag as a sign of surrender.

The IDF criticized HRW for giving it inadequate time to respond, saying it "didn't bother to give the report to the IDF before releasing it to the public via the media, in order to allow for in-depth investigation."

For its part, HRW said that the IDF declined repeated requests for a meeting to discuss the cases and did not respond to questions submitted in writing.

Joe Stork, deputy Middle East director at Human Rights Watch, said in a statement along with the report that the Israeli military "is stonewalling in the face of evidence that its soldiers killed civilians waving white flags in areas it controlled and where there were no Palestinian fighters. These cases need thorough, independent investigations."

In the wake of repeated reports of wrongdoing during the three-week war that ended Jan. 18, including a highly controversial one reported by the Monitor last month that suggested a policy of maximum force to avoid Israeli casualties, the Israeli military has said that it is conducting its own internal investigations into the behavior of soldiers during the offensive. Mr. Stork called most of those investigations "inadequate."

"The Israel Defense Forces have for years permitted a pervasive culture of impunity regarding unlawful Palestinian deaths," Stork said in the release. "Field investigations may serve a useful military purpose, but they are inadequate

Israel killed Palestinians waving white flags, report says

to determine whether a soldier violated the laws of war, and serve as a pretext that a serious investigation is taking place."

<P/>

U.N. reports to follow

Thursday's report also comes not far ahead of what are expected to be two critical United Nations reports about the Gaza war.

Israel has refused to cooperate in the investigation that is expected to yield the harsher of the two reports. That investigation is headed by Judge Richard Goldstone, a former war-crimes prosecutor from South Africa who was appointed by the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. Israel has criticized the council, which has a rotating membership that currently includes countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kyrgyzstan, and Angola, as biased and thus unfit to accurately assess its actions.

Israel has provided assistance, however, to investigators working on a second report, being conducted by the UN Commission on Human Rights.

Drafts of the two reports are expected to be supplied to Israel by the end of August, before being presented to the UN's Human Rights Council in mid-September. The Israeli center-left newspaper Haaretz reported last month that some in Israel believe the reports could prompt legal action against Israel in The Hague; in preparation, the Foreign Ministry is said to be preparing an exhaustive defense brief.

Public questioning IDF commanders' integrity

The latest reports on the war in Gaza come amid a wave of public questioning of the behavior of senior IDF commanders, notes Eyal Ben-Ari, a Hebrew University sociologist whose specialties include the culture of the IDF and its relationship to Israeli society. This week, he noted, two senior officers have come under fire for private use of army vehicles.

"Today in general, there's more and more focus on soldiers' morality and the strength of the army being built on that," says Professor Ben-Ari, "and you cannot disconnect that from that the allegations of human rights abuses and all the other discussions about morality in the IDF, about lying and disinformation."

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Load-Date: August 13, 2009

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No fans of ours

The Jerusalem Post August 11, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 16

Length: 703 words

Byline: Seth J. Frantzman

Highlight: Ironically, the American hikers captured by the Iranian regime have a history of criticizing Israel. TERRA

INCOGNITA

Body

On August 1, three Americans went missing in the mountains of Kurdistan. There had originally been four of them travelling around the region and submitting articles to media outlets. On July 31 Shon Meckfessel stayed behind in Sulaimania, over 150 miles northeast of Baghdad, while Sarah Shourd, Josh Fattal and Shane Bauer went to a nearby town called Ahmed Awa. According to Shon, they had no idea that Ahmad Awa was near the border with Iran. There was no Lonely Planet for Iraqi Kurdistan and "they couldn't find it on their map," said Shon.

The next day one of them phoned to say they were being taken into custody by Iranian border guards. On August 9 Iran confirmed the three were being held.

BUT THE three "hikers" were in fact well-heeled journalists. Joshua Fattal was a contributor to the Jewish Week. Shane Bauer, the most prolific, had recently been in Syria, Ethiopia and Sudan doing investigative and photo journalism. Bauer has spent the past six years in the Middle East and Africa, and his writings have appeared in various media including the LA Times, Christian Science Monitor and Al Aljazeera. He has also written for left-wing American publications such as The Nation and Mother Jones.

Reports that all three journalists were Jewish circulated online, making their way to the Vanguard News Network, a neo-Nazi online forum, which noted that "maybe they were spying. They worked in journalism. That is a Jewinfested industry."

Hate-filled posts about the three followed. It seems that Iran, at least officially, believes the same thing and wishes to use the three as yet another state-sponsored bargaining chip with the West.

But the connection of two of the journalists to Israel is worth mentioning. Bauer has a photo on his website titled "Neo-Nazi in Tel Aviv" taken on July 1, 2009. The photo shows an African woman and child in the foreground, but in the background is a woman with a tattoo of a three- pronged swastika, usually used as a symbol by Afrikaner nationalists. The photojournalist, Mr. Bauer, might have pointed out the irony of the Afrikaner symbol next to the black woman and child on the streets of Tel Aviv. But instead he seemed to be wanting to say something more, something negative about Israel. It wasn't titled "African woman in Tel Aviv."

The third traveller, Sarah Shourd, has written numerous blog entries praising Syria and condemning Israel. She identifies herself as a "teacher-activist-writer from California currently based in the Middle East. She loves fresh broccoli, Zapatistas [a radical leftist anti- government insurgency in Mexico] and anyone who can change her mind."

No fans of ours

In a photo on her website Through Unfettered Eyes: Dispatches from Addis Ababa to Damascus, she proudly wears a keffiyeh [the traditional headdress worn by Arab men] and considers Palestinian Blues, Leila Khaled: Hijacker and Occupation 101 as among her "favorite documentaries."

A May 3, 2009 post on her blog notes "It's been more than four months since the Israeli massacre in Gaza." Shourd speaks of <u>Hamas</u> winning "what many consider to be the first truly democratic election in the Middle East." (Apparently Israel is not in the Middle East.)

She also mocks the Western perception of Syria: "The hazy sketch of Syria we get in the US becomes progressively more hazy as to almost lose all definition once you are here. Dangerous? Conservative? Anti-American? Oppressive to **women**? Backwards? Extremist? It's not nearly as simplistic as that."

It is perhaps ironic because only last month Syria changed a law that sentenced men charged with honor killings to a maximum one-year sentence. Now the minimum is two years. Shourd further mentions that in Yemen "many Yemenis have challenged me, saying my analysis falls short. They say I am too apologetic toward the terrorists, framing them as victims rather than the perpetrators."

IS THERE a difference between the perception of Israel by the Iranian regime and that of Shourd? Whatever the case, we can only hope the experience of these three will change their opinion of Israel or Gaza. But for now, Bauer's Israel will be the "Neo-Nazi in Tel Aviv," and for Shourd Israel will be the country that massacres and places people in giant prisons.

Graphic

Photo: SHANE BAUER was arrested with two other journalists on the Iranian border with Iraq. Iranian authorities are deliberating whether to charge them with espionage. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

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Give Canadians the choice of Al Jazeera TV

The Toronto Star

July 16, 2009 Thursday

Copyright 2009 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: OPINION; Pg. A23

Length: 724 words

Body

The most vocal critics of human rights commissions often invoke freedom of speech. Yet they were strangely silent when Ottawa effectively blocked Al Jazeera Arabic TV's entry into Canada in 2004. And they are mostly silent now about Al Jazeera English's application before the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission.

Being treated like that in Canada is a minor irritation for the folks at the Qatar-based Al Jazeera, including the Canadian Tony Burman, managing director, English. They have seen far worse.

A-J Arabic was started in 1996 as a way of putting the gas-rich Persian Gulf emirate on the map.

Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani got it started with \$140 million and the freedom to do real journalism. The quid pro quo was that the network wouldn't go after him. As compromising as that sounds, it isn't really. Which Canadian media excoriate their owners?

A-J spread like wildfire. Using its motto, "The opinion and the other opinion," it broke one taboo after another. Are the Saudi royals corrupt? Is Hezbollah a terrorist organization or legitimate resistance?

Jordan, Kuwait and Bahrain shut down A-J bureaus. So did the Palestinian Authority (again, yesterday). Algeria shut down its own power grid 10 minutes into an A-J program on extrajudicial killings in that country.

Saudi Arabia once banned its citizens from watching, appearing on or talking to anyone from A-J. It ran an effective campaign to have advertisers pull their business from Al Jazeera.

It pulled its envoy from Doha.

So did Morocco. Tunisia and Libya severed diplomatic relations.

Egypt dubbed A-J a "Zionist channel."

Al-Jazeera was accused of being a lackey of Osama bin Laden, Saddam Hussein and <u>Hamas</u> - as well as Israel and the CIA.

In November 2001, two American 500-pound bombs were dropped on the A-J bureau in Kabul, levelling the building. No one was inside.

During the Iraq war, its office in a Basra hotel was hit by four American missiles. Again, no one was hurt. Its Baghdad bureau was bombed, killing one correspondent. A-J staff was repeatedly harassed, beaten, arrested.

Give Canadians the choice of Al Jazeera TV

With its many bureaus and enterprise reporting, A-J got scoops galore: the 1998 Anglo-U.S. bombing of Iraq; interviews and tapes of Osama bin Laden; the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, etc.

It was the first Arabic channel to interview Israelis. It was the first with women sports reporters.

In Canada, the A-J Arabic application was approved in 2004 by the CRTC but under strict conditions. To ostensibly protect viewers from possible anti-Semitic material, the channel's distributors were to be held responsible for its content. They balked.

"The effect of the commission's decision is to turn distributors into censors," said Michael Hennessy, president of the Canadian Cable Association. "This sets a frightening precedent."

Now it is the Al Jazeera English network, started in 2006, that's up for consideration. The CRTC is expected to meet next week.

The English network broadcasts 24 hours a day, seven days a week, from four centres - Doha, Kuala Lumpur, London and Washington.

It has developed a following of 140 million households in 100 countries - a footprint that the BBC and CNN took 10 years and more to develop. But unlike them, "our home team is not London or Atlanta. We have no home team to cheer," says Burman, former head of CBC News.

A-J English reports from under-reported regions of this world. It does so in detail, not two- or three-minute clips. This at a time when other media are retrenching, and Canadians are seeing less and less of news from around the world.

The network has a staff of 1,200 from 50 nationalities, "the most diverse newsroom in the world," says Burman. "Our staff is as multicultural as Canada. A-J should have special resonance in Canada."

Burman also says that "Israeli politicians appear on Al Jazeera more than on any other network outside of Israel. We provide more coverage of Israel than any other international coverage outside of Israeli networks.

"We are seen in Tel Aviv but not Toronto, in Haifa but not Halifax, in Kiryat Shmona but not Calgary."

That makes no sense.

The CRTC has no choice but to give Canadians the freedom to see Al Jazeera English. Otherwise, it would place Canada in the company of those autocrats who have tried to silence Al Jazeera.

Haroon Siddiqui writes Thursday and Sunday. hsiddiq @ thestar.ca

Load-Date: July 16, 2009

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TERROR AT GUNPOINT; SCOTS POSTIE ON GAZA MISSION TELLS OF STARING DOWN BARRELS OF COMMANDO GUNS AND HELL IN ISRAELI PRISON

Daily Record
July 15, 2009, Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 23

Length: 678 words **Byline:** Annie Brown

Body

A SCOTTISH postwoman has told how Israeli commandos held her at gunpoint as she took part in an aid convoy.

Theresa McDermott was among 21 human rights activists thrown in a cockroach-infested prison after their boat carrying humanitarian supplies to Gaza was intercepted.

The Israeli Defence Force seized the ship and held the activists at gunpoint. Theresa then spent six days behind bars.

The Free Gaza Movement ship was in international waters but Israeli gunboats threatened to fire when it refused to turn back to its base in Cyprus.

Theresa, 42, revealed: "They told us over the radio that we had 10 minutes to turn around or they would open fire.

Saved

"They said we were entering a blockade zone and they would use all means possible to stop us.

"Their boats kept trying to push us into Israeli waters but we managed to keep inside international seas."

The threats were repeated several times and Theresa believes the ship was only saved because it was carrying former US congresswoman Cynthia McKinney and Nobel laureate Mairead Maguire.

Theresa said: "We were hopeful that because we had such highprofile people on board that they wouldn't carry out their threats."

The IDF jammed the ship's radar, GPS and navigation systems and the British captain had to navigate manually, keeping the ship more than 60 miles from the coast of Israel.

The small boat, a former Greek ferry called The Spirit of Humanity, left Cyprus on June 29.

It was intercepted in the early hours of the next day and shadowed by up to eight gunships.

Pushed

TERROR AT GUNPOINT SCOTS POSTIE ON GAZA MISSION TELLS OF STARING DOWN BARRELS OF COMMANDO GUNS AND HELL IN ISRAELI PRISON

Commandos finally rushed the ship at 3pm as it headed towards Gazan waters.

Theresa, from Edinburgh, said: "They boarded and then they told us to get down. They were shouting at us and pointing their guns.

"I couldn't get down quick enough so one of them pushed me to the ground. They were very forceful.

"We were trying to keep them calm to make sure they didn't think we were a risk to them."

The activists were held in a crew room for the next seven hours until the ship reached the port of Ashdod.

They were then paraded in front of Israeli TV crews and taken to a detention centre at Ben Gurion airport before being moved to Ramleh prison.

Theresa was thrown in a cell with six African <u>women</u> - the Israelis claimed they were all illegal immigrants.

She revealed: "They said we tried to enter Israel illegally but our argument is that we were kidnapped and forcibly brought into Israel while sailing in international waters."

Theresa and the other activists were locked up for 21 hours a day.

She said: "The worst thing was the cockroaches. They were everywhere and the food was terrible.

"The only thing that helped get me through was the group of *women*. They were fantastic.

"They shared their little stash of tea and sugar and they always made sure I was OK."

She said the Israelis improved the food because they were holding former congresswoman McKinney.

The activists were held for six days then flown home.

United Nations human rights investigator Richard Falk called the seizure of the ship"unlawful".

Medical

It was carrying medical supplies, olive trees, educational packs and toys - all still to be delivered.

Theresa has become a wellrespected human rights activist and makes her mercy missions while on leave from the Post Office.

It is the second time she has found herself in Ramleh prison. In February, she was detained for five days after being after being forcibly removed from a Lebanese aid boat.

The Gaza Strip has been under a heightened Israeli blockade for two years since the militant group *Hamas* seized control in June 2007.

Half of Gaza's 1.5million people rely on Unrwa, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, for food.

According to the World Health Organisation, one third of children under five and <u>women</u> of childbearing age are anaemic. The Gazan organisation Ard al-Insan are treating 4000 malnourished kids.

Theresa is determined to return - despite the risk of arrest.

She said: "You cannot witness the suffering of the people and do nothing. It is a humanitarian crisis.

"The situation is dire and I want to do all I can to help."

TERROR AT GUNPOINT SCOTS POSTIE ON GAZA MISSION TELLS OF STARING DOWN BARRELS OF COMMANDO GUNS AND HELL IN ISRAELI PRISON

Graphic

ON BOARD: Cynthia McKinney is a former US congresswoman MERCY MISSION FOILED: The Israeli forces stormed the boat, above, and Theresa, main picture, was held in a cell in Ramleh prison, left

Load-Date: July 15, 2009

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Bees provide pain relief in beleaguered Gaza

The Jordan Times

November 15, 2009 Sunday

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THE JORDAN TIMES

Length: 763 words

Body

By Mai YaghiAgence France-Presse

GAZA CITY - In a clinic in the beleaguered Gaza Strip, Ratib Samur makes his way from one patient to the next armed with little more than a small box filled with enraged bees.

He uses the bees to sting those who have come to him for help - and amid the territory's deepening isolation, his clinic has been transformed into a hive of activity.

Since the Islamist movement <u>Hamas</u> seized power in Gaza in 2007 the coastal enclave has been sealed off from all but vital aid by both Israel and Egypt, limiting the ability of Gazans to seek medical care abroad.

It has meant growing demand for Samur's bee venom treatment.

"The bee stings are really great," says Mohammed Al Dayya, paralysed from the waist down because of muscular atrophy.

The 25-year-old used to be treated in Egypt, but has had to resort to the bees because of the closures. Confined to Gaza, he wheels himself into Samur's clinic each week to get stung, which he says has stabilised his condition.

"I no longer have this pain that used to keep me from sleeping," he said during a recent session. "This treatment made my condition stable and now it won't get worse before I am able to travel." Most claims of apitherapy - the medical use of bee venom - are anecdotal and have not been proved to the satisfaction of scientists, although believers say it helps relieve pain from multiple sclerosis and rheumatoid arthritis and certain other ailments.

Bee stings, however, also entail risks of serious allergic reactions, and of course the process of getting stung is not one most people would enjoy - at Samur's clinic, patients often get four to six stings a time.

Samur admits his treatment is no substitute for advanced medical care.

"I cannot help him walk again, but my treatment basically focuses on easing the pain and preventing his condition from deteriorating further," said Samur, who studied agricultural engineering in Egypt.

When the 53-year-old opened the clinic in 2003 after testing out bee venom treatments on his family and friends, he was greeted with scepticism.

"It became more acceptable when I got brilliant results from the treatment with a number of patients, and it increased even more after the Israeli siege," he said.

Israel generally allows people to leave Gaza for emergencies but grants only a limited number of permits for medical treatment abroad.

Bees provide pain relief in beleaguered Gaza

The lack of medical options and the economic crisis gripping the territory has sent hundreds of men, <u>women</u> and children flocking to Samur's clinic, where he pricks them with bees raised in dozens of backyard hives.

A course of three injections costs just \$2.5.

Many of his patients suffer from wounds inflicted during Israel's assault on Gaza at the turn of the year aimed at halting Palestinian rocket attacks. Some 1,400 Palestinians were killed before the fighting ended on January 18.

Ismail Matar has been receiving bee stings to treat the shock he suffered when a friend was killed before his eyes by an Israeli air strike.

"My friend was torn apart right in front of me by shrapnel from an Israeli missile," the 23-year-old said.

"I was in psychological shock. I was not strong enough to move my legs, I could barely see, and none of the drugs worked. But now, after seven months of treatment with bee stings, I am much better. I can walk again."

The natural remedy, which contains large amounts of the anti-inflammatory agent melittin, has been used in other nations to treat multiple sclerosis and arthritis, but there is little experimental evidence of its effectiveness.

"The bee venom treatment is a complement to medicine," Samur says. "I don't diagnose the illness, but rely entirely on the opinion of the doctor." He also refuses to treat people with heart disease, diabetes or cancer.

Patients such as Nivine Ajur, a 32-year-old mother of six who suffers from rheumatoid arthritis, swear by the treatment.

"I have been suffering from rheumatoid arthritis for five years and nothing helped because there is no treatment for this disease in Gaza," she said as a bee plunged its stinger into her wrist.

"I could not climb stairs at all but now, after five months of treatment, I can climb them six times a day."

In another corner of the clinic 10-year-old Mohammad Barud does not flinch even as bees gather on his ear lobe just below his hearing aid.

"I'm used to this, and I am not afraid," he said.

"My hearing gets better every week and I will keep coming here until I can take out this hearing aid. The doctor told me I would have to wear it my whole life."

Load-Date: December 8, 2009



Bees provide pain relief in beleaguered Gaza

AlArabiya.net

November 13, 2009 Friday

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Length: 748 words

Body

In a clinic in the beleaguered Gaza Strip, Ratib Samur makes his way from one patient to the next armed with little more than a small box filled with enraged bees.

He uses the bees

In a clinic in the beleaguered Gaza Strip, Ratib Samur makes his way from one patient to the next armed with little more than a small box filled with enraged bees.

He uses the bees to sting those who have come to him for help -- and amid the territory's deepening isolation, his clinic has been transformed into a hive of activity. Since <u>Hamas</u> seized power in Gaza in 2007 the coastal enclave has been sealed off from all but vital aid by both Israel and Egypt, limiting the ability of Gazans to seek medical care abroad.

It has meant growing demand for Samur's bee venom treatment.

"The bee stings are really great," says Mohammed al-Dayya, paralyzed from the waist down because of muscular atrophy.

The 25-year-old used to be treated in Egypt, but has had to resort to the bees because of the closures. Confined to Gaza, he wheels himself into Samur's clinic each week to get stung, which he says has stabilized his condition.

"I no longer have this pain that used to keep me from sleeping," he said during a recent session. "This treatment made my condition stable and now it won't get worse before I am able to travel."

Most claims of apitherapy, the medical use of bee venom, are anecdotal and have not been proved to the satisfaction of scientists, although believers say it help relieve pain from multiple sclerosis and rheumatoid arthritis and certain other ailments.

Bee stings however also entail risks of serious allergic reactions, and of course the process of getting stung is not one most people would enjoy, at Samur's clinic, patients often get four to six stings a time.

Samur admits his treatment is no substitute for advanced medical care.

"I cannot help him walk again, but my treatment basically focuses on easing the pain and preventing his condition from deteriorating further," said Samur, who studied agricultural engineering in Egypt.

Skepticism

Bees provide pain relief in beleaguered Gaza

When the 53-year-old opened the clinic in 2003 after testing out bee venom treatments on his family and friends, he was greeted with skepticism.

"It became more acceptable when I got brilliant results from the treatment with a number of patients, and it increased even more after the Israeli siege," he said.

Israel generally allows people to leave Gaza for emergencies but grants only a limited number of permits for medical treatment abroad.

The lack of medical options and the economic crisis gripping the territory has sent hundreds of men, <u>women</u> and children flocking to Samur's clinic, where he pricks them with bees raised in dozens of backyard hives.

A course of three injections costs just \$2.50 dollars.

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Load-Date: November 14, 2009



Goldstone Urges Accountability for War Crimes; Insists Impunity Undermines Peace Process

Palestine News & Information Agency (WAFA)

September 29, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 848 words

Body

The Head of the UN Fact Finding Mission Justice Richard Goldstone urged the international community to put an end to impunity for violations of international law in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory as he presented the report of the Mission to the Human Rights Council on Tuesday.

Following its 3-month investigation, the four-person Mission concluded that serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law were committed by Israel in the context of its military operations in Gaza from December 27, 2008 to January 18, 2009, and that Israel committed actions amounting to war crimes, and possibly crimes against humanity.

The Mission recommends that the Security Council set up a body of independent experts to report to it on the progress of the Israeli and Palestinian investigations and prosecutions. If the experts' reports do not indicate within six months that good faith, independent proceedings are taking place, the Security Council should refer the situation in Gaza to the ICC Prosecutor.

The Fact Finding Mission, headed by Justice Richard Goldstone, who is a former judge of the Constitutional Court of South Africa and former Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, also comprises Hina Jilani, Advocate of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights defenders and a member of the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur (2004); Professor Christine Chinkin, Professor of International Law at the London School of Economics and Political Science and a member of the high-level fact-finding mission to Beit Hanoun (2008); and Colonel Desmond Travers, a former Officer in Ireland's Defence Forces and a member of the Board of Directors of the Institute for International Criminal Investigations.

'Now is the time for action,' Justice Goldstone told the Human Rights Council, 'A culture of impunity in the region has existed for too long. The lack of accountability for war crimes and possible crimes against humanity has reached a crisis point; the ongoing lack of justice is undermining any hope for a successful peace process and

reinforcing an environment that fosters violence. Time and again, experience has taught us that overlooking justice only leads to increased conflict and violence.'

The Mission was appointed by the President of the Human Rights Council in April with a mandate to 'To investigate all violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law that might have been committed at any time in the context of the military operations that were conducted in Gaza during the period from 27 December 2008 and 18 January 2009, whether before, during or after.'

The Mission found that the repeated acts of firing rockets and mortars into Southern Israel by Palestinian armed groups from the *Hamas*-controlled Gaza Strip constituted war crimes that may amount to crimes against humanity.

In the lead up to the Israeli military assault on Gaza, the Mission said it found that Israel had imposed a blockade amounting to collective punishment and carried out a systematic policy of progressive isolation and deprivation of the Gaza Strip. During the Israeli military operation, code-named 'Operation Cast Lead,' more than 1,400 people were killed, including *women* and more than 340 children, and houses, factories, wells, schools, hospitals, police stations and other public buildings were destroyed.

The report concluded that the Israeli military operation was directed at the people of Gaza as a whole, in furtherance of an overall and continuing policy aimed at punishing the Gaza population, and in a deliberate policy of disproportionate force aimed at the civilian population. The Report states that Israeli acts that deprive Palestinians in the Gaza Strip of their means of subsistence, employment, housing and water, that deny their freedom of movement and their right to leave and enter their own country, that limit their rights to access a court of law and an effective remedy, and could lead a competent court to find that the crime of persecution, a crime against humanity, has been committed.

The Government of Israel has a duty to protect its citizens,' Justice Goldstone told the Human Rights Council, 'That in no way justifies a policy of collective punishment of a people under effective occupation, destroying their means to live a dignified life and the trauma caused by the kind of military intervention the Israeli Government called Operation Cast Lead. This contributes to a situation where young people grow up in a culture of hatred and violence, with little hope for change in the future. Finally, the teaching of hate and dehumanization by each side against the other contributes to the destabilization of the whole region,' he said.

As well as calling for justice, the Members of the Mission urged the Human Rights Council to take action that would ensure the protection of victims, prevent further violence and improve the living conditions of the affected people.

Load-Date: April 21, 2010



To criticize Israel is a dangerous thing in today's Canada

The Toronto Star September 11, 2009 Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. A21

Length: 758 words

Byline: Kathy Wazana, Special to The Star

Body

Two days ago, I came home to a message from my mother asking: "Why are you attacking Israel?"

Once again, I am being tried for treason in the family court, my mother having read the headlines equating the protest letter I signed against TIFF's City to City spotlight on Tel Aviv with a call for the destruction of Israel.

"It is clear that the script they are reading from might as well have been written by <u>Hamas</u>," wrote Rabbi Marvin Hier, dean and founder of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre.

Toronto is built on destroyed indigenous villages. By saying this I am not saying Toronto should not exist or calling for its extinguishment.

Likewise with Tel Aviv. Our letter points out historical facts that we stand behind and are backed up by many scholars that we consulted before publishing it.

In the week since the publication of the letter, the authors of the letter have been called hypocrites, censors and, worse, anti-Semites. A ludicrous charge: five of the eight are Jewish and one is an Israeli.

These accusations seek to intimidate us into silence and shut down substantive discussion. This, ironically, is the very charge that is being levelled at us.

It's hard not to see these attacks as part of a deliberate strategy to divert attention from the real issues, namely Israel's gross violations of human rights and disregard for international law and, in this instance, the hijacking of Toronto's premier cultural event and putting it at the service of Israel's political agenda.

I am Jewish, with deep ties to Israel, and to my family members living there. Speaking out against the State of Israel neither diminishes my Jewishness nor puts Israel at risk of destruction.

It calls on Israel to live up to the standard of Jewish ethics that I grew up with. As though this should exonerate Israel, its defenders are always quick to point to the many countries where human rights are routinely violated, leading, inevitably, to the question: "Why are you singling out Israel?"

We do not deny or condone other countries that oppress their populations. Had Beijing or Tehran been selected as the inaugural City to City spotlight, and presented in an uncritical and largely laudatory manner, there would have been equally outraged protests.

To criticize Israel is a dangerous thing in today's Canada

TIFF singled out Israel for a celebratory spotlight, and its timing could not have been worse, in view of the ongoing settlement and colonization of Palestinian lands, of the continued construction of the wall that is enclosing the Palestinian population of the West Bank in a series of claustrophobic, prison-like enclaves, of the daily acts of humiliation and violations of the rights and the dignity of old and young alike, and, most recently, of the lethal assault on Gaza that left 1,400 Palestinian **women**, men and children dead.

The purpose of our letter was to point to a few things that are left out of the glowing descriptions of Tel Aviv as "a young dynamic city that, like Toronto, celebrates diversity." Many people are excluded from that diversity and Tel Aviv, far from being outside the conflict, is the military centre of Israel, a place fighter jets departed from on their lethal missions to Gaza last December and January.

Asserting these facts in no way argues that Israel should not exist or calls for its destruction. This absurd claim is being circulated with the express purpose of discrediting the letter and intimidating its authors into silence.

The accusations seek to divert attention from the issue at hand: the hijacking of Toronto's premier cultural event and putting it at the service of Israel's political agenda.

When Israel's consul general, Amir Gissin, launched Brand Israel in Toronto in August 2008, he made no secret of the fact that it was to culminate in a major Israeli presence at the 2009 Toronto International Film Festival.

Welcome news in Israel where "the need to have an ongoing campaign that will implant positive emotional associations to Israel has become crucial," wrote Israel author Haskell Nussbaum in the Jerusalem Post. "The Foreign Ministry is beginning to get it."

Under the circumstances, it is hard to escape the connection between TIFF's celebratory spotlight on Tel Aviv and Israel's campaign to cleanse its image, and make it "more attractive," as Gissin told a Toronto conference in May 2008. "Not right, attractive."

Isn't that what the City to City Tel Aviv spotlight is about?

In Canada today, to criticize Israel is a very dangerous thing.

Documentary filmmaker Kathy Wazana is the founder of the Toronto Just Peace Seder and Playgrounds for Peace Initiatives.

Load-Date: September 11, 2009



Living with Cheney's poisonous legacy

Guardian.com

September 3, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 806 words

Body

ABSTRACT

AC Grayling: Nine years on, 'war on terror' policies still haunt the US and its allies. Who will stand up to challenge the ex-VP's recklessness

FULL TEXT

The former US vice-president Dick Cheney is almost as busy now as he was when he was running the United States and its wars. Most of his effort, repeated and of course unchallenged on <u>Fox News last Sunday</u>, is devoted to an open and unapologetic defence of torture, aka "enhanced interrogation techniques", which he says have "prevented the violent death of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of innocent people".

He should have said "other people" or "more people", because thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of innocent people have indeed died as a result of the full-scale Bush-Cheney wars unleashed in response to the 9/11 atrocities, as if fighting crime with crime, mass murder with mass murder, was *the obvious and right thing to do*.

The result? Nine years on in Afghanistan the latest commander of the Nato forces <u>is this week asking for 20,000</u> <u>more US troops</u> - nine years on, and escalation: sound familiar? - while in Iraq the convoys taking US military equipment out of the country as part of the drawdown are under threat from Iran-influenced Shia militias on the road south to Kuwait, and under threat from Sunni insurgents on the road west towards Jordan and Agaba.

Cheney and Bush thought they were planting the firm footprint of the American Colossus in the desert sands of the Middle East, to hold sway there in control of its turbulent and unreliable spirit; instead they have placed 150,000 soldiers and billions of dollars of equipment into the jeopardy of quicksands, surrounded by hostile millions, in the process empowering its enemies in the region and destabilising its friends. Iran has gained, Pakistan has lost, <u>Hamas</u> and Hezbollah have gained, America has lost.

And dragged tumbling on the coat-tails of this foolish enterprise, confected by ideologues in the fat-insulated comforts of Washington armchairs, is Little Britain in the flap-eared shape of <u>Tony Blair</u>, missal in one hand and missile in the other.

I met a captain in the US Marines who told me how much he admired the courage and supreme professionalism of the British forces he liaised with in Iraq when he was last there. That was good to hear. But is there still a

Living with Cheney's poisonous legacy

justification for their involvement in Afghanistan? Why are we still there? The standard answer is: to stop al-Qaida or its clones from having a base of operations. But al-Qaida is comfortably and <u>mainly safely now ensconced in Pakistan</u>. I would defend a fight against Taliban-style religious fanatics for the purpose of rescuing that half of the Afghan population denied education, opportunities and minimum rights, namely the <u>female</u> half.

But Hamid Karzai's government and its western backers seems to have no interest in this; just before the quasielection last week <u>Karzai signed a bill legalising rape of wives by husbands</u>, to placate the Neanderthal religious tendency which dominates almost all factions in the country, not just the Taliban.

But the corrosive effects of the Cheney-Bush epoch on the world are not limited by the borders of the Middle East. In fact the US's own borders have become a place of malediction because of them. On 26 August, the American Civil Liberties Union filed a lawsuit demanding access to records concerning the US customs and border protection policy of <u>searching the laptop computers of any traveller</u> even if there are no grounds for suspicion regarding him or her. CPB agents can look at anyone's bank details, personal files, record of websites accessed, contacts, family photos, indeed all and any personal and other documents stored on a laptop, at will and with impunity, in the absence of any prior reason for doing so.

One attorney working for the ACLU's First Amendment Working Group said, "Travelling with a laptop should not mean that the government gets a free pass to rifle through your personal papers. This sort of broad and invasive search is exactly what the Fourth Amendment's protections against unreasonable searches are designed to prevent."

Attorney Larry Schwartztol of the ACLU's National Security Project added, "Innumerable international travellers have had their most personal information searched by government officials and retained by the government indefinitely. The disclosure of these records is necessary to better understand the extent to which US border and customs officials may be violating the Constitution."

Hats off to the ACLU. It stands between the better traditions of the US and the efforts of Cheney-Bush to talibanise it after their own fashion. The question is: how long will the poison of the Cheney-Bush years keep on seeping through the veins of the US and the world, given that what they started seems so difficult to stop?

Load-Date: September 3, 2009



'Will you guarantee my safety?'

The Jerusalem Post September 13, 2009 Sunday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 13

Length: 679 words

Byline: YOSSI TANURI

Highlight: Israel has gotten to the point where a 16-year-old asks the defense minister this question. The writer is a fifth generation Jerusalemite who served in an elite unit of the IDF and is currently the director-general of United

Israel Appeal of Canada.

Body

On September 1, 2009 more than 1.5 million Israeli children and youths - some glad, some not - walked into school for the opening of the school year. It is customary that the president, prime minister and various other ministers join the children at different schools around the country and greet them.

Defense Minister Ehud Barak addressed a high school in the center of the country where a 16-year-old student asked him what the State of Israel would do to guarantee his security as a soldier. After all, he would be drafted into the IDF in just a year's time...

At some point, we will have to explore how we, as a country, got to the point where a 16-year-old child asks the defense minister for a guarantee that the state will ensure his safety when he joins the IDF and bears part of the responsibility to guarantee this country's security.

Sadly, Barak was correct when he replied that we cannot guarantee this young man's security as an IDF soldier. That's the way things are here.

ACCORDING TO the unsigned agreement we are born into, everyone at the age of 18 is drafted into the IDF or national service. He/she will do his/her utmost to guarantee the security and the existence of our one and only Jewish homeland.

Some of these young people are killed in battle, others are wounded. Some are taken hostage.

Somehow everything has turned around. How did we lose our sense of direction? When did we invent a new philosophy that endangers the basis of our being? Gilad Schalit was not taken hostage. He was kidnapped in battle by a terror organization whose sole purpose is to erase the State of Israel from the map. The price this organization is asking for Schalit will cause enormous and irreversible strategic damage. If delivered, it will inspire a new intifada and motivate every young Palestinian to murder as many Jews as possible, because in the end, they too will be released one day.

If delivered, it will destroy the moderates among the Palestinians while strengthening <u>Hamas</u>, as hundreds who have killed <u>women</u> and children are released. Paying this price will guarantee the planning of the next kidnapping.

'Will you guarantee my safety?'

This is why Barak rightfully looked this 16-year-old in the eyes and told him the truth. We cannot guarantee his safety.

All of this does not minimize Gilad Schalit's tragedy nor that of his family - nor ours as a nation. The soldier with shy eyes and bashful smile is suffering somewhere in Gaza while his father and mother try to move mountains and conduct a major campaign for his return.

This does not relieve our government of the responsibility of finding a solution that will protect the country, maintain security and prevent all the would-be widows, orphans and bereaved.

The ethos that all Israelis were born with is that we do not talk with terrorists. It is this philosophy that got us to the school in Ma'alot, to the lobby of the Savoy Hotel, to Entebbe and to all locations where they tried to terrorize us. This is the only way to free Gilad Schalit and to protect the State of Israel.

I, ALONG with millions of Israeli citizens and Jews around the world, think about Gilad daily. Many of my writings in recent years have been dedicated to this child and soldier - our son and our soldier.

Generations of IDF officers were drafted and raised on the ethos that we do not leave a wounded soldier on the battlefield. We do everything possible to bring him home, even when it is difficult and might put others at risk. This is what makes us better as a military power and as a state.

As parents of three boys who will be called to serve our country when they turn 18, my wife and I are torn with the question of where we stand. What values do we educate our children with? What do we expect or not expect from the State of Israel? Where do we stand as individuals, family and state?

For us this is not a philosophic discussion but a discussion about life and our future and values. I leave you today with these tough questions that were raised by the high-school kid, and that have left us once again torn, with tears in our eyes and pain in our hearts.

Graphic

Photo: IDF SOLDIERS resting after battle during the Second Lebanon War. (Credit: Ariel Jerozolimski)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Feminists who don't defend women

Ottawa Citizen

August 10, 2009 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A8; Naomi Lakritz

Length: 772 words

Byline: Naomi Lakritz, The Calgary Herald

Body

All's been quiet on the sisterhood front. Too quiet, considering how many horrifying stories about <u>women</u> have made the headlines.

There were the alleged honour killings of the three teenaged Shafia girls from Montreal, along with one of their father's two wives. The father, the mother and the girls' brother are charged with murder.

Then there was the eight-year-old girl in Phoenix whose Liberian refugee family disowned her after she was raped. They claim she had dishonoured the family.

And there was Saudi beauty pageant winner Aya Ali al-Mulla, who won her crown without anyone ever seeing her face; she was draped from head to foot in Saudi Arabia's traditional black abaya. Pageant officials pronounced al-Mulla, 18, the Queen of Beautiful Morals. She had to pass rigorous quizzes on her morality, her obedience to her parents, and other such virtues, to win her title.

All of these incidents have as their theme oppression and the quashing of <u>women</u>'s right to autonomy and self-determination, by the males in their milieu. My question is, where are the queens of beautiful morals here in the West?

I checked out the websites of the usual suspects. Naomi Klein is busy tooting her own horn with an announcement that her book, The Shock Doctrine, won the Warwick Prize for Writing! (Exclamation point hers). I did a search for "honour killing" on her site and came up with "Your search yielded no results."

It's possible that my good old namesake is unclear on the concept of oppression.

Klein, who is Jewish, is calling for boycotts of Israel in support of the Palestinian cause whose leaders have declared they want to kill Jewish people. Maybe if she supported the Palestinian people via protesting their oppression by their terrorist *Hamas* leaders, she'd have a worthy cause.

Then I looked at Judy Rebick's blog. Like Naomi, she's preoccupied with flogging her own book, Transforming Power. One recent post, dated July 28, was titled: The Toronto Municipal Strike: Who Do We Get Mad At?

I don't know who to get mad at about the garbage strike in Toronto, Judy. Living in Calgary, it doesn't cross my mind that much.

Feminists who don't defend women

But shouldn't we all be even a teeny bit mad at the way <u>women</u> are being denied their selfhood by the patriarchal environments they live in, be it in Canada, Phoenix or wherever it's happening?

Judy does have a post from June titled "Take action in solidarity with the indigenous people of Peru."

What about a little solidarity with four dead <u>women</u> whose car ended up in the Rideau Canal near Kingston? How about a show of solidarity with that beauty queen in Saudi Arabia who's obviously a brilliant girl because she plans to go to medical school, but who can't show her face to the world because to do so might dishonour her family and lead to a fatal consequence?

And is there nary a tear to be shed or a word to be spared for that poor child in Phoenix whose family has tossed her aside like so much trash for something that was not her fault?

Meanwhile, on Rose's Place, which bills itself as a blogsite for Canadian feminists, recent discussions centred around Sonia Sotomayor, Obama's birth certificate and U.S. health reform, with Toronto Star columnist Antonia Zerbisias complaining about Muslim-bashing regarding the alleged honour killings.

It is not Muslim-bashing to acknowledge that a crime has allegedly happened in a Muslim family.

It is not Sikh-bashing to say that some of the alleged honour killings in Canada in the past few years happened in Sikh families.

Shall we just ignore the United Nations Population Fund's estimate that 5,000 <u>women</u> a year die in honour killings, to avoid casting aspersions on any culture? Shall we pretend it's not happening in Egypt, Lebanon, Turkey, Morocco and Pakistan, to name just a few countries?

There seems to be no problem with denouncing Christian culture for decorating trees at Christmastime, or displaying crosses on Remembrance Day, but when members of another culture engage in actual evildoing, we're supposed to pretend it all just falls under the rubric of domestic violence. Since domestic violence occurs in all cultures, honour killings can be conveniently lumped into that category and we can keep pretending it's not particular to certain cultures.

Nobody's even mentioned the fact that Mohammad Shafia was living in this country with two wives, one of whom died with the girls. Let's just pass completely over that form of oppression visited on these two <u>women</u>, for fear of offending someone.

As Judy Rebick says in another June blog posting: "The revolution will be tweeted or whatever." Yeah, Judy. Whatever.

Naomi Lakritz writes for the Calgary Herald.

Load-Date: August 10, 2009



Many feminists are not stepping up to defend women

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

August 13, 2009 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: ISSUES & IDEAS; Pg. A13; Naomi Lakritz

Length: 766 words

Byline: Naomi Lakritz, Canwest News Service

Body

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Shall we just ignore the United Nations Population Fund's estimate that 5,000 <u>women</u> a year die in honour killings, to avoid casting aspersions on any culture?

Shall we pretend it's not happening in Egypt, Lebanon, Turkey, Morocco and Pakistan, to name just a few countries?

There seems to be no problem with denouncing Christian culture for decorating trees at Christmastime, or displaying crosses on Remembrance Day, but when members of another culture engage in evildoing, we're supposed to pretend it all just falls under the rubric of domestic violence. Since domestic violence occurs in all cultures, honour killings can be conveniently lumped into that category and we can keep pretending it's not particular to certain cultures.

Nobody's even mentioned the fact that Mohammad Shafia was living in this country with two wives, one of whom died with the girls.

Let's just pass completely over that form of oppression visited on these two women, for fear of offending someone.

As Judy Rebick says in another June blog posting: "The revolution will be tweeted or whatever." Yeah, Judy. Whatever.

Canwest News Service

Graphic

Photo:;

Load-Date: August 13, 2009



The families of Gaza profit from bunny business; Cuddly, clean and nutritious, cottontails are solving the Palestinian food crisis. Donald Macintyre reports

The Independent (London)
August 17, 2009 Monday
First Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 16

Length: 761 words

Byline: Donald Macintyre

Body

THE SHRAPNEL holes in the wall behind her underline why Subheya Motawe, her husband and their 15 children were forced to escape from their four-room home in this central Gaza village last January. With no time to grab most of their possessions, Mrs Motawe, 52, had the presence of mind to at least take the most valuable one before fleeing: a pregnant *female* rabbit. After the family returned home at the end of the Israeli military's assault on Gaza, the doe gave birth to a healthy litter. Which was just as well since most of the family's other 24 rabbits were casualties of Operation Cast Lead - either directly because of bombardment or indirectly because Mrs Motawe hadn't been able to leave the house to get feed or clean water for them. With the new offspring, Mrs Motawe had the nucleus she needed to make a fresh start.

For rabbits have become an unlikely siege-beating lifeline for some of the poorest families in Gaza. Relatively cheap to feed and famously reproductive, the fluffy creatures are helping families like the Motawes to survive the desperate shortage of income - and nutritious food - imposed by the economic collapse of a Gaza under blockade.

A "steadily rising trend" of chronic malnutrition in Gaza since the beginning of the Israeli blockade imposed when <u>Hamas</u> seized full control of the territory in June 2007, was revealed in a report by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent in November. It pointed to an unhealthy shift towards "low cost, high energy" foods such as cereals, sugar and oil at the expense of dearer but more nutritious foods such as meat, fish, cheese, fruit and vegetables.

It was in this context that Care International began a pilot scheme to supply 70 "vulnerable" families with two hutches, four months' worth of feed and-at the ratio regarded by experts as optimal for breeding - four <u>females</u> and one male rabbit apiece. Mrs Motawe says she was "excited" to be among the first to benefit. Having been faced with debts and potentially crippling education costs for such a large household, she says: "It is a good way to provide income for the family."

The families of Gaza profit from bunny business Cuddly, clean and nutritious, cottontails are solving the Palestinian food crisis. Donald Macintyre reports

Rabbits breed quickly and repeatedly - a single <u>female</u> can give multiple births up to six times a year. Mrs Motawe: "I like feeding them and caring for the soft little babies. Rabbits are so quiet and calm, when I come early in the morning to water them and clean the cages. No bad smell."

But there is little sentimentality in the Motawe family about the rabbits. "The children help me look after them." But she adds: "They know they are going to be eaten." Food pellets for the rabbits are supplemented with the grass the family collects and the idea is that after an initial start-up cost of around £180 for the "kits" supplied by Care, the small business becomes self-financing, providing some meat for the owners - Mrs Motawe likes to make rabbit stew with chard leaves and garlic - but also generating income - rabbits currently sell in Gaza markets for around 80 Israeli shekels (£12.75) each.

After Operation Cast Lead, Care carried out a needs survey which established that 65 per cent of households regarded food as their most important need. Crops suffered during the fighting because it was often too dangerous for farmers to tend them and roads have been damaged, making it hard to get what food there is available into the towns.

With the help of a £650,000 grant from the British Department for International Development to ease Gaza's postwar food and farming problems, the project - which includes training in small farm management - is now being extended to another 100 "conflict affected" families.

Care's Palestinian agricultural expert in Gaza, Anas Mussalam argues that the rapid reproductive cycle of rabbits, which begin mating as early as six months after birth, makes the beneficial impact on poor Gazan families especially rapid. "I really do believe this is one of the best of all agricultural projects," he says. As efficient converters of low cost feed - including grass - rabbits will produce on average four times more meat than a cow using the same amount of feed. And an 11lb doe bearing 30 young in a year weighing 120lbs when weaned is producing almost 1,000 per cent of her own body weight in offspring - compared with a 1,000lb cow, which will produce in the same period a calf weighing only 40 per cent of her own bodyweight. But that's quite apart from the nutritious value to humans of the low-cholesterol, high-protein rabbit. "It's cheap," says Mr Mussallam, himself an enthusiastic rabbit eater, "and it's delicious."

Load-Date: August 16, 2009



MKs Eldad and Elkin want to keep Hebron road closed to Palestinian cars. Former terror-plagued road due to partially reopen at the end of the week

The Jerusalem Post July 27, 2009 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 737 words

Byline: TOVAH LAZAROFF

Body

A Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee subcommittee plans to ask the prime minister and the defense minister to keep the Zion Route in Hebron closed to Palestinian vehicles. The road is due to be partially reopened at the end of this week.

The route, which links Kiryat Arba to the Cave of the Patriarchs in the Israeli-controlled section of Hebron, has been closed to Palestinian cars since the second intifada broke out in 2000. Since February, settlers have been battling the Defense Ministry to keep the road closed.

The ministry has wanted to partially reopen it to vehicles owned by the 80 Palestinian families that live alongside it, who cannot at this time access their homes by car from that road.

Although it initially looked to partially reopen the road as a gesture to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, the issue is also the subject of a petition to the High Court of Justice by Palestinians who live along the road, and the Hebron Municipality.

In mid-July the state told the High Court, which is in the process of adjudicating the matter, that it planned to open the route to those 80 Palestinian families no later than the end of July.

Earlier this month, the state said, the Defense Ministry had debated but ultimately rejected re-opening to Palestinian pedestrian traffic Shuhada Street, which is located in the Israeli-controlled section of Hebron near Beit Hadassah.

But it added it was possible that the matter of Shuhada Street would be reexamined after the Zion Route was opened.

On Sunday, MK Ze'ev Elkin (Likud), who chairs the subcommittee that deals with matters pertaining to Judea and Samaria, toured the area along with MK Aryeh Eldad (National Union), who is also a member of the subcommittee. Both men spoke out against the move.

"We shouldn't take any life-threatening steps in an area that has already proven to be dangerous," said Eldad.

Hebron Jewish community spokeswoman Orit Struck said that prior to closing the road there were many shooting attacks there against Israeli vehicles; in fact, it had the highest number of attacks of any route in Israel.

MKs Eldad and Elkin want to keep Hebron road closed to Palestinian cars. Former terror-plagued road due to partially reopen at the end of the week

The state in its response to the court said that Hebron was a particularly dangerous area of Judea and Samaria. There is still an active and dangerous terror infrastructure within Hebron, it said.

In the last year, it said, the security forces had prevented six terrorist cells in the city from executing attacks against Israeli targets. Most of those cells were from *Hamas*, it added.

The state also pointed out that the terrorist who was responsible for the February 2008 suicide bombing in Dimona that killed one woman and wounded 40 others came from Hebron.

A year later, in February 2009, the army was able to stop an armed terrorist from south of Hebron from carrying out a suicide bombing, the state said.

It added that it has also thwarted dozens of stabbing attacks against Jews in Hebron and at the Cave of the Patriarchs.

Any decision to ease the situation for Palestinians in Hebron had to be done without creating a security risk, said the state.

According to Struck, the IDF commander who was with the subcommittee on the tour said that it opening the route would be dangerous.

But in the portion of the meeting open to the media, an IDF officer said that all that was happening here was that 80 families would be able to drive their cars to their homes.

Kiryat Arba Local Council head Malachi Levinger said that there were alternative routes that accomplished the same thing as reopening the Zion Route.

He noted that residents of Balfour Street in Jerusalem, who live next to the prime minister's residence, also have a problem with vehicle access to their homes for security reasons.

Hebron spokesman Noam Arnon said that reopening the route was purely a diplomatic move and that Defense Minister Ehud Barak, who received only 13 mandates, should not have the power to make this decision for the entire government.

Earlier in the day, Elkin and Eldad visited Shdema, the abandoned army base not far from the Jerusalem neighborhood of Har Homa. Settlers would like to build at this site rather than see the land handed over to the Palestinian town of Beit Sahour for a medical center and park.

The subcommittee has asked IDF and civil administration officials to meet with it in the Knesset, to discuss alternative sites for the hospital, as well as the possibility of renovating the abandoned military buildings at the site.

Graphic

Photo: MKs ARYEH Eldad and Ze'ev Elkin tour the abandoned Sdema army base southeast of Jerusalem. (Credit: *Women* in Green)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



THE ART OF SURVIVAL

The Santa Fe New Mexican (New Mexico)

July 12, 2009 Sunday

Copyright 2009 The New Mexican

Section: MAIN; Pg. A-1

Length: 760 words

Byline: STACI MATLOCK

Body

By Staci Matlock

The New Mexican

This weekend's popular Santa Fe International Folk Art Market on Museum Hill does more than keep traditional skills alive.

For many artists, it is their own survival.

"We are helping Palestinian <u>women</u> who live in refugee camps in the Gaza Strip increase their income to support their families and keep their heritage alive," said Hind El-Arabi, administrator of the Sulafa Embroidery Shop, represented at booth 63 in the market. It is one of 130 booths showing work by 132 artists from 46 countries.

Sulafa provides materials and training to 500 refugee <u>women</u> in Gaza, then markets the products and pays the artisans. The income is vital to Palestinian <u>women</u> who've lost the male bread-winners in their families through divorce or death. "They haven't any support," El-Arabi said.

The Sulafa program saw a leap in applicants after the recent clashes between Israel and <u>Hamas</u> left many Palestinians dead.

"They lost husbands, brothers and sons," El-Arabi said as she showed brightly and intricately embroidered dresses, scarves and pillowcases. "The embroidery helps them survive and support their families."

Like many of the items at the market, it can take the artists two to three months to embroider, weave or paint their wares, working six to nine hours a day. El-Arabi said <u>women</u> who have embroidered for years end up with weak eyes and often need glasses to continue the painstaking, detailed work.

Last year, buyers spent enough that the average artisan went home with \$16,000.

Thousands of visitors and locals thronged the market Saturday. They fingered soft shawls made of pashmina goat wool, oohed over jewelry and watched in wonder as Bertha Medina Aquino of the Andes demonstrated her detailed gourd painting with burning cord. An army of 1,300 volunteers helped the artisans, guided buyers and answered questions.

THE ART OF SURVIVAL

Nearby, Ghulam Sarwar of Pakistan began decorating a white Santa Fe municipal truck with flamboyantly painted birds and symbols, part of the truck artistry he's practiced for 40 years. City Hall provided the truck so Sarwar could demonstrate a craft that dates to the 1950s, when artisans began using buses, trucks, rickshaws, boats and tankers as their canvases.

Sarwar and nine other truck artists are sponsored by Anjum Rana, a woman devoted to protecting the folk art style. She realized the art form could transfer well to carved wooden boxes, clocks, frames, household items and even model trucks.

She provides the artists with objects and paint, then helps them sell the results. "I wanted to help bring this art to others," Rana said. "This is an art form that is not respected at home. They think it is too flashy and from the street."

Rana, Sarwar and the other truck artists were awarded a UNESCO seal of excellence award for handicrafts in 2008. Rana said the art form faces competition from corporate advertisers who now cover buses with painted advertisements. "This is a dying art," she said. "We need to preserve it and that's why we paint these other objects."

All the artisans spent the prior week in workshops designed to help them increase their businesses, learning everything from reaching new markets to building a Web site. They also learned about traditional New Mexico folk art such as beadwork, colcha embroidery, and retablo painting during a tour at Los Luceros Ranch in Alcalde.

While more than 140 artists were accepted to the sixth annual market, several faced problems getting passports or visas and were unable to come. One artisan from India was blocked when his visa request was denied, despite a last-minute plea by U.S. Sen. Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M.

"When we lose our artists it breaks our hearts," said the market's executive director Charlene Cerny. "Everyone who makes it to the market is kind of a miracle. It takes a lot of money and time for these people to get here."

Ironically, Cerny said, organizers had an easier time getting people from Palestine into the country than they did several artists from Mexico this year.

Market-goers also enjoyed the music of various musicians who played on a central stage while people danced. Near the entrance to the Museum of International Folk Art, Ayo Adeyemi, a master Nigerian drummer, invited children to try out a drum. Adeyemi was on his way to the market last year when he and his 11-year-old son were in a car accident near Flagstaff, Ariz. His son, a budding drummer, died. But Adeyemi was at the market this year, happy to pass along his skills and love of drumming.

Contact Staci Matlock at 986-3055 or smatlock@sfnewmexican.com

Graphic

See pdf's for exact rendition, caption, graphics and photographer info.

Load-Date: July 13, 2009



Israeli raid fails to derail West Bank calm ... so far; Palestinian militants vow retaliation after this weekend's killing of three suspected militants in the West Bank city of Nablus, but residents there say that economic revival will curb the desire for revenge.

The Christian Science Monitor December 28, 2009 Monday

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Length: 880 words

Byline: Joshua Mitnick Correspondent

Body

The year-and-a-half détente between Israeli forces and Palestinians in the West Bank was strained this weekend after Israeli soldiers killed three suspected militants who were wanted for shooting dead an Israeli motorist. The first incursion of Israeli forces in Nablus in months hurt the prestige of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, the US-backed leader who has been cooperating with Israel to reassert Palestinian control in West Bank cities. The Jerusalam Post reported that two of the dead Palestinians had ties to Palestinian nationalist militias with ties to Mr. Abbas' Fatah movement. "Israel tried to embarrass the Palestinian Authority and its president," complained Husam Khader, a Palestinian legislator who visited a mourning tent for one of the gunmen killed. "Palestinians now the view the PA" as an Israeli lackey.

The anger is palpable. Newly printed martyrdom posters are again ubiquitous in Nablus's Old City and downtown, while tens of thousands of angry mourners over the weekend called for revenge and an end to cooperation between the Israeli and Palestinian security forces. A new wave of violence would threaten prospects for resurrecting peace negotiations and undermine an economic revival throughout the West Bank this year. But for all the frustration, the calm appears more robust than the desire to retaliate. "There is a fear of going backward," says Ghazi Najav, who owns a home decoration shop. The relative calm of recent years has bolstered a sense of personal and economic security, he says."We don't have a military compatible with Israel. I don't want to see more Palestinian young men die." How the weekend violence beganThe flare up began on Thursday evening, when a gunmen opened fire on an Israeli car en route to a settlement near Nablus, killing Rabbi Meir Hai. Within two days, Israel dispatched undercover agents and soldiers to Nablus to pursue the attack suspects. The sight of Israeli soldiers back inside the city startled residents, and PA officials like Khader were frustrated because Israel called the incursion on its own without coordinating with the Palestinian security forces. In a city where Palestinian militants once roamed freely with guns and spurred chaos, today gunmen seem to have vanished. The turnaround has been helped by an amnesty program by the Israeli military and an effort by the Palestinian Authority to include former militants into the ranks of the Palestinian security forces. It's also been helped by US-supervised training of Palestinian security forces. Israeli military officers have praised the Palestinians for improvement, and security cooperation is thought to be better than ever. But this program has its limits. At the mourning tent for Annan Soboh, relatives recounted how soldiers ordered women and children out of their homes before they went into the house this weekend to kill the man they suspected of weapons dealing. Israel claims Mr. Soboh was given a chance to surrender. Soboh was part of the amnesty program with the Israeli military. "The PA insisted that everyone stop the resistance," against Israel, Soboh's brother Fareed said. "Now they are the ones in an awkward situation." The PA put its stamp on the

Israeli raid fails to derail West Bank calm ... so far Palestinian militants vow retaliation after this weekend's killing of three suspected militants in the We....

mourning reception, which was held at a union hall where a gigantic poster of Abbas was draped down the side of the building. Hamas and rival Fatah politicians embraced one another at the tent. Fareed Soboh says that with settlers targeting Palestinian towns for vigilante attacks and a stalemate in peace talks, economic prosperity alone won't satisfy Palestinian aspirations. "Last week the PA was talking about making a better economy," he said. "But during the funeral people were calling for revenge." A 'grave' incidentIsraeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak called the Thursday shooting attack a "grave" incident, and warned of a potential escalation. And yet Israel's military did not tighten up barriers to travel in the region. Earlier this year, the Israeli army agreed to lift barriers to Palestinian movement around the West Bank, a decision that gave the Palestinian economy some flexibility and contributed to growth of 7 percent. But after the attack, many Jewish settlers are arguing for a tightening of travel restrictions. The attacks come at a vulnerable time for Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, who is trying to enforce a settlement freeze unpopular with his ideological backers. If Palestinian warnings of an escalation in violence comes to pass, the 10month settlement freeze demanded by the US could be suspended. But a Jewish settler resident in the area said that he was satisfied with the Israeli response. The retaliatory killing have calmed the atmosphere on the Israeli side, said the settler, who refused to give his name. A group of four former members of the Al-Agsa Brigades sit on the step of a storefront in downtown Nablus. They have given up their weapons and taken a job with the Palestinian security forces. The talk of a new outbreak of violence is bluster, they agree. Their former militias do not exist any more after the Palestinian Authority cracked down on gunmen. "In this age, we do nothing," said former militant Abu Bohorein. "We have gone legit. People are angry, but the talk about revenge is just talk."

Load-Date: February 19, 2010



Windsor Star (Ontario)
September 21, 2009 Monday
Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. B2; World Report

Length: 1819 words

Byline: Star News Services

Body

NORTH AMERICA

TRIO ARRESTED OVER TERRORIST PLOT

WASHINGTON - Three men of Afghan origin, including one accused of training with al-Qaida, have been arrested over a plot to carry out attacks in the United States, officials said Sunday.

The U.S. Justice Department said the FBI was investigating other individuals "in the United States, Pakistan and elsewhere, relating to a plot to detonate improvised explosive devices in the United States," according to affidavits filed to support the arrests.

Najibullah Zazi, 24, and his 53-year-old father Mohammed -- both Afghan natives -- were arrested in Colorado late Saturday, the department said in a statement.

Ahmad Wais Afzali, 37, also from Afghanistan, was later arrested in New York.

All three reside legally in the United States. If convicted each man faces eight years in prison.

MEXICAN DRUG VIOLENCE CLAIMS 14

CIUDAD JUAREZ - Fourteen people were killed in the Mexican border-town of Ciudad Juarez on Saturday, the latest grisly chapter of drug violence that has already killed more people in the city this year than in all of 2008.

Local prosecutors said the 14 victims were murdered in a series of attacks blamed on drug wars which have seen 1,701 people die in the area this year already.

According to an AFP count, based on official figures, 1,653 people were killed in the same area in all of last year, despite the deployment of 8,500 troops top the region, which borders El Paso, Texas.

SOUTH AMERICA

U.S. MAY HAVE HAD INPUT INTO COUP

BOGOTA, Colombia The United States knew about an abortive coup against Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez in 2002, and may even have taken part, former U.S. president Jimmy Carter has told a Colombian newspaper.

"I think there is no doubt that in 2002, the United States had at the very least full knowledge about the coup, and could even have been directly involved," Carter said in an interview with El Tiempo published Sunday.

The former U.S. leader said it is understandable that Chavez continues to blame the United States for the failed overthrow attempt.

The Venezuelan president, considered a bulwark of leftism in Latin America, was overthrown by a civilian-military junta for about 48 hours in April 2002, before returning to power.

Then-president George W. Bush denied any U.S. involvement in the abortive coup and called on Chavez, a fierce U.S. critic, to "learn a lesson" from the attempted overthrow.

Carter told El Tiempo that he believed Chavez was elected in a "fair" vote in 1999, had carried out necessary reforms for Venezuela and ensured that "those who are traditionally excluded are able to get a larger share of the national wealth."

But he also said he was worried by the Venezuelan leader's drift towards "authoritarianism."

He added that he felt Chavez's popularity at home and his influence abroad had been "diminished."

EUROPE

PUTIN BRINGS LEOPARDS BACK

SOCHI, Russia - Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin released two leopards into the wild on Saturday in a bid to revive the fortunes of the rare cats in the Caucasus and soothe ecological worries over 2014 Sochi Games.

Caucasian or Persian leopards disappeared from the Caucasus in the 1920s due to excessive hunting. Turkmen President Kurbanguly Berdymukhamedov sent two male leopards caught in Turkmenistan by plane to Sochi. *Female* leopards are to follow.

"We are standing here and admiring your animals. Glorious animals, very beautiful," Putin, surrounded by International Olympic Committee members, told Berdymukhamedov by telephone as he stood by the cage in the Sochi national park.

Russia won the right to host 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi and major construction works are about to begin.

Critics say huge construction projects may harm the environment. They question the need for spending billions of dollars on the games during a financial crisis and say they do not believe all the infrastructure would be ready by 2014.

"I think Russia is on its way to organizing an exceptional Olympic Games," French Alpine skiing legend and IOC member Jean-Claude Killy told reporters.

SENIOR CLERIC SHOT DEAD IN CAUCASUS

MOSCOW - A leading Muslim cleric was shot dead in his car in southern Russia on Sunday, a state investigator said, in an attack another religious leader blamed on Islamist militants.

Gunmen shot dead Ismail Bostanov, the second most senior Muslim cleric in Karachayevo-Cherkessia region, as his car arrived in the regional capital Cherkessk, investigator Vyacheslav Taranenko said.

Karachayevo-Cherkessia is one of the least violent of Russia's mainly Muslim North Caucasus regions and has largely escaped a recent surge in violence in nearby Chechnya, Dagestan and Ingushetia.

The killing was likely carried out by adherents of the Wahhabi strain of Islam, whose influence Bostanov had tried to curb, another senior cleric in the region Ismail Berdiyev was quoted as saying by the Interfax news agency.

A police officer and two of his brothers were shot dead in a separate attack in Ingushetia on Sunday, Interfax reported, citing a police spokesman.

200 CAUGHT TRYING TO ENTER ITALY

ROME - Italian police on Sunday detained nearly 200 clandestine migrants and three alleged people smugglers in operations in Sicily and the Adriatic port of Ancona, ANSA news agency reported.

Police intercepted 138 people as they came ashore near Syracuse on Sicily, as well as two Egyptians who had brought them from Libya. The migrants said they had paid up to US\$1,000 to cross the Mediterranean.

Another group of 44 people, mainly from Pakistan, Turkey and Bangladesh, was found hidden behind a false wall in a truck that had arrived in Ancona from Greece, ANSA said.

The Turkish truck driver was arrested. Forty-two of the group were sent back to Greece while two, who appeared to be minors, were handed over to the city social services department.

Italy is one of the prime arrival points for would-be migrants seeking work and a better life in Europe. Some 6,760 illegal immigrants arrived in Italy in the first half of this year.

REMATCH SET FOR CHESS LEGENDS

MADRID - Chess legends Garry Kasparov and Anatoli Karpov will face off today in the Spanish city of Valencia for a five-day rematch, 25 years after their epic world championship duel.

The Sept. 21-25 match will not carry the same suspense as the Moscow showdown between then world champion Karpov and challenger Kasparov, their first battle that dragged on five months before it was called off with no winner.

The new match will have only 12 games -- four semi-rapid and eight rapid -- with Kasparov, 46, and Karpov, 58, facing off under the watch of Dutch chess arbiter Geurt Gijssen, the Valencia regional government said.

Kasparov, who earlier said it would be more a "ceremonial tournament" with a time-limit on moves, has been training in the Norwegian capital Oslo with the 18-year-old chess prodigy Magnus Carlsen.

He is due to fly into Valencia on Sunday, organizers said.

Karpov has secluded himself for the last week in an apartment on the Spanish coast, training with a group of worldclass players and with a computer, according to organizers.

Kasparov, now a Russian opposition politician, was only 21 and Karpov 33 at the infamous 1984 match when the winner was to be the first to take six games.

Karpov won five, Kasparov three and 40 more were draws when the World Chess Federation, in a controversial move, stopped the duel on alleged health grounds though both players said they wanted to continue.

AUSTRIAN FAR-RIGHT MAKES GAINS

VIENNA - Austria's far-right Freedom Party made strong new gains in a regional election Sunday which its leader said was proof of its national support.

The Freedom Party almost doubled its vote and took second place in the western state of Vorarlberg where the ruling conservative People's Party maintained control with a much reduced majority.

Voters gave the far-right group 25.2 per cent, compared to just 12.9 per cent in the last election in 2004.

The People's Party, in power in Austria in a coalition with the Social Democrats, saw its vote fall from 54.9 per cent to 50.8 per cent.

MIDDLE EAST

ISRAELIS KILL TWO GAZA MILITANTS

GAZA - Two Palestinian militants were killed by Israeli fire in the Gaza Strip on Sunday, associates of the men and Palestinian medical workers said.

An Israeli army spokeswoman said troops aimed mortar and tank fire at two men after they were spotted close to the border fence in the north of the enclave. The soldiers believed they were planting explosives, she said.

One of the dead was a member of Gaza's ruling <u>Hamas</u> Islamist movement and the other was from an allied group, the Popular Resistance Committees, representatives of the two groups said. A third man was wounded in the incident, according to medics working at a hospital where he was being treated.

It was the first such fatal attack by Israel in Gaza in nearly a month. Two <u>Hamas</u> militants were also killed on Sept. 1, but Israel denied involvement in that case. The Israeli army said the two men who died on Sunday were involved in a mortar attack on Israel on Aug. 24 that wounded an Israeli.

Since a war in January that killed over 1,000 Palestinians in Gaza, a ceasefire has broadly held, with sporadic exceptions.

AFRICA

140 REBELS KILLED: YEMEN MILITARY

SAADA - The army killed more than 140 Shiite rebels after the insurgents launched an assault on the government's mansion in the mountain city of Saada in northern Yemen on Sunday, a military official said.

"The army killed more than 140 rebels after thwarting an attempted attack on Saada," the official said, describing the fighting as "the fiercest" since the start of the military offensive on August 11.

The rebels started their attack on the city before dawn from three directions in an attempt to take the government's regional headquarters, but the army was able to foil the advance, the official said.

"So far more than 140 bodies have been found," he added.

Meanwhile, sporadic clashes erupted in the Harf Sufyan area in Amran province which borders Saada, witnesses said.

DOZENS MISSING AS MIGRANT BOAT SINKS

TANGIERS, Morocco - Rescuers scoured the sea off the coast of Morocco Sunday for dozens of African migrants who are missing and feared dead after their boat capsized in an accident that killed eight others.

A total of 42 would-be illegal immigrants were crammed onto the inflatable dinghy that sank before dawn on Saturday off Perejil, a rocky Spanish-owned islet in the Mediterranean Sea off the Moroccan coast, according to a source close to the Moroccan rescue service.

The Spanish Red Cross however estimated there were 60 migrants on the boat, which was headed for Spain.

Spanish and Moroccan rescue teams on Saturday recovered the bodies of eight of them, including that of a pregnant woman, Moroccan security sources said.

They said seven of the 11 survivors appeared before prosecutors in Tangiers on Sunday, while the four others, who were found in poor condition, were receiving treatment.

Graphic

Photo: Andrew Biraj, Reuters; HITCHING A RIDE: Passengers travel atop a train and a woman sits between carriages, as the train heads for Mymensing from Dhaka, Bangladesh on Sunday.;

Load-Date: September 21, 2009



Yonath gives Israel, women and science a boost at Stockholm Nobel ceremony. As crystallographer becomes ninth Israeli to receive prize, past recipient slams inadequate state investment in research

The Jerusalem Post December 11, 2009 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 752 words

Byline: JUDY SIEGEL

Highlight: First photo appeared on page 1.

Body

In a formal but simple ceremony at the Stockholm Concert Hall on Thursday, 70-year-old Weizmann Institute of Science Prof. Ada Yonath - a pioneer in the study of the key protein-producing ribosomes in all cells - became the first Israeli woman, and the ninth Israeli, to win a Nobel Prize - and only the fourth woman to become a chemistry laureate.

Yonath, accompanied to Sweden by her only daughter, granddaughter and sister, shared the 10 million Swedish kroner (\$1.5 million) award with Britain's Indian-born Venkatraman Ramakrishnan and American Thomas A. Steitz, who continued Yonath's work.

The field involving the ribosome, which translates genetic code in the production of protein, has contributed much to understanding resistance of bacteria to antibiotics and is expected to help in the development of new and more effective anti-bacterial drugs.

Yonath will later during her week in Stockholm deliver a science lecture on ribosomes to represent herself and the other two chemistry laureates, as will others among the remaining 10 Nobel laureates in medicine or physiology, chemistry or physics and literature.

Each of the winners received a gold medal and a document from Swedish King Carl XVI Gustaf as the royal family and relatives and friends of the laureates were present. Orchestral music was played, and an opera singer sang arias from Tosca and Don Giovanni.

After the hour-long event, the royals, winners and guests proceeded to City Hall for a ball and festive dinner, where Yonath was due to sit close to the king.

The concert hall ceremony was devoid of all national symbols, including flags and anthems, as the annual occasion is meant to celebrate science.

Simultaneously, scores of Yonath's colleagues attended a video screening of the ceremony at the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot, some of them wiping tears of joy from their eyes.

Yonath gives Israel, women and science a boost at Stockholm Nobel ceremony. As crystallographer becomes ninth Israeli to receive prize, past recipient slams in....

Before the ceremony, Yonath - one of five <u>women</u> to receive a Nobel this year and one of just 40 to do so in 108 years - said she hoped her award would encourage Israeli children - both girls and boys - to develop an interest in sciences in general and specifically chemistry.

"There is a great feeling here," Yonath said. "There is a lot of pleasure in it. I have my entire family here, and this is a wonderful opportunity to spend time with them. I can't complain."

She spent some of her time with the other laureates rehearsing in the concert hall and learning to curtsey or bow to the king. She also attended a reception in her honor at the home of Benny Dagan, Israel's ambassador in Stockholm, where everyone wanted to shake her hand.

The Nobel Prize was established by Swedish inventor and industrialist Alfred Nobel, who produced dynamite. The prize highlights and lends prestige to scientists who have spent decades committing to this time-consuming work.

Technion Prof. Avram Hershko, who shared the Nobel Prize in Chemistry four years ago with his longtime student Prof. Aharon Ciechanover, said he worried that due to inadequate state investment in research, "there will be no more" Israeli Nobels, as the prizes received now and recently were based on work done 20, 30 or more years ago.

Yonath, a crystallographer born to a poor family in the Geula quarter of Jerusalem, was interested in science at an early age and recalled conducting experiments on their apartment balcony.

"Once, when I tried to calculate the height of the balcony, I broke my arm. Another time, I wanted to see if water moves faster than kerosene. When my father came out to smoke, a fire broke out."

At the age of 10, after she lost her father - a rabbi - to illness, her mother raised her and her sister in Jerusalem by running a failing grocery store and then as a government clerk in Tel Aviv.

Yonath graduated from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem with a bachelor's degree in chemistry and then a master's degree in biochemistry, followed by a doctorate in x-ray crystallography at the Weizmann Institute.

For years she had to fight skepticism and even ridicule by colleagues and peers, describing the way she was sometimes treated as if she were "the village fool" studying a theoretical subject that "would get nowhere."

Within a week of hearing she would receive the Nobel, she aroused some controversy by calling for the unconditional release of all *Hamas* prisoners, saying that "holding Palestinians captive encourages and perpetuates their motivation to harm Israel and its citizens.... Once we don't have any prisoners to release they will have no reason to kidnap soldiers."

Graphic

2 photos: Yonath's nobel achievement. Professor Ada Yonath of the Weizmann Institute of Science receives the Nobel Prize in Chemistry from King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden during the awards ceremony yesterday in Stockholm. Yonath is the ninth Israeli to be awarded a Nobel prize. Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu congratulated Yonath last night for 'the honor that your accomplishments have brought to Israel, its citizens and the Israeli scientific community.' Prof. Ada Yonath. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Be wary of Tamils' terrorist history; But legitimate refugees on ship off West Coast deserve fair treatment

Edmonton Journal (Alberta)
October 25, 2009 Sunday
Final Edition

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Section: OPINION; Pg. A12; Lorne Gunter

Length: 877 words

Byline: Lorne Gunter, Freelance

Body

It would be easy to say that the 76 Tamils who showed up in a cargo ship off our West Coast last week should be turned around and told to sail at full steam back to wherever they came from. After all, they all arrived either with forged passports or no passports at all.

That's dodgy enough, but given that many Tamils support the murderous Tamil Tigers separatist group, it is likely some of these would-be refugees are terrorists themselves, perhaps even looking for a safe haven from which to rebuild their shattered organization. Indeed, there is an outstanding Sri Lankan warrant in effect for at least one of the men, Kartheepan Manickavasagar, who is suspected of being a Tiger.

Under Canadian law it is illegal to belong to the Tigers or any of their fundraising front organizations.

The Tigers--officially the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam(LTTE)-- were one of the most ruthless militant groups in the world, until, after more than 25 years of civil war, the Sri Lankan army brutally put down their insurrection earlier this year.

The Tigers perfected suicide bombing. They have used it far more times --nearly 500--than any other insurgents in the world, including the main Palestinian terrorist organizations the PLO, <u>Hamas</u> and Islamic Jihad. The civil war they conducted against the Sri Lankan government for over a quarter century cost 70,000 lives, many of them innocent civilians on both sides. All of this makes the claimants bobbing in our Pacific waters doubly dodgy.

Still, there is a lot of credence to claims by Tamils that they are mistreated in Sri Lanka, even fearful for their lives. They cannot go back or the Colombo government might arrest and abuse them.

While the Tigers deserve no sympathy or sanctuary, the same is not true of ordinary Tamils.

During British colonial rule, when the island nation was known as Ceylon, Tamils held most of the senior indigenous positions in commerce, the professions and the bureaucracy. This is partly the result of their greater willingness than their Sinhalese countrymen to accept missionary education and British institutions, and partly because of British unwillingness to integrate Buddhists into the upper echelons of society and imperial government.

After independence in 1948, however, Sinhalese majority governments implemented a form of reverse discrimination known as the "policy of standardization." Sinhalese was declared the sole official language.

Be wary of Tamils' terrorist history; But legitimate refugees on ship off West Coast deserve fair treatment

Hundreds of thousands of Tamils were disenfranchised (which made it much easier for the Sinhalese to win overwhelming majorities). Businesses were seized from their private owners--mostly Tamils-- and placed under the control of mostly Sinhalese bureaucrats. Government jobs and contracts, too, were given almost exclusively to those in the ethnic majority.

This culminated in what became known as "Black July" in 1983. After a band of Tigers ambushed a Sri Lankan army convoy, Sinhalese mobs, including hundreds of Buddhist monks, rampaged through the streets of the country's major cities. They went door-to-door looking for Tamils (who are predominately Hindu), dragged them into the street and either bludgeoned them to death with clubs and pipes or placed gasoline-soaked tires around their necks and lit them so the victims would be burned alive.

Most of the victims were civilians, not Tigers. Many women and children were among the dead.

If I were a Tamil, I too would harbour a great deal of resentment against the Sinhalese-dominated central government. Before the Tigers took over the Tamil cause, Tamil legislators proposed many peaceful solutions to the ethnic tension. For instance, they proposed a federal system of government with provinces not unlike our own that controlled provincial affairs. All their ideas were rejected. The Sinhalese reasoned that they needn't compromise because they controlled all the levers of power.

The problem with the Tigers is that far from being mere freedom fighters, they became a criminal organization preying on their own people as often as not. For instance, Tamils in the Diaspora--hundreds of thousands of whom were rightly welcomed to Canada following Black July to shelter them against a repeat of the violence--were threatened with death if they did not make substantial monthly contributions to the Tiger war effort. Tamils here wanting to return home to visit loved ones often found them held captive by the Tigers until substantial ransoms were paid.

Following the Boxing Day tsunami in 2004, Tiger soldiers swept through refugee camps and orphanages press ganging hundreds of children to fight the Sri Lankan army and carry out suicide missions against civilian targets.

The Sri Lankan government has been far from angelic, itself, kidnapping, torturing and killing Tamils against whom mere rumours of Tiger sympathy have been made. Last spring's final offensive against the Tigers caught hundreds of innocents in the crosshairs.

The Tamils floating off Vancouver Island cannot be dismissed en masse. Many of them may have legitimate refugee claims. Many may need Canada's protection. Being returned to Sri Lanka might be a death sentence. But Ottawa must be equally certain not to admit any Tigers. We don't need them bringing their violence and corruption to our shores.

Igunter@shaw.ca

Load-Date: October 26, 2009



All hail the shameless neo-cons

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

October 17, 2009 Saturday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; News Review; Pg. 2

Length: 815 words **Byline:** Mike Carlton

Body

HAVING spent the week worrying myself sick about poor, wretched James Packer battling along on his few remaining billions, I find it hard to concentrate on less important stuff. Like the war in Afghanistan, the global financial crisis, and the tsunami of fanatical Muslim terrorists heading for our defenceless shores.

A thread, though, does emerge from the gloom. The dolts who got it so catastrophically wrong in what you might call the Bush/Blair/Howard interregnum are now howling from the rooftops that it's high time the whole mess was cleaned up, and why hasn't it been, and what's going to be done about it, and what a bunch of wimpy hypocrites Barack Obama and Kevin Rudd have turned out to be. Their gall is monumental.

Take the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Obama. "A farce ... I think it discredits the whole system,†snorted our own Lord Downer, pausing briefly in his historic mission to pacify the Levant or wherever. His lordship's scorn rattled around the pundits of the right: nine months in office, already, and still the President hasn't won the Afghan war, deposed the venal Hamid Karzai, captured Osama bin Laden, bombed Iran, seen off <u>Hamas</u> or fixed the world financial system.

A recent emission from The Australian's foreign editor, Greg Sheridan, crystallised this idiocy. After a few tortured paragraphs wondering whether Obama wanted to be The Fonz or Richie Cunningham from Happy Days – a metaphor so creaky you could see the kapok stuffing bursting from the seams – he offered up this startling sentence: "At some point, Obama is going to have to do something seriously unpleasant to someone".

Shameless, unrepentant, nothing learnt and nothing forgotten, there is the neo-con world view in a nutshell: the US gains respect only when the cruise missiles and F/A-18s are thundering from the decks of a carrier battle group to wreak death and destruction on the villains du jour. That George Bush tried this endlessly and failed so disastrously troubles them not a jot.

Obama, praise be, seems to be an infinitely more subtle operator. Presumably the Norwegians recognised this and gave him the prize as an encouragement. It's their gong and they can do what they like with it.

Here at home, the attempts by the Opposition and its cheerleaders to foment panic about the new lot of asylum seekers are no doubt a welcome diversion from the troubles of the Liberal Party but they are equally disingenuous. If Malcolm Turnbull wants to return to the Ruddocky horrors of <u>women</u> and children rotting behind the razor wire or going mad on some god-forsaken lump of guano in the Pacific, he should say so.

âââ

In ancient Rome, no great man moved without the say-so from his Haruspex. The Haruspices (plural), wise men all, would pore over the entrails of sacrificed sheep or goats and, from the signs revealed, would divine, say, whether the Ides of March was time or not to assassinate Caesar in the forum.

In this useful work they were assisted by augurs, priests who studied the flight of birds: ptarmigan heading north augurs well for sacking Carthage. Two millenniums on, how we laugh at such mumbo jumbo. Instead, we have economists.

Curiously, though, while the practice of economics might be more scientific (debatable, I admit) the results are just as haphazard. Do economists get anything right? Ever?

I vaguely recall there was one who predicted the global financial crisis, but as he was merely an untenured junior professor at some remote college in rural Idaho he wasn't heard until well after Bear Stearns and General Motors had crashed in ruins. The rest of them plainly didn't have a clue. Still less were they repentant afterwards.

In our own backyard, it is always fun to watch the Treasury gurus get their budget forecasts wrong by \$20 billion or so. Or you might recall last January's assurances from a private think tank, Access Economics, that the economy would "unwind scarily fast ... this is not just a recession. This is the sharpest deceleration Australia's economy has ever seen." No it didn't, no it isn't.

But the dopiest of the lot are those who work for the big banks. Their mission in life, in so far as they have one, is to get their heads on television, carefully positioned in front of their employer's logo. (And why ABC TV news lets them get away with that not-so-subliminal advertising I do not know.)

The other day to a man – they are all men – they were gravely forecasting unemployment would rise from 5.8 per cent to 6 per cent. Bingo, down it went to 5.7 per cent. So much for conventional wisdom; a phrase coined, incidentally, by the late John Kenneth Galbraith, one of the few 20th century economists who ever made any sense. He meant it ironically.

Time, I think, to revive my campaign to skewer the heads of a brace of economists on pikes across the Commonwealth Bridge over Lake Burley Griffin, to encourage the others.

Graphic

CARTOON: Lelievre

Load-Date: October 16, 2009



'Aspirational' award starts war on Obama's home front

The Times (London)
October 10, 2009 Saturday
Edition 1, National Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 14,15

Length: 798 words

Byline: Catherine Philp; Tim Reid

Body

At 5.45am yesterday Robert Gibbs was woken by a network television producer calling him at home. "This'd better be good," the White House press secretary grumbled. It was, the producer assured him. President Obama had just won the Nobel Peace Prize. "Oh, that is good," Mr Gibbs replied.

At the end of an extraordinary whirlwind day that began for Mr Obama with a call to the Lincoln Bedroom moments later, he may justly be questioning his aide's initial judgment. At home, admirers met the news with astonishment, bafflement and, in some cases, laughter. Across the globe, reaction ranged from polite congratulation and wild effusion to outrage and scepticism.

Conservative critics greeted the news with glee, an affirmation of their belief that Mr Obama is beloved in Europe just for being a celebrity, adored for what he says, not what he does - or, as his Texan predecessor would say, all hat and no cattle.

Without question, the choice is political. The Nobel Peace Prize is a notoriously difficult award to predict but one thread of consistency since 2000 has been the award committee's implacable hatred of the Bush Administration.

Three of the past six peace awards have gone to Bush adversaries. In 2002 the prize went to Jimmy Carter as an explicit rejection of the Bush presidency in the build-up to the Iraq war.

In 2005 Mohamed ElBaradei, the UN atomic agency chief who had clashed with Washington over the search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, was honoured. In 2007 Al Gore received the prize for his warnings on climate change, denounced by President Bush as a liberal myth.

Mr Obama's is a fourth and perfect example of what Nobel scholars call the growing aspirational trend of Nobel committees over the past three decades, by which awards are given not for what has been achieved but in support of the cause being fought for.

'Aspirational' award starts war on Obama's home front

Defending the choice, the committee chairman made clear that this year's prize fell in that category. "If you look at the history of the peace prize, we have on many occasions given it to try to enhance what many personalities were trying to do," Thorbjørn Jagland said. "It could be too late to respond three years from now."

Students of Nobel history question how helpful aspirational awards have been to the causes espoused by their recipients. When the Dalai Lama was honoured in 1986, the Chinese responded with a brutal crackdown on his supporters in Tibet. Shirin Ebadi, the Iranian human rights activist and lawyer, is in exile in Dublin while opposition leaders at home labour under crushing repression. Mr Obama's peace prize may be unhelpful in different ways, the political motives behind it unwittingly tainting his efforts to be independent.

World leaders urged him yesterday to seize the momentum to renew peacemaking efforts. "We do not yet have peace in the Middle East ... this time it was very clear that they wanted to encourage Obama to move on these issues," Martti Ahtisaari, the former Finnish President and peacemaker, who won last year, said. But while the Palestinian leadership praised the award, Israeli reaction was measured and *Hamas*, the radical faction in control of Gaza, denounced it.

When Mr Obama rises this morning it will not be peace but the Afghan war on his agenda, and the advice of his commander, General Stanley Mc-Chrystal, that thousands more troops are needed there.

Rush Limbaugh, the US right-wing shock jock, seized on the accolade as evidence that Mr Obama lacked the stomach for such a fight: "With this award the elite of the world are urging Obama, the man of peace, to not do a surge in Afghanistan, not take action against Iran and its nuclear programme and to basically continue his intentions to emasculate the US."

Controversial nominations

Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin and Benito Mussolini were all nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize

Protesters threw snowballs at the US Ambassador in Oslo when he arrived to collect the 1973 prize on behalf of Henry Kissinger, the Secretary of State, for the deal to end the Vietnam war. The North Vietnamese negotiator, Le Duc Tho, turned down the joint award, as the war was still being fought

Jane Addams was nominated 91 times between 1916 and 1931 before she was finally awarded the prize. She was an American social reformer and international president of the <u>Women</u>'s International League for Peace and Freedom

Mahatma Gandhi was nominated three times but never won. When he was assassinated in 1948, no prize was awarded as there was "no suitable living candidate"

Mother Teresa refused to attend a Nobel dinner in Oslo when she went to collect her prize in 1979. She said the money should be spent on the poor. The banquet was cancelled

Source: Nobel Foundation, Reuters

Online

Vote in our poll: should Obama have the prize? timesonline.co.uk/newsblog

Graphic

Observers are split over whether the Nobel vote is the President's window of opportunity or a barrier to success

JEWEL SAMAD / AFP / GETTY IMAGES

Load-Date: October 10, 2009



Israeli military rabbis drawing some criticism

Charleston Daily Mail (West Virginia)

August 17, 2009, Monday

Copyright 2009 Charleston Newspapers

Section: NEWS; Pg. P11B

Length: 897 words

Byline: MATTI FRIEDMAN, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Body

JERUSALEM - Most Israelis expect their military rabbis to confine themselves to such tasks as making sure the army provides kosher food and respects the Sabbath. But lately, some of them are asserting their own idea of Jewish virtue at the risk of stepping into the country's culture wars.

Some critics worry that the rabbinate and its charismatic chief, Brig. Gen. Avichai Rontzki, are infusing a militant mix of Judaism and nationalism into a traditionally secular institution that embodies the Israeli consensus.

On the Palestinian side, Islamic hard-liners already see their war with Israel through an uncompromising religious lens, and the rabbinate's critics warn that the Jewish state must not follow suit and risk pushing the conflict closer to a zero-sum holy war.

When Israeli soldiers massed on the Gaza border for the country's offensive against <u>Hamas</u> militants six months ago, uniformed rabbis stood amid the tents and tanks, reciting prayers with the men as they prepared for battle. When the troops went into Gaza, Rontzki went in with them.

That might not have seemed unusual, but some rabbis went further, distributing pamphlets that put the conflict firmly in religious terms. One suggested a parallel between today's Palestinians and the Philistines, the biblical foes of the Israelites.

After criticism arose, the army condemned the pamphlet and Rontzki said it was distributed without his knowledge.

But the critics say it was in line with a pattern that goes against the heterogeneous nature of Israel's conscript army.

Although mostly Jewish, the Israel Defense Forces' estimated 175,000 regular troops include some Muslim Arabs and immigrants from the former Soviet Union who identify as Christians. The military's advocate-general is an Orthodox Jew, and the editor of its official magazine is openly gay. All soldiers have access to their own clergy and observe their religions' holidays, though only Jewish chaplains wear uniforms and serve in the military rabbinate.

Rontzki was given the job in 2006, after relations between the government and the settler movement were soured by Israel's removal of 8,000 settlers from Gaza the year before.

Claiming Gaza was Jewish land, and fearing Jewish settlements in the West Bank would be next to go, some settlement supporters called on soldiers to refuse orders and even to dodge the draft. Rontzki, himself a West Bank settler, was not among the resisters. A former combat officer who came to religion as an adult and had become an influential rabbi, he seemed the perfect candidate to heal the rift.

Israeli military rabbis drawing some criticism

The army chose Rontzki "instead of a more moderate personality with the hope of avoiding the kind of problems discussed around the withdrawal from Gaza," said Gershom Gorenberg, an Israeli historian who has studied the settler movement.

"In the process, it has given a very prominent pulpit to someone whose views on other issues are extremely controversial," he said.

Rontzki pioneered a new arm of the rabbinate dedicated to Jewish education, dubbed the Jewish Consciousness division. During the Gaza war his staff distributed colorful pamphlets exhorting soldiers to victory, accompanied by prayers, photographs of uniformed men in prayer shawls, and a number to call with questions of religious law.

Rabbis have always been a visible component of military life, ministering to troops in the field and officiating at soldiers' funerals. But as the political clout of religious Israelis has grown in recent years, so has the sensitivity of secular Israelis to signs of religious influence in state institutions, especially the military.

"Under Rontzki's command, the rabbinate is giving the conflict a religious overtone, and they are also using their free access to soldiers to work toward political goals," said Michael Sfard, an attorney for Yesh Din, an Israeli human rights group. Those goals, critics like Sfard say, include making sure the West Bank, claimed by the Palestinians as part of their future state, remains in Jewish hands for good.

Rontzki has been accused of speaking out against military service for <u>women</u> - he denies it - and after Bamahane, the army magazine, profiled a homosexual major, Rontzki wrote to several senior officers to protest.

Israel's army is proud of the opportunities it provides to <u>women</u> and openly gay soldiers. "A senior IDF officer who believes that it would be better for <u>women</u> not to be drafted and that homosexual soldiers should be erased from official army publications . . . does not deserve to serve in his position," the Association for Civil Rights in Israel wrote to the military chief of staff.

The military responded that Rontzki was expressing his personal opinions. It declined to let Rontzki be interviewed, but Maj. Avital Leibovich, a spokeswoman, said his actions were in line with military orders.

"The jobs of the rabbinate have not changed," Leibovich said. "The rabbinate is not supposed to be a substitute for the commander on the ground, but to give a spiritual boost to a religious soldier who might need it."

The rabbinate's new approach comes at a time of rising Orthodox influence in the military's combat units. Elite troops once came predominantly from the socialist kibbutz movement; today they are more likely to be people like Rontzki - skullcapped, seminary-educated and steeped in an ethos of national service, sacrifice and building settlements.

Load-Date: August 18, 2009



Few surprises from Sweden

The Jerusalem Post

August 20, 2009 Thursday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 16

Length: 849 words

Byline: Gerald M. Steinberg

Highlight: A report in a Swedish newspaper claiming IDF soldiers stole and sold dead Palestinians' organs is par

for the course. The writer heads NGO Monitor and is a professor of political science at Bar Ilan University.

Body

The article published on Monday in the Swedish newspaper Aftonbladet accusing IDF soldiers of stealing and selling the organs of Palestinians is not a surprise or isolated aberration, but rather the result of a long campaign of anti-Israeli demonization, based on manufactured "evidence" repeated by Palestinian "eyewitnesses".

Applying the strategy adopted at the NGO forum of the 2001 UN Durban conference, the well-financed network of radical non-governmental organizations (NGOs) plays a major role in this demonization, and the Swedish government is a major source of funding. Expressions of modern anti- Semitism and blood libels are the logical results of this activity.

An NGO Monitor research report on Swedish government funding, published on June 29 2009, documented this pattern in detail, and warned of the incitement and anti-Semitic language being used routinely by these organizations. This systematic study examined over 20 major NGOs funded through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), Diakonia, the multi-national NGO Development Center (NDC), and the Swedish Mission Council (SMR).

Many of these NGOs routinely accuse Israel of "genocide," "ethnic cleansing," and "apartheid," and some compare Israeli military and political officials to Nazis. This propaganda warfare is waged through the faade of "research" reports which routinely quote Palestinian "testimonies," taken and repeated without question. The path from this demonization to the blood libels of Aftonbladet is short and direct.

The Palestinian Medical Relief Society (PMRS), run by Dr. Mustafa Barghouthi, and funded partly by the SMR framework, is a prominent example. Barghouthi referred to the Gaza conflict as a "horrendous massacre," and used terms like "ghetto," and "apartheid" on a radio program. PMRS refers to the security barrier as the "apartheid wall," and claimed that Israel employs a "racist ideology" and inflicts "collective punishment" on the Palestinians.

Similar language is found in the publications and statements of the radical Israel-based Alternative Information Center (AIC), which received 300,000 Krona (\$42,000) in 2008, Palestinian-based AI Haq (SEK 3 million, as part of Diakonia's IHL program), and Physicians for Human Rights-Israel (SEK 900,000). The central role of PHR- I officials in the campaigns accusing Israeli doctors of torture and other forms of heinous immorality, resulted in a decision by the Israel Medical Association to sever relations.

Few surprises from Sweden

SIDA money also goes to the <u>Women</u>'s Affairs Technical Committee (WATC), Palestinian Medical Relief Society (PMRS), and Jerusalem Center for <u>Women</u> (JWC), which demonize Israel with the rhetoric of "apartheid," "ethnic cleansing," and "massacres." This language is repeated in NGO reports and and press statements, which are then reprinted in the media and amplified in the United Nations Human Rights Council.

NGOs supported by Sweden are also among the leaders in the effort to rewrite the history of the conflict in order to portray Israel as an "evil empire" and the world's worst violator of human rights. The Palme Center, run by the Social Democratic Party and leading trade unions, accuses Israel of "provok[ing] the al-Aqsa rising and the 'Second Intifada,'" and "disproportionate violence against civilians, unlawful executions and torture." The fighting in Gaza is also blamed solely on "the provocative Israeli occupation," rather than on the over 8,000 rockets launched by <code>Hamas</code>, or other forms of terror. The history of Arab rejectionism, the wars designed to "wipe Israel off the map", and the decades of massive Palestinian terror, are erased as part of this demonization.

Similarly, a Sabeel project, "The Nakba Memory, Reality and Beyond," used SIDA funding (SEK 540,000) "to commemorate the Nakba of 1948". Sabeel is a leader of the church divestment campaign, and its director, Naim Ateek, employs anti-Semitic themes and imagery in sermons promoting "Palestinian Liberation Theology." Diakonia's "International Humanitarian Law" project and other Swedish government funding are behind the abuse of legal frameworks to demonize Israel. The "lawfare" movement uses courts in Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand to accuse Israelis of war crimes and similar charges. While all of the cases heard to date have been dismissed, the main purpose of this effort is to reinforce the incitement and hatred directed against Israelis through the rhetoric of morality and human rights. Using Swedish funding, lawfare cases are promoted by Al Haq and the Gaza-based Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR), which, like other such groups, accuses Israelis of "war crimes" and "crimes against humanity."

When NGO Monitor sent the draft report to the Swedish embassy in Tel Aviv and government officials in Stockholm, they refused to comment or to engage in a discussion of the implications of these reprehensible activities.

Perhaps now, after the Aftonbladet report has highlighted the results of this demonization, they will reconsider and stop this destructive misuse of public funds.

Graphic

Photo: A SCREEN shot of the article in Aftonbladet, showing a picture of a dead Palestinian man with a photo of a New Jersey rabbi accused of being involved in the human organs trafficking ring unveiled last month.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



'FAYYADISM' OFFERS NEW HOPE FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

August 7, 2009 Friday

SOONER EDITION

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Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. B-7

Length: 842 words

Byline: Thomas L. Friedman

Body

RAMALLAH, West Bank

In 2002, the U.N. Development Program released its first ever Arab Human Development Report, which bluntly detailed the deficits of freedom, *women*'s empowerment and knowledge-creation holding back the Arab world.

It was buttressed with sobering statistics: Greece alone translated five times more books every year from English to Greek than the entire Arab world translated from English to Arabic; the GDP of Spain was greater than that of all 22 Arab states combined; 65 million Arab adults were illiterate. It was a disturbing picture, bravely produced by Arab academics.

Coming out so soon after 9/11, the report felt like a diagnosis of all the misgovernance bedeviling the Arab world, creating the pools of angry, unemployed youth, who become easy prey for extremists.

Well, the good news is that the U.N. Development Program and a new group of Arab scholars last week came out with a new Arab Human Development report. The bad news: Things have gotten worse -- and many Arab governments don't want to hear about it.

This new report was triggered by a desire to find out why the obstacles to human development in the Arab world have "proved so stubborn." What the roughly 100 Arab authors of the 2009 study concluded was that too many Arab citizens today lack "human security -- the kind of material and moral foundation that secures lives, livelihoods and an acceptable quality of life for the majority." A sense of personal security -- economic, political and social -- "is a prerequisite for human development, and its widespread absence in Arab countries has held back their progress."

The authors cite a variety of factors undermining human security in the Arab region today -- beginning with environmental degradation -- the toxic combination of rising desertification, water shortages and population explosion.

In 1980, the Arab region had 150 million people. In 2007, it was home to 317 million people, and by 2015 its population is projected to be 395 million. Some 60 percent of this population is under the age of 25, and they will need 51 million new jobs by 2020.

Another persistent source of Arab human insecurity is high unemployment. "For nearly two and a half decades after 1980, the region witnessed hardly any economic growth," the report found. Despite the presence of oil money (or

'FAYYADISM' OFFERS NEW HOPE FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

maybe because of it), there is a distinct lack of investment in scientific research, development, knowledge industries and innovation. Instead, government jobs and contracts dominate. Average unemployment in the Arab region in 2005 was 14.4 percent, compared with 6.3 percent for the rest of the world. A lot of this is because of a third source of human insecurity: autocratic and unrepresentative Arab governments, whose weaknesses "often combine to turn the state into a threat to human security, instead of its chief support."

The whole report would have left me feeling hopeless had I not come to Ramallah, the seat of Palestinian government in the West Bank, to find some good cheer. I'm serious.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is to the wider Middle East what off-Broadway is to Broadway. It is where all good and bad ideas get tested out first. Well, the Palestinian prime minister, Salam Fayyad, a former IMF economist, is testing out the most exciting new idea in Arab governance ever. I call it "Fayyadism."

Fayyadism is based on the simple but all-too-rare notion that an Arab leader's legitimacy should be based not on slogans or rejectionism or personality cults or security services, but on delivering transparent, accountable administration and services.

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Fayyad, famous here for his incorruptibility, says his approach is "to tell people who you are, what you are about and what you intend to do and then actually do it." At a time when all the big ideologies have failed to deliver for Arabs, Mr. Fayyad says he wants a government based on "legitimacy by achievement."

Something quite new is happening here. And given the centrality of the Palestinian cause in Arab eyes, if Fayyadism works, maybe it could start a trend in this part of the world -- one that would do the most to improve Arab human security -- good, accountable government.

Notes

Thomas L. Friedman is a syndicated columnist for The New York Times.

Load-Date: August 8, 2009



Robinson tells 'Post': Two-state solution in danger

The Jerusalem Post August 28, 2009 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 778 words

Byline: REBECCA ANNA STOIL

Body

Former Irish president and UN Human Rights Commissioner Mary Robinson warned on Thursday that if Israel does not freeze settlement construction, a two-state solution may no longer be possible.

"The balance is tipping and if it tips, there will not be a two-state solution and how would that make Israel safer?" asked Robinson, in an exclusive interview with The Jerusalem Post.

She is here as part of a delegation of veteran world leaders known as The Elders.

"A one-state solution has huge implications. So for the sake of being able to have a two-state solution, we need a freeze on settlements," she said.

Robinson did not restrict her criticism to Israel.

"On the Palestinian side, there needs to be much more responsibility to come together in a responsible way, as the PA and <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah and other elements must be much more urgent on the discussions that they are having in Egypt.

"There is no time to delay on this and the civil society we are meeting are becoming impatient on leadership and want more leadership," she said.

Amid controversy over the records of some of the visiting Elders regarding Israel, Robinson defended the NGO as "balanced."

"In all of our meetings everyone can see that we want to further the purposes of peace. We want to probe a little bit, push a little bit to try to see if we can help in a nonpolitical way," she said.

"We're not involved in negotiations, but we ask the right questions in the right quarters to try to create some space."

The Elders includes Nobel Peace laureates Jimmy Carter and Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu. During their four-day visit to Israel and the West Bank, they have met with politicians, civic groups and young people.

"We are a group that contains a number of those who would be, if you like, perceived to be quite balanced on the Israeli side," said Robinson, who recently received of the US Presidential Medal of Freedom. Pro-Israel activists had protested that award, slamming her for being anti- Israel, and in particular citing in her role at the 2001 World Conference against Racism in Durban, South Africa.

Robinson tells 'Post': Two-state solution in danger

"The leader of our group, former president of Brazil Fernando Enrique Cardozo, has very warm relations with Israel over the years, and [former prime minister] Gro Brundtland represents the great role of Norway and her own role in the Oslo Process, and Ela Bhatt, who is the head of the Self-Employed Womens Association in India, comes with a Ghandian true impartiality," Robinson said.

The group's goal was to "keep the focus on the people," she said.

"We have explained to each group that we are not in power and we are absolutely committed to peace and reconciliation and to peace and human rights on the Israeli side and on the Palestinian side. We are trying to further that," she said.

Israel should take a page from Ireland's book and look at positive steps that can be taken toward peace, Robinson said.

"I felt when I was in Gaza in November, which was before the bombing of Gaza a few weeks later, I was struck by the fact that there was the blockade and it was having its impact, but there was also a very tentative cease- fire," she said.

"And in an Irish situation, when the IRA Sinn Fein made any tangible step like a tentative cease-fire, there was always a move to consolidate it, there was always a step taken to ensure some dividend. And it did strike me that it wasn't wise that there wasn't such a step [with Gaza].

"And I know that the situation since became worse, but it's probably now back to where it was. I believe that if there is to be peace, there has to be reconciliation among the factions on the Palestinian side, and that must be fostered. And one of the ways to do that is to ease and hopefully remove the blockade.

"I am aware of the security concerns, they are very real and I don't underestimate them. But the real security is the lasting peace, and that we know from Ireland. I can go to Belfast now. It's a thriving cultural city, and now when I travel from Dublin to Belfast, I don't even feel anything when I cross the border," Robinson said.

Robinson also spoke out against the worsening situation for women in Gaza.

After speaking with two young Gazan <u>women</u> by video- conference, she said that they expressed concerned that the always-patriarchical society there was "getting worse."

"We met this afternoon with three PLC [Palestinian Legislative Council] members, including... former speaker of the PLC Abdel Aziz Dweik - all three were released from prison about three months ago. I raised this and said please that as elders, we are very concerned about the situation. We want it to be known that we raised it with you and please convey it back to Gaza."

Graphic

Photo: Mary Robinson (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Green Shoots in Palestine

The New York Times

August 5, 2009 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 21; OP-ED COLUMNIST

Length: 850 words

Byline: By THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN

Dateline: Ramallah, West Bank

Body

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This new report was triggered by a desire to find out why the obstacles to human development in the Arab world have "proved so stubborn." What the roughly 100 Arab authors of the 2009 study concluded was that too many Arab citizens today lack "human security -- the kind of material and moral foundation that secures lives, livelihoods and an acceptable quality of life for the majority." A sense of personal security -- economic, political and social -- "is a prerequisite for human development, and its widespread absence in Arab countries has held back their progress."

The authors cite a variety of factors undermining human security in the Arab region today -- beginning with environmental degradation -- the toxic combination of rising desertification, water shortages and population explosion. In 1980, the Arab region had 150 million people. In 2007, it was home to 317 million people, and by 2015 its population is projected to be 395 million. Some 60 percent of this population is under the age of 25, and they will need 51 million new jobs by 2020.

Another persistent source of Arab human insecurity is high unemployment. "For nearly two and half decades after 1980, the region witnessed hardly any economic growth," the report found. Despite the presence of oil money (or maybe because of it), there is a distinct lack of investment in scientific research, development, knowledge industries and innovation. Instead, government jobs and contracts dominate. Average unemployment in the Arab region in 2005 was 14.4 percent, compared with 6.3 percent for the rest of the world. A lot of this is because of a third source

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of human insecurity: autocratic and unrepresentative Arab governments, whose weaknesses "often combine to turn the state into a threat to human security, instead of its chief support."

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http://www.nytimes.com

Load-Date: August 5, 2009



Sisterhood's silence over honour killings deafening

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)
July 29, 2009 Wednesday
Final Edition

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Section: THE EDITORIAL PAGE; Pg. A14; Naomi Lakritz

Length: 831 words

Byline: Naomi Lakritz, Calgary Herald

Body

All's quiet on the sisterhood front this week. Too quiet, considering how many horrifying stories about <u>women</u> made the headlines.

There were the alleged honour killings of the three teenaged Shafia girls from Montreal, along with one of their father's two wives. The father, the mother and the girls' brother are charged with murder. Then there was the eight-year-old girl in Phoenix whose Liberian refugee family disowned her after she was raped. They claim she had dishonoured the family.

And there was Saudi beauty pageant winner Aya Ali al-Mulla, who won her crown without anyone ever seeing her face; she was draped from head to foot in Saudi Arabia's traditional black abaya. Pageant officials pronounced al-Mulla, 18, the Queen of Beautiful Morals. She had to pass a bunch of rigorous quizzes on her morality, her obedience to her parents, and other such virtues, to win her title. All of these incidents have as their theme oppression and the quashing of <u>women</u>'s right to autonomy and self-determination, by the males in their milieu. My question is, where are the queens of beautiful morals here in the West?

I checked out the web-sites of the usual suspects. Naomi Klein is busy tooting her own horn with an announcement that her book, The Shock Doctrine, won the Warwick Prize for Writing! (Exclamation point hers). I did a search for "honour killing" on her site and came up with "Your search yielded no results."

It's possible that my good old namesake, Naomi, is unclear on the concept of oppression. Klein, who is Jewish, is calling for boycotts of Israel in support of the Palestinian cause whose leaders have declared they want to kill Jewish people. Maybe if she supported the Palestinian people via protesting their oppression by their terrorist <u>Hamas</u> leaders, she'd have a worthy cause.

Then I looked at Judy Rebick's blog. Like Naomi, she's preoccupied with flogging her own book, Transforming Power. Her most recent post, dated July 28, is entitled: The Toronto Municipal Strike: Who Do We Get Mad At?

I don't know who to get mad at about the garbage strike in Toronto, Judy. Living in Calgary, it doesn't cross my mind that much. But shouldn't we all be even a teeny bit mad at the way <u>women</u> are being denied their selfhood by the patriarchal environments they live in, be it in Canada, Phoenix or wherever it's happening?

Judy does have a post from June entitled "Take action in solidarity with the indigenous people of Peru."

Sisterhood's silence over honour killings deafening

What about a little solidarity with four dead <u>women</u> whose car ended up in the Rideau Canal near Kingston? How about a show of solidarity with that beauty queen in Saudi Arabia who's obviously a brilliant girl because she plans to go to medical school, but who can't show her face to the world because to do so might dishonour her family and lead to a fatal consequence?

And is there nary a tear to be shed or a word to be spared for that poor child in Phoenix whose family has tossed her aside like so much trash for something that was not her fault?

Meanwhile, on Rose's Place, which bills itself as a blogsite for Canadian feminists, recent discussions centred around Sonia Sotomayor, Obama's birth certificate and U. S. health reform, with Toronto Star columnist Antonia Zerbisias complaining about Muslim-bashing regarding the alleged honour killings.

It is not Muslim-bashing to acknowledge that a crime has allegedly happened in a Muslim family. It is not Sikh-bashing to say that some of the alleged honour killings in Canada in the past few years happened in Sikh families. Shall we just ignore the United Nations Population Fund's estimate that 5,000 <u>women</u> a year die in honour killings, to avoid casting aspersions on any culture? Shall we pretend it's not happening in Egypt, Lebanon, Turkey, Morocco and Pakistan, to name just a few countries?

It is so politically incorrect to say that someone who belongs to another culture is doing something wrong, that one must remain silent for fear of muddying the ideals of multiculturalism. Ironically, there seems to be no problem with denouncing Christian culture for decorating trees at Christmas time, or displaying crosses on Remembrance Day, but when members of another culture engage in actual evildoing, we're supposed to pretend it all just falls under the rubric of domestic violence. Since domestic violence occurs in all cultures, honour killings can be conveniently lumped into that category and we can keep pretending it's not particular to certain cultures.

Nobody's even mentioned the fact that Mohammad Shafia was living in this country with two wives, one of whom died with the girls. Let's just pass completely over that form of oppression visited on these two <u>women</u>, for fear of offending someone. With all this walking about on politically correct eggshells, it's no wonder silence wins out among the queens of beautiful morals.

As Judy Rebick says in another June blog posting: "The revolution will be tweeted or whatever." Yeah, Judy. Whatever.

nlakritz@theherald, Canwest, Com

Load-Date: July 29, 2009



Friedman: Hopeful green shoots are sprouting in Palestine

The Salt Lake Tribune August 7, 2009 Friday

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Section: OPINION; Columnists

Length: 841 words

Byline: Thomas L. Friedman

Body

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Friedman: Hopeful green shoots are sprouting in Palestine

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Load-Date: August 13, 2009



SEX IN THE CITY

The Evening Standard (London)
July 7, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 751 words

Body

Q: SHOULD I TAKE MY NEW GIRLFRIEND TO SEE BRUNO?

NIRPAL DHALIWAL SAYS...

If you're trying to avoid having sex with your girlfriend, you can bank on a movie date with Brüno to ensure that you're off the hook for at least one night, possibly even a couple of weeks. I can't imagine anyone getting laid after seeing this film. At best, you will laugh yourself sick and your girlfriend will realise that you are in a state of subnormal development as you're both exposed to male toilet humour at its juvenile worst. Or, you will both be bored and irritated at the incessant spectacle of willies, dildoes, homophobia and human stupidity that fills this movie and then go home feeling a little depressed. Either way, she won't want sex. And if you do, you should think long and hard about what you really need in a partner < a penis, maybe?

This is the movie equivalent of over-excited boys dry-humping each other, the kind of tawdry jock humour that was funny for several minutes when you were 15 years old. It's not the sort of movie that'll have you both staring into each other's eyes in intense and engaged conversation over a glass of red wine afterwards. If you both like getting stoned, then wait until it's out on DVD and then you can have a night in, getting high and giggling like twits together as you plough through a tube of Pringles. That's about the only value this film can have as entertainment for couples. Your girlfriend might make an effort to enjoy it, forcing laughter in order to show you that she's a post-feminist geezer-bird who can have fun with the lads. In which case, you'll probably go right off her. **Women** who make a point of sharing blokey jokes are about as sexy as **women** who like football in enterties our condition, not pander to it. But there is one invaluable reason for taking a girlfriend to see it. Men are generally useless at dumping **women**, stringing them along while lacking the courage to let them go. Take her to see Brüno and laugh dementedly at the crassest moments and then talk endlessly about how it's the best film ever, while mimicking the character at every opportunity it that's a sure-fire way to make her decide to cut you loose for good.

--

ESTHER WALKER SAYS..

SEX IN THE CITY

You're right to think twice about whether to take your brand new girlfriend to see a film as controversial as Brüno. It goes out of its way to make you squirm: Brüno staggers \(\circ\) leather-clad and chained to his gay lover \(\circ\) into an anti-gay demonstration; he tries to seduce Republican presidential candidate Ron Paul and he starts snogging a man while in the ring at a cage fight. There's a horrifying 30-second close-up shot of a huge, waggling penis and explicit sex scenes \(\circ\) the crucial parts only barely covered up by black squares \(\circ\) at a swingers' party.

It's not that your girlfriend will be mortally offended, it's just that unless you like that omigod-l-can't-look style of satire, it's pretty stressful to watch Brüno miming extravagant oral sex in front of a medium and confusing "hummous" with "*Hamas*" at Israel/Palestine peace talks. But the actual watching of the film isn't the issue < if she went to see it with friends she might well think it was a hoot < the point is how she will interpret your choice.

So just ask her if she wants to see it, right? Wrong! In new relationships, girls would rather die than appear prohibitive, demanding or a nag. Later she won't care but at the start she'll want to seem relaxed.

When you suggest Brüno, she won't say she'd rather eat wasps than see it, or that she thinks Sacha Baron Cohen is about as funny as cancer or that she walked out of Borat. She will sweetly swear blind that Brüno is an excellent choice and that she can't wait to see it. But as you buy your popcorn and settle down in your seats, I promise she will be thinking, "I can't believe he's making me see this stupid film!" Then she'll start to wonder what you're "trying to say" to her by picking out this film for you both to watch. Then she'll worry you're not compatible and by the end of the film she'll have been practising her "Listen..." speech in her head for the last half an hour. Later on down the line you can thrash out, honestly, the kind of films you can watch together but at the start, it's best to play it safe. Save Brüno to see with your mates and take her to Public Enemies instead; it has guns and gangsters for you and Johnny Depp in a vest for her. Bliss.

Load-Date: July 7, 2009



Green shoots in Palestine

The International Herald Tribune August 6, 2009 Thursday

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Section: Pg. 7

Length: 870 words

Byline: Thomas L. Friedman

Dateline: Ramallah, West Bank

Body

ABSTRACT

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FULL TEXT

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Green shoots in Palestine

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Load-Date: August 5, 2009



Israel's barrier to progress

Guardian.com

July 22, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 891 words

Body

ABSTRACT

Seth Freedman: Far from protecting anyone, the controversial separation wall can only give a false sense of security

FULL TEXT

In many parts of the West Bank, Israel's much-vaunted separation wall is conspicuous by its absence; Ha'aretz <u>reports</u> that only around 60% of the barrier has been completed will come as no surprise to those who spend time in the area around the project's proposed route.

In places such as the <u>South Hebron Hills</u>, the only obstacles separating thousands of Palestinians from Israeli communities are sporadic flying checkpoints thrown up by the army, or flimsy, unguarded wire fences ostensibly keeping the terrorist hordes at bay. If mainstream Israeli thinking is to be believed, the "security" wall is vital for the safety of Israel's citizens, the implication being that scores of would-be bombers are daily banging their heads against a concrete wall as they try desperately to reach Israeli cities to unleash carnage on unsuspecting <u>women</u> and children.

However, the facts simply don't add up. If 40% percent of a mosquito net was removed, the remaining mesh would have no protective effect, since the insects would simply sail through the hole and get on with their blood-sucking task unimpeded. Yet, according to the Israeli authorities, that is not the case when it comes to the separation wall, and millions of Israelis are all too eager to swallow the lie in order to achieve a deceptive peace of mind.

At the end of a trip to *Nablus*, I was shown first-hand how simple it is to circumnavigate the wall and checkpoints and enter Israel entirely at will, and without encountering a single soldier or slab of wall. If it was that easy for me by day, it would be even easier for a militant by cover of darkness, and the same is true throughout the porous perimeter across the West Bank.

Travelling unchecked to and from Bethlehem, Bet Jalla and other towns to the immediate south of Jerusalem is child's play for determined tourist or terrorist alike, yet statistics have shown a marked decrease in suicide attacks suggesting that something other than the non-existent barrier is preventing such atrocities taking place around the clock.

Israel 's barrier to progress

Some believe that <u>Hamas</u> are responsible for the reduction in bombings, having never rescinded their declared <u>hudna</u> on suicide attacks shortly after coming to power. Others believe that the Palestinians realised that suicide bombings were a failed policy, in that they simply gave Israel justification for further land-grabs and heightened security measures in response to the attacks.

One activist to whom I spoke commented that the <u>Shin Bet's network of informants</u> was in fact the most effective tool Israel had in preventing suicide bombings, noting that the massive unemployment rate in the West Bank drove more and more Palestinians to desperate measures, such as collaboration, in order to supplement their meagre incomes.

Whether the near-cessation of suicide attacks is down to a policy of ceasefire or an increase in informers tipping off the Israeli authorities, the wall itself has very little effect on the statistics. If anything, it increases the likelihood of renewed violence against Israeli citizens in the long term, thanks to its crippling impact on life for Palestinians affected by the route of the barrier, and their belief that their situation is unlikely to ever improve.

In the meantime, many <u>settlers are up in arms</u> about the route of the wall, claiming that they have been "abandoned" behind the barrier by the Israeli authorities. They claim that they have no protection from attacks at the hands of Palestinian militants, despite the army maintaining a presence wherever Jewish settlers set up shop in the West Bank.

The defence minister Ehud Barak is "determined to complete the security fence, despite the delays", according to reports, although legal challenges and diplomatic pressure appear to have put paid to any major construction efforts for the foreseeable future. Settlements, as well as the infrastructure supporting their existence, are too <u>hot a topic</u> at present for the Israeli authorities simply to take unilateral decisions about where to place the wall or how to fence in those communities currently bereft of barricades.

Instead of burying their heads in the sand and pretending that all is well in terms of Israelis' security as a result of an incomplete wall, Israel's leaders ought to be worried about the consequences of continuing their <u>policies</u> of intransigence towards the Palestinians. The cyclical nature of the conflict means that the relative calm of today is by no means guaranteed to continue into the future.

Stifling the Palestinians of the means to provide for their families, whether by denying them freedom of movement or by brazenly taking their land from under their noses, ensures another generation will grow up resenting Israel and eventually resorting to violence as a way of expressing their rage.

Despite such tactics not being in the best interests of the Palestinian people, the fact that they have seen no progress even when they put down their arms means that the dam will inevitably burst again soon. When it does, the inefficacy of Israel's half-built wall will be plain for all to see, as too will the half-hearted measures at rapprochement which have hampered peace efforts for years and decades gone by.

Load-Date: July 22, 2009



A word from Obama can raise Arab disquiet

The Dominion Post (Wellington, New Zealand)

July 3, 2009 Friday

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Section: FEATURES; GENERAL; Pg. 5

Length: 856 words

Byline: VENTER Nick

Body

Barack Obama's overtures to Arab and Iranian leaders have caused alarm in Israel. But a visiting Israeli commentator says the alarm is not confined to his country. Nick Venter reports.

EHUD YA'ARI has been described by The New York Times as "one of Israel's best Middle East watchers". A commentator for Israel's Channel 2 and the author of eight books, he has the contacts from 40 years of covering Arab affairs.

Those contacts, he says, alerted him to Arab disquiet about Barack Obama's offer of a "new beginning" in a speech at Cairo University last month. "My email box exploded from all over the Arab world: liberal, enlightened Arabs screaming against the contents of the speech".

The main cause of outrage: the United States president's endorsement of the wearing of the hijab (traditional head covering) by Muslim <u>women</u>, an endorsement that was given just days after four <u>women</u> were elected to the Kuwaiti parliament for the first time, two of whom are having their victories challenged because they refuse to wear headgear.

But Ya'ari says there is also alarm in the Middle East about the president's offer to talk "without preconditions" to the Iranian regime, that has since been "delegitimised" by its own people. "Obama is trying something that (former president George W) Bush didn't want to try, which is engagement. He seems to have a huge confidence in the power of words and argument - 'just talk to the guys, they may see reason'. I'm afraid, and almost every Arab I know is afraid, that it will prove to be just a bit different.

"Engaging the Syrians does not necessarily mean that the Syrians are dropping their support of terrorist movements such as Hizbollah or *Hamas* or giving up their alliance with Iran. It may be that he is engaging with (President Mahmoud) Ahmadinejad, but the Iranians will not be coming forward offering concessions on the nuclear issue. What then? What next?

"There is quite a degree of cynicism in the Middle East about the reliance of Obama on his own personal charisma, skill (and) power of conviction. People are afraid that he will try too hard with the Iranians, that he will go nowhere and that he will end up strengthening Iran's hands without reaping any concessions."

Ya'ari says Iran has undergone a regime change, but its significance has been disguised by the brutal crackdown on protesters. "The revolutionary guard with their poster boy Ahmadinejad have taken power away from the clerical

A word from Obama can raise Arab disquiet

establishment. The old guard of the Islamic revolution, the people who were the disciples, aides and assistants of (1979 revolution leader Ayotallah Ruhollah) Khomeini have lost power to the new generation of the revolutionary guards who now pick the cabinet and the Parliament."

The regime, he says, is keener than its predecessor to assert Iranian power. "Iran wants to call the shots in the Persian Gulf. They have aspirations to become sort of a regional empire recognised by the United States and Europe as the leading power in the region with whom you do business. That means sidelining the Arabs, forget about the Israelis.

"If you go through the Middle Eastern press every day you will see that this is the main issue. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is there. It is bothering everybody. Certainly it is bothering us, but it is not something which is threatening the others. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is contained, whereas, when the Iranians make a claim, for example, for the kingdom of Bahrain (as Iranian officials did earlier this year), this is something that rattles everybody."

Further heightening regional uncertainty is the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq's cities and the proposed withdrawal of all US troops from Iraq by 2012.

"The Americans have already accepted, under Bush, cohabitation with the Iranians in Iraq. 'We will tolerate your interference and influence and you will tolerate ours.' But now with the Americans withdrawing, the Iranians are there.

"If the Iranians can combine the oil resources of Iran and Iraq by having a client government in Baghdad, they make the market, not Saudi Arabia."

Closer to home, Ya'ari is not optimistic that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will be resolved by the creation of separate Jewish and Palestinian states, the so- called two-state solution. "The Palestinians have reached a silent consensus that they are not really interested in a two- state solution. You have the Palestinians retaining the demand for statehood as a battle cry and diplomatic slogan but not as a real political agenda and platform.

"What they want is to retain the territorial integrity of the land and a regime that is based on some sort of loose confederacy without boundaries. Instead of a two-state solution, they want a resolution of the conflicts through two governments, one country."

* Ehud Ya'ari was brought to New Zealand by the Israel New Zealand Innovative Connections trust.

CAPTION:

Region of dialogue: When Barack Obama spoke in Egypt, "my email box exploded from all over the Arab world: liberal, enlightened Arabs screaming against the contents of the speech", says Ehud Ya'ari.

Picture: REUTERS

Load-Date: July 8, 2009



<u>Jordan: 'Between Islamists and tribal alliances, campus politics at a standstill'</u>

Right Vision News

December 14, 2009 Monday

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Length: 993 words

Dateline: Pakistan

Body

Pakistan, Dec. 14 -- AMMAN - Students participating in this week's University of Jordan (UJ) student union elections say they will support either Islamists or a coalition of pro-establishment tribal-affiliated candidates. The annual polls, set to take place on Thursday at UJ's main campus in Amman and Saturday in the university's Agaba branch, will mark the second time students directly elect all of their representatives since 2001. The outgoing council was dominated by those running on a tribal platform, but an Islamist coalition won internal elections for council president and the executive commission. The electoral outlook for this year is not much different from 2008, according to participants, with many students expressing apathy towards the process and a dislike for "tribal and religious prejudices" on campus. The elections coincide with a nationwide dialogue over political reform, following the Lower House's dissolution in late November and last week's appointment of Samir Rifai as prime minister. Succeeding Nader Dahabi's two-year-old government, Rifai's Cabinet is expected to come up with a new elections law ahead of upcoming parliamentary polls and implement the decentralisation plan. With the Kingdom's political landscape uncertain, according to analysts, coalitions at the 40,000 student-university, widely viewed as a "microcosm" of the Kingdom, have remained the same. In order to win, they say independent candidates must depend on the support of the Islamists or the "National Current", a group representing most key tribes. Tribalists are running for all 104 union seats at the main UJ campus in the capital and its Aqaba branch. The group said they are now "more organised" and are being logistically supported by the recently formed National Current Party. Its leaders emphasised their commitment to government policies regarding the higher education sector and other political issues of interest to young people."We look at everything from a point of view in line with the vision of our Hashemite leadership," said Sultan Otein, a spokesperson of the tribal coalition, claiming that the state "prefers" the group because they can settle any disputes emerging between tribes on campus. Columnists, student activists and civil society organisations have denounced tribal-based violence occurring on campuses across the country over the past few years, blaming the existing Elections Law for discouraging political parties and promoting tribal differences. Among the issues on the National Current's agenda is the UJ disciplinary code, which they aim to amend "to give more freedom for student activism, provided it is in accordance with our national interests", Otein said. He added that the group is against a plan to install security cameras in classrooms. "We are for issues of student interest; we are not interested in marking the day when [Hamas movement founder] Ahmad Yassin was assassinated, for example," he told to media, criticising events organised by the Islamists.Islamist activists, however, said they consider politicised events such as commemoration of the 1948 Palestinian Nakba (catastrophe), as part of "supporting our nation's issues and causes". Backed by the country's largest opposition party, the Islamic Action Front, the Islamist camp is maintaining last year's policy: "participation without excluding others". Noting that they do not want to dominate the council, the Islamists refused to declare the number of their candidates, expressing fears of "official interference" in the polls. The university doesn't allow any side to interfere with the election, stressed UJ Vice President Abdel Karim Qudah, who heads the election committee. Having

Jordan: 'Between Islamists and tribal alliances, campus politics at a standstill'

boycotted elections for seven years in protest against a policy to appoint half the council members, Islamist students voiced their satisfaction with UJ President Khalid Karaki's policy of fully elected councils."In the past, we used to feel a lack of freedom, but things have changed," Islamists' spokesperson Abdullah Kilani told to media as the campaign officially kicked off on campus late last week. The Islamist group offers several services for students to build support on campus, such as photocopying material and guidance for freshmen. One of the Islamists' future goals is separating males and females inside lecture halls, and the movement is looking to work with the university administration to change the one-person, one-vote system next year. While many student voters are divided between the two camps, a wide spectrum of students, especially females, find the elections "useless"."I won't vote this year because they [candidates] do nothing after winning," noted fourth-year student Sura Arabiyat, who studies accounting. "They just fight," she added. Her colleague Shireen Momani voiced similar sentiments. "I don't even know who's running," she remarked. Momani and Arabiyat are a part of a growing segment of students who disapprove of the atmosphere on campus, according to Mohammad Masri, a researcher at the UJ Centre for Strategic Studies."These students usually attend lectures and then just go home," he said, explaining that they are not interested in existing political coalitions or extracurricular activities on campus. In the past, the pro-government groups and political parties used to compete through clubs offering extracurricular activities and promoting causes of interest to students, Masri said. However, a ban on party activity in universities has led to a decline in campus politics, he said."Now independent candidates cannot win because there are no means to promote your ideas except through alliance with the tribes or Islamists," Masri said, pointing out that student activists are awaiting changes in the country's politics before determining their course.

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Load-Date: December 13, 2009



Powerful Islamic movement sees leadership struggle

Daily News Egypt
November 1, 2009 Sunday

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Length: 953 words

Body

CAIRO: The Middle East's most powerful Islamic political movement is undergoing a leadership struggle as young, more moderate activists try to push the Muslim Brotherhood to soften its fundamentalist ideology and become a more democratic force.

The direction the Brotherhood takes could have wider implications. The group is the strongest opposition movement in Egypt, though officially banned. Moreover, it is highly influential beyond Egypt's borders as the father of Islamic movements across the Arab and Muslim world - including the Palestinian militant group *Hamas*.

Egypt's autocratic government has cracked down fiercely on the group, arresting many of its members and branding it a front for extremists. The United States has been reluctant to open up channels to the Brotherhood in deference to the government, a close Mideast ally.

Still, some reform advocates in the region and the West believe there is little chance for real democracy unless popular Islamic groups like the Brotherhood somehow participate in the process.

But the government crackdown only makes reform within the Brotherhood less likely, many observers say.

"The Egyptian state is dictating the kind of Brotherhood we are getting today," said Joshua Stacher, a political scientist at Kent State University who studies the movement. "The policies of repression and arrests make it very difficult" to move toward a more moderate Brotherhood because they strengthen conservatives in the group.

"They (hard-liners) say, What has running for elections and democratization done for us? It just leads to more arrests," Stacher said.

Young Brotherhood moderates say it needs to become a more open and modern political movement if it is going to survive. Some want to imitate Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party, an Islamic-rooted party that has embraced mainstream politics. The young critics contend the Brotherhood's old guard is holding it back.

"Those in charge aren't connected with today's world," Abdelmonem Mahmoud, a journalist and blogger, told The Associated Press.

Powerful Islamic movement sees leadership struggle

Mahmoud, once a prominent spokesman for Brotherhood youth who was jailed several times for being part of the movement, said he froze his membership a year ago because of repeated intellectual clashes with the conservative leadership.

Several others have done the same. Mahmoud said that while it wasn't an organized exodus, if the leaders didn't start to pay attention to the younger generation, the Brotherhood would begin to lose many of its "open-minded" members.

"Their thirst for change is not sated by the Brotherhood, so they look for it elsewhere," he said.

But conservatives are digging in. While some urban youth push to liberalize the Brotherhood, its large rural membership has become more hard-line in recent years.

Two weeks ago in an unprecedented move, the Brotherhood's 81-year-old leader, Supreme Guide Mohamed Mahdi Akef, stepped aside from his post. His deputy Mohamed Habib, who is considered more hard-line, announced Akef had handed all his authority to him, a claim Akef later denied in Egyptian newspapers.

The confusion over Akef's position has betrayed the divisions within the leadership in an organization that prides itself on having a divine purpose and unified front.

Khalil Al-Anani, an Egyptian expert in Islamist groups, said Akef felt he could no longer deal with conservatives' demands. "The pressure became too much," Al-Anani said.

The Muslim Brotherhood advocates an Islamic state in Egypt, implementing Shariah law. Moderates in the Brotherhood feel that rather than insisting on an Islamic state, it should be a party for promoting Islamic values in a democratic system.

The Brotherhood has long seen internal debates over how much it should operate within the system. Founded in 1928, the group had an armed wing that carried out bombings and other attacks until the 1970s, when it officially renounced violence, though it remains outlawed. The Brotherhood has gained popularity through a network of schools, clinics and other social services known for being far more efficient than their state-run equivalents.

In recent years, the Brotherhood entered politics more forcefully than ever before. Its candidates - running as independents - won 20 percent of parliament's 454 seats in 2005, making it the largest opposition bloc.

For the past month, Brotherhood moderates have been trying to get a figure seen as one of their own, Essam El-Erian, into the group's top body, the Guidance Bureau, after a position opened up. Conservatives in the Bureau have resisted.

El-Erian, a 55-year old doctor and Brotherhood member for almost 35 years, is widely known as a moderate voice in the organization. He has been reported to accept the principle of <u>women</u> and Christians running for the presidency - counter to the group's official line - to agree with greater cooperation with the West, and has been reported to say that it's time to accept Israel as a reality with a two-state solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"This is a good time to exert pressure on the old guard to change the group from a religious movement to a civil one," said one young Brother who administers a Facebook group with other moderates. He spoke on condition of anonymity in order not to jeopardize his position in the organization.

But the broader problem, experts say, is that even if the Brotherhood does reform, the Egyptian government is unlikely to allow it into politics. The government has stepped up its repression ahead of parliament elections scheduled for next year.

"It is in the government's advantage to keep the Brotherhood ultra-conservative," said Al-Anani. "The more democratic the group gets, the more popular it will become in the country."

Load-Date: November 2, 2009



Politics is dirty and difficult. And a noble calling...

The Independent (London)
August 22, 2009 Saturday
First Edition

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Section: COMMENT; Pg. 31

Length: 848 words

Byline: Christina Patterson

Body

If Alan Duncan and his ilk think it's tough to be a politician, they might give some thought to Morgan Tsvangirai. Put the 51-year-old son of a wing commander, who has made millions out of oil, in a room with the 57-year-old son of a bricklayer, who spent 10 years working in a mine, and he might discover that some politicians have a little more to worry about than the fact that they're condemned to live on "rations".

Tsvanigirai, who won last year's presidential election in Zimbabwe, and has survived a brutal beating by police and multiple attacks on his life, and been arrested and tried for treason, and whose wife and grandson were both killed last year in separate car crashes, now shares power with the man who stole the election, and who tried to imprison and kill him. He shares power not because he thought it would be a lovely idea to kiss and make up and sing "Kum Bah Yah", but because the sitting tenant, a brutal dictator who has run a murderous regime for nearly 30 years, refused to budge. And what do you do? Watch the country you love sink further into violence and mass collapse, or do you take the tiny crumbs of so-called power that are tossed to you, and do your best?

Tsvangirai made his Hobson's choice and as a result more Zimbabweans are able to feed their children, and more are not just working, but getting paid. The price is hard to imagine, but Tsvangirai does not have the air of someone who is crushed. Meetings with Mugabe were, he said this week, not "acrimonious", but cordial. "Over a long period of time," he added, "you start to develop some chemistry."

Chemistry?! This isn't When Harry Met Sally! But even forced marriages, it seems, have their moments of levity. Just think of that slapstick duo, the Chuckle Brothers, made up of a bullying bigot who founded a church, because the church he belonged to didn't hate Catholics enough, who in the name of God preached paranoia and hatred and inspired countless acts of paramilitary violence, and a former Chief of Staff of a different paramilitary organisation that specialised in blowing up mothers and babies in shopping centres and teenagers in pubs. Not, you'd have thought, a marriage of true minds, but the chemistry, it turned out, was so intense that it made other people in the Northern Irish Assembly feel like intruders on a passionate love affair.

The truth, it turned out, was that they had masses in common, including that stalwart of a successful relationship, a GSOH. Call it Stockholm syndrome, call it shared humanity, but put two people in a room together and they'll tend to discover that the other person is (even if they're a murdering monster) human.

Politics is dirty and difficult. And a noble calling...

Stick the hideous Israeli hawks in a room with the intransigent ideologues of <u>Hamas</u>, and see how they get on. They both, in theory, disapprove of murdering civilians, but do it anyway. They both deny the right of the other to exist. They would both rather be right than have peace. Not sure about the GSOH, but it's not a bad start.

Politics, as poor Obama has discovered in his dealings with the gun-toting nutters of the American right, is about compromise - sometimes horrifically botched compromise. How many young men do you send to die to safeguard a regime with a corrupt puppet president who has been buying votes and selling <u>women</u>'s bodies in order to hold on to power? Two? 200? 2,000? And if the alternative is an even more misogynistic medieval fieldom run by people you funded to crush the Soviets?

And when the economy of your country (and much of the world) has collapsed, who do you listen to? The man who, as Chancellor, got us into the mess? The not-at-all-pro-Government governor of the Bank of England who has endorsed, and suggested extending, some of his reflationary policies? The prime-minister-in-waiting who believes they're a disaster and would opt for a Thatcherite tight purse? Or do you just hand it all over to Joanna Lumley?

This is tricky, tricky stuff. I'm very glad I don't have to make these decisions, or share my office with people who've tried to kill me (though all that screaming over the Ashes nearly did). I'm very glad I don't have to have my paltry purchases pored over by sneering journalists, or my cleavage subjected to national scrutiny, or my haircut, outfits, love life and speeches in the Commons weighed in the balance, and found wanting. But someone has to do it. Someone has to make these choices, and present an electorate that wants peace, prosperity, security and an easy life at a bargain basement price with the difficult, unpalatable options on offer.

In recent months, our politicians have let us down. They've let us down with petty fiddles and petty moaning and a petty (but almost understandable) obsession with PR. But politics, in spite of its compromises, remains a necessary, and even a noble, calling, and one that needs the best minds it can get. Let's by all means reform a tired (and currently emotional) Parliament, but let's remember that politics is the art of the possible. The impossible, as we all know, takes a bit longer.

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Load-Date: August 21, 2009



Moderation - now there's some wishful thinking

The Jerusalem Post

December 2, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 15

Length: 939 words

Byline: SETH FRANTZMAN

Highlight: The Western idea that exposure to its democratic values will improve the Muslim world is a myth, evidenced by the numerous Islamists produced by the West. TERRA INCOGNITA. The writer is a researcher at the

Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Body

One of the most galling and recurring ironies of democracy appears to be that it provides a platform, through free speech, for the very thing that seeks to undermine it. This point has been driven home with the recent revelations that the Iranian-controlled Alavi Foundation gave money to US colleges - the same colleges which proclaim "free speech" when they invite the likes of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to speak on campus.

The first way in which Islamism uses democracy is through the ballot box. This was one of the unintended consequences of the Bush administration's program of spreading democracy in the Arab world. One of the most egregious examples of this was the *Hamas* election victory in the Palestinian elections of January 2006. In elections in 2005, the Muslim Brotherhood obtained around 20 percent of the seats in Egypt's parliament (88 of 454). Turkey has also served as a test case for Islamist democracy. Since Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Justice and Development (AK) party won 34% of the vote in the 2002 elections, the country has been governed by its brand of Islamism.

The rise of Islamist parties and their use of the democratic system has three main causes. First, the Islamist parties position themselves as parties of "change," representing a supposed reform from years of economic stagnation and political corruption. Second, the parties capitalize on disillusionment with nationalism and the current return to religiosity. Lastly, the Islamist parties are aided and abetted by the West, whose democratic values are twisted by them to great success. The West tends to view electoral triumphs by Islamists as a form of "moderating" them.

Thus in the wake of the Brotherhood's gains in 2005 The Washington Post declared that "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood may be a model for Islam's political adaptation." Numerous stories by The New York Times and others have tried to portray the AK in Turkey as a party that supports individual rights. Thus its fight for the "right" of women to wear head scarves at university is a positive struggle, rather than a negative intrusion of religion into the public space. Women in Turkey have even come to wear the head scarf out of "protest." In this way Islamism passes itself off as defending individual rights even as it seeks a monolithic imposition of piety on the masses. The West's commentators are seduced by these appeals to individual rights and protests against the national semi-secular ethos.

THE MYTH of moderation and the idea that exposure to the West's democratic values will necessarily improve the Muslim world is enticing. But it is a myth that is evidenced by the numerous Islamists who have been produced by the West, rather than existing in spite of the West's values.

Moderation - now there's some wishful thinking

Consider the fountainhead of Islamism, Sayyid Qutb. Born in Egypt in 1906, he was educated at a British school. He joined the Ministry of Education when Egypt was still under the hand of British semi-rule in the 1930s. In 1948 he received a scholarship to study education at the University of North Colorado in the US. Already gravitating towards Islamic piety, the US helped engender greater extremism and he published his first Islamist text in 1949, while in the land of democracy. He travelled widely in the US and came to loath "the American girl" and her "seductive capacity" which "lies in the round breasts, full buttocks... she shows all." He was disgusted by jazz music which was "created by Negroes... to whet their sexual desires."

Qutb's increasing hatred for the US, and hypocritical lurid interest in American <u>women</u>, mirrors the transformation of Major Nidal Malik Hasan who carried out the recent Fort Hood massacre. Hasan was a US-born Muslim-Palestinian whose entire success in life was primarily due to the US Army which paid for his schooling and promoted him despite his dismal record. Hasan played on the fact that FBI and army investigators feared being perceived as discriminating against him in order to proselytize fellow soldiers, spread hatred and contact a radical imam in Yemen. Like Qutb he had a love-hate relationship with <u>women</u>, attending the Starz strip club next to the very army base where he gunned down American servicemen.

The imam Hasan contacted was Anwar al-Awlaki, an American of Yemeni descent who was born in New Mexico in 1971. Awlaki studied in three major American universities, almost obtaining a doctorate from George Washington University. Portrayed as a "moderate" after 9/11, despite his contact with the hijackers, he moved to Yemen in 2004 to fight a jihad against the US and its allies.

Hasan and Qutb are just the tip of the iceberg. Khalid Sheikh Muhammad, the architect of 9/11, attended college in the US. Many of the colleagues of the Ayatollah Khomeini, father of the Iranian Islamic revolution, studied in the US and Europe on scholarships from the shah's regime. David Headley (Daood Gilani), who plotted terror against the Danish newspaper that printed cartoons of Muhammad, is a US citizen. Adam Ghadan (Adam Pearlman, Azzam the American) is the son of Northern California hippies who now works as a spokesman for al-Qaida.

Going forward in the war on terror one of the greatest problems will be the way in which the West's values of openness, secularism and free speech will be manipulated and even used to inspire terror and jihad. There doesn't seem to be a good way to prevent this problem. However, as Joshua Muravchik has shown in his recent book The Next Founders: Voices of Democracy in the Middle East, the values of the West also inspire a positive form of democracy that doesn't simply lead to the "road to hell" of Islamism.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



<u>Striding forward; Artists forced to work underground now have a prize to publicise their work internationally.</u>

The Sunday Times (London)

November 22, 2009

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Section: CULTURE; FEATURES; Pg. 24

Length: 955 words **Byline:** Jasper Rees

Body

The events of the current decade have concentrated the minds of writers, directors and artists wonderfully. There have been sundry works of art about the West's engagement with Islam. Why, Osama Bin Laden has even had a hilarious cameo on the cartoon series Family Guy. Very little attention has been paid to work created by Muslims.

Last year, however, an arts prize was set up by Richard Chandler, a billionaire New Zealand-born philanthropist based in Singapore, to shine a light into those parts of the world where creative freedom is not a given. The Freedom to Create prize is open to artists in all fields and is awarded to "an individual or group that uses its creative work to promote social justice, build the foundations for an open society omisll edor its rotice, ons ciety and inspire the human spirit". There are more than 1,000 entrants from Africa, Asia, Latin America, eastern Europe and the Middle East. The winner of the main prize (there is also a youth prize and a prize for imprisoned artists) will be announced on Wednesday. The prize is worth \$50,000, but they give half to an organisation that will advance the cause their work highlights. This year's judges include the conductor Daniel Barenboim, Geoffrey Robertson QC, and last year's inaugural winner, the Zimbabwean dramatist Cont Mhlanga.

In a way, it doesn't matter who wins. The point is publicity, in particular for artists working in the Islamic trouble spots. Not that all entrants are struggling to express themselves. In 2006, a Kuwaiti doctor, Naif Al-Mutawa, launched a comic called The 99, featuring 99 superheroes, each based on a virtue expounded in the Koran. "Some of the more conservative places in the world weren't so happy to let The 99 in," he says. He is now negotiating to open a 99 theme park in Saudi Arabia, and is franchising a global cartoon show animated in Hollywood. "I told the writers, it's only when Jewish kids watch it and think the characters are Jewish, and Muslims think they're Muslims, that I'll consider myself successful."

It's all a far cry from Afghanistan, whose nominees include an animation entitled Suicide Bomber, and a bloody sculptural commentary on human rights called Attack on Afghanistan. Sheenkai Alam Stanikzai, meanwhile, has created an installation piece about the traditional suicide method of abused Afghan <u>women</u>: hurling themselves into wells. The work includes 40 photographs of girls, alongside the dates of their suicide. The practice has its roots in

Striding forward Artists forced to work underground now have a prize to publicise their work internationally.

pre-Islamic times, explains the artist: "I recognised the similarity between these ancient events and contemporary world events, so I decided to show my feelings about what is happening: more than 40 <u>women</u> are dying every day."

Stanikzai is by no means the only woman nominated. From Pakistan, Sheema Kermani entered a series of dance and theatre pieces about the veil, polygamy, sexual abuse and honour killings. For many years, dancing by <u>women</u> was banned in Pakistan, and Kermani was obliged to sign an affidavit every time she performed. "For long periods, it has been almost like a life underground," she says. "I feel religion should be a private matter. Most of my work exposes the cruelty and hypocrisy of fundamentalists and how they use religion to exploit the people, especially *women*."

From Palestine, the film-maker Larissa Sansour submitted A Space Exodus, a powerfully witty film about a *female* astronaut planting a Palestinian flag on the moon. Her aim, she says, is "to flip the power balance and put the habitual analyser - the westerner - in the role of the analysed". A nonbeliever of Christian descent, she explains that her freedom to create has been severely impeded by the Israeli authorities: "I have had warning shots fired over my head, been denied access to locations, threatened by soldiers, interrogated, intimidated, had several guns pointed at my forehead. Speaking your mind as a Palestinian means trouble." It's not just in Israel: a New York gallery where she is planning her first show has already asked her to retitle and/or modify certain pieces.

Also from Palestine comes DARG TeaM, a group of Gaza Strip rappers whose name stands for Da Arabian Revolutionary Guys. They've not yet performed outside Gaza City, where <u>Hamas</u> takes a dim view of western influences. "But we find our way through by adding our Arabic touch to it," says their manager, Fadi Srour, "and explaining that we are talking on behalf of the ones who can't speak loud enough while living under injustice. Our lyrics and attitude show Islam is a peaceful religion and how we care about fighting nonviolently for our cause."

The Palestine-Israel conflict has its most balanced coverage in a compilation of photographs and interviews with combatants on both sides by the Yemen-based Tunisian artist Karim Ben Khelifa. "The viewer has to detach himself from stereotypes," he says. "For the first time, they will be able to walk between enemy lines, look the fighters in the eye and hear each individual talking."

While the Freedom to Create prize aims to highlight the existence of this work, it's harder actually to see much of it, or for artists to take their work abroad. That is why the longer-term work done by one of the nominees may have even more heft. The Kurdish Sufiartist Adalet R Garmiany has created an installation piece about the chemical warfare waged on his compatriots by the Saddam regime. But he is also the founder of a group called ArtRole, which in 2007 brought four Iraqi artists to the UK. More exchanges have followed since. The aim, he explains, is "to overcome fear, building a bridge through direct debate, and dialogue beyond the political. Art and artists don't have barriers: they can move to any place".

Graphic

Special power: the Kuwaiti comic strip The 99 stars Muslim superheroes

Load-Date: November 23, 2009



Egypt scales back ties with Israel in another obstacle to US efforts on Mideast peace

Guelph Mercury (Ontario, Canada)

November 3, 2009 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: Pg. 01

Length: 982 words

Dateline: ARTICLE

Body

CAIRO, Egypt - A sharp deterioration in Egypt's relations with Israel is further complicating Washington's faltering efforts to move the Middle East peace process forward.

The U.S. has long relied on Egypt's key role as a mediator in the region, most crucially in trying to reconcile rival Palestinian factions. But those efforts are now stalled as U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton rushes to Cairo to meet Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on Wednesday - a clear sign of concern that Egyptian and Arab support for the Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts may be waning.

Clinton, who extended her Mideast trip by a day to come to Cairo, arrives at one of the lowest ebbs in three decades of Egyptian-Israeli peace. Over the past month, Egypt has been scaling back its already limited contacts with Israel in an apparent protest over Israel's refusal to halt Jewish settlement in the West Bank and east Jerusalem.

Egypt has tried to keep Israelis away from several international forums and censured an academic for meeting Israel's ambassador to Cairo. Egyptians have also bitterly blamed Israel for their culture minister's loss of the top post at the U.N. culture agency, UNESCO, and even for attempts by African countries to grab a bigger share of the Nile's waters.

"If generally they have been cool, now their ties seem to be frosty," said Samir Ghattas, head of the Cairo-based Maqdus Center for Strategic Studies.

Israel acknowledged the Egyptian frictions but tried to play them down, contending the hard line against the Jewish state comes more from the society than from Egypt's government.

Egypt was the first Arab country to make peace with Israel in 1979 and though ties have never been warm, it has played a critical role as Mideast peace mediator. The Egyptians helped end the Gaza war early this year. More recently, Egyptian and German mediators brokered a deal between Israel and <u>Hamas</u> to exchange 20 Palestinian <u>women</u> prisoners for the first video images of Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit since he was captured in a cross-border raid from Gaza in 2006.

The deterioration of relations poses another obstacle to the Obama administration's plan for Egypt and other Arab countries to forge a regional peace deal.

Egypt scales back ties with Israel in another obstacle to US efforts on Mideast peace

Other Arab countries - most of which refuse all contact with Israel - have rejected the U.S. call for small steps toward normalization with Israel that could create a better environment to restart Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

Palestinians are demanding a total settlement freeze before they will return to talks, suspended since late last year.

Clinton angered Arabs this week when she lauded Israel for what she called an unprecedented offer to curb Jewish settlement on lands Palestinians hope to incorporate in a future state. It was unusually strong praise for Israeli peace efforts without explicitly mentioning any positive acts by the Palestinians.

Arab governments interpreted her comments in Jerusalem as a tilting of U.S. policy toward Israel. On Monday in Morocco, Clinton issued what she called a clarification, saying her words in Jerusalem were meant as "positive reinforcement" for the Israelis. She said Israel's effort still fell far short of U.S. expectations, and strongly praised the Palestinians.

Her decision to extend her Mideast trip with a hastily arranged visit to Cairo, where she arrived late Tuesday, appeared linked to Egyptian concerns about signs of a recalibration of the U.S. approach to the peace process.

And there are other signs the process is not moving in the direction Washington would like.

Last week, Bahrain's lower house of parliament approved legislation penalizing all contact with Israel. Around the same time in Jordan - the only other Arab country to have signed a treaty with Israel - a coalition of opposition parties and trade unions demanded a "cancellation" of the 1994 peace agreement, saying it has only benefited Israel.

Egyptian officials are reluctant to speak publicly about the tensions with Israel. But behind closed doors, they express frustration at Israel's continued settlement.

That frustration was expressed two weeks ago when Egypt rescinded an invitation for Israeli doctors to attend a breast cancer awareness conference in Cairo sponsored in part by U.S.-based Susan G. Komen for the Cure. The U.S. foundation said it launched a diplomatic campaign to reverse the decision and the Israelis eventually were invited, but chose to stay away.

Last week, Egypt pressed other Arab countries to block a key meeting for the Mediterranean Union, which includes Arab states, the European Union and Israel, because controversial Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman planned to attend the Paris forum.

"Egypt's line, which other countries followed, was not to be associated with Israel," said Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Yigal Palmor. "They politicized the whole thing in a very negative manner."

Another setback came when Hala Mustafa, a liberal-minded member of Egypt's ruling party and editor of the quarterly journal Democracy, was censured for meeting with Israel's ambassador to Egypt.

Senior Israeli officials also are visiting Egypt less frequently these days.

And experts saw another sign of the heightened tensions in Mubarak's speech to his ruling party this week. He made little mention of the stalled peace process, a topic that usually tops his foreign policy statements.

Instead, he talked about water supplies. In recent weeks, Egyptian state-owned papers have accused Israel of inciting African countries, who control the Nile River's water, to work against Egypt. These countries have been demanding a new Nile water sharing that will reduce Egypt's quota.

Egyptian Culture Minister Farouk Hosny's failure to win the top job at UNESCO recently further soured relations. He blamed "a group of the world's Jews" for the loss and also criticized Israel. Israel did not comment on the criticism.

Load-Date: November 24, 2009



Clinton's push for Arab democracy overshadowed by Israel stance

Christian Science Monitor November 3, 2009, Tuesday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 6

Length: 1004 words

Byline: Hannah Armstrong Contributor to The Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: Marrakesh, Morocco

Body

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton met with more than 20 Arab foreign ministers Monday at a forum intended to promote democracy in the region, but her initiatives were overshadowed by a new road block in Middle East peace efforts.

Grilled by reporters at a Monday night press conference with Moroccan Foreign Minister Taieb Fassi-Fihri, Secretary Clinton held fast to her support this weekend for an Israeli proposal to restrain settlement growth in the West Bank, which she called "unprecedented."

But Palestinians, whose President Mahmoud Abbas Clinton met in Abu Dhabi on Saturday, are demanding a more comprehensive freeze in settlement activity as a precondition for reentering peace talks. Arab League President Amr Moussa expressed Arab leaders' deep disappointment over what they perceive as US backpedaling on earlier demands for a complete settlement freeze.

"The problem is the immunity given to Israel, a country outside the scope of international law. This kind of immunity is unprecedented," Mr. Moussa told the Monitor on Monday. "We have to stop treating Israel as a superstate over international treaties."

A Moroccan diplomat called this new road block in the Middle East peace process a "handicap" for talks on democratic reform at the two-day Forum for the Future, as it's known. The annual meeting, established by the Group of 8 (G-8) industrialized countries in 2004 to support inclusive dialogue between the West and the Islamic world, brings together foreign ministers from the G-8 and from the broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA).

Clinton lauds Morocco's example

Tuesday's talks in Marrakesh are expected to spotlight democratization initiatives in the BMENA region, with a focus on facilitating dialogue between governments and civil society. According to American officials, a lack of democracy in the Middle Eas and North Africa poses a major threat to global security and stability.

Clinton kicked off the day with opening remarks that held up Morocco as an example for positive reform in the region. She recalled a visit to the country 10 years earlier, when she met an illiterate father who had supported his daughter's aspirations of becoming a doctor. She also spoke of "devout <u>women</u>" who had gone on to become human rights advocates.

Clinton's push for Arab democracy overshadowed by Israel stance

"Examples like these remind us there (is) much in Morocco's experience that we can look to guide our efforts today," she said.

Michael Posner, assistant US secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, said on Monday that the Obama administration would use "principled engagement" to encourage regional governments to adopt democratic reforms - "both to provide security and at the same time to build democratic institutions that protect their own people." Posner said that change "occurs from within society" and is "very hard to impose from outside."

Hicham Houdaifa, a commentator with Moroccan magazine Le Journal that recently had its bank account frozen by Moroccan officials, says he was "disappointed" that Clinton did not address the issue of press freedom. In the lead-up to the forum in Morocco Reporters Without Borders sought to draw attention to a recent crackdown on the Kingdom's press, but was prevented from holding a press conference by Moroccan officials.

"What Hilary Clinton may not know is that we are a country of reforms, but we are doing little to implement them," says Mr. Houdaifa. "It was good to hear 'change comes from within," he said, adding that the "bad legacy" of the Bush administration's foreign policy had caused some Moroccan NGOs to refuse to accept American money.

Joseph Nye, dean of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government in Cambridge, Ma., says that the Obama administration shares Bush's commitment to democracy but is less "dogmatic" in its approach. "[Bush's] approach not only opened the administration to charges of hypocrisy, but led to mistrust that undercut American soft power."

Clinton headed to Cairo next

In Morocco on Tuesday, Clinton announced new aid programs designed to support development efforts in the Middle East. They included \$76 million to stimulate economic growth in Yemen, one of the region's poorest countries and a focus of increasing concern as a potential haven for militants including Al Qaeda. She also offered \$30 million for young Jordanians. In September, a Jordanian immigrant described by many back home as a troubled teen, was arrested by the FBI in Dallas and charged with attempting to bomb a Dallas skyscraper.

The initiatives were relatively modest, however, compared with the more than \$3 trillion in US grants that Israel has enjoyed since 1985, according to a Congressional Research Service report (pdf). Egypt, with its strong limits on political opposition and the press, is also a major US aid recipient, with Congress budgeting \$1.5 billion for the country in the 2008-09 fiscal year that ended last month.

US officials must tread cautiously in urging Arab allies like Morocco and Egypt to improve their human rights record, said Marina Ottaway, Middle East Program Director at the Carnegie Endowment For International Peace. Human rights transgressions on the one hand ought to be pointed out, she said, but "without necessarily condemning these countries, because realistically, we need their cooperation, particularly Egypt's, on Israel and on negotiations between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah."

State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley announced Monday night that Clinton would extend her Middle East tour, originally scheduled to end Tuesday, to meet with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on Wednesday in Cairo. Exactly five months before their planned visit, President Obama gave an historic speech to the Arab world in which he sought "a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world." He promised that "America will not turn our backs on the legitimate Palestinian aspiration for dignity, opportunity, and a state of their own."r Material from Reuters was used in this report.

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Load-Date: November 3, 2009



Weekend Australian

October 10, 2009 Saturday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 22

Length: 933 words **Byline:** John Lyons

Body

People on both sides are questioning whether the third intifada has started, writes John Lyons

BARACK Obama clinched the photo opportunity he wanted at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York two weeks ago, but in the Middle East a different reality is taking hold as people ask an uncomfortable question: is this the beginning of the third intifada?

On the Israeli and Palestinian sides that question was asked this week as clashes took place around Jerusalem.

Monday morning looked like a war zone. The newspapers were full of conflict, and an Israeli surveillance blimp hovered over the Old City as clashes continued.

Israel uses these blimps for major operations. They are a regular feature along the Gaza border, and one was used recently to fly along the route the Pope took in Israel.

On Monday, the blimp hovered over East Jerusalem while a police helicopter flew in circles. You could tell where the clashes were by where the helicopter was circling.

By Thursday, the comments of an Israeli official in The Jerusalem Post, talking about the possibility of ``several dead Palestinians", brought home the grimness of the situation.

The paper quoted the official: ``We are closely following the events and understand that many wounded or several dead Palestinians could trigger additional violence in the West Bank."

The two sides have opposite versions of what is happening.

Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat claimed Israel was ``lighting matches in the hopes of igniting a big fire" byallowing the Jews to visit the al-Agsa Mosque.

But Israel laid the blame for the clashes on figures such as the Islamic Movement's Sheik Raed Salah.

After rumours ran through Arab-dominated East Jerusalem that a ``Jewish takeover" of the Temple Mount was in the offing, Salah called on Arabs ``to shield the Aqsa Mosque with their bodies". He said he would ``pay any price" to defend the mosque, one of Islam's holy sites that is also sacred to Jews as the Temple Mount.

The right-wing Yisrael Beiteinu party moved to ban the Islamic Movement, but others argued it was better to have the organisation out in the open, where the Israeli intelligence agency Shin Bet could watch it.

One of Judaism's leading authorities, Rabbi Yosef Elyashiv, this week repeated his view that under Jewish law it was forbidden for Jews to ascend to the Temple Mount.

The second intifada began nine years ago. Israeli civilians were targeted by Palestinian suicide bombers in cafes, buses and shopping centres.

I asked the Palestinian who sold me a coffee in the Old City whether we could be witnessing the beginning of a third intifada. ``Of course," he said. ``They want to take Jewish people to our mosque. This is our fight. Stones are our weapon."

As the tensions escalated, the Israeli police decided to let only Muslims visit the al-Aqsa mosque -- and only men older than 50, and <u>women</u>. And as usual in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the two sides cannot even agree on language. While Jews insist on calling it the Temple Mount, Muslims only refer to it as al-Aqsa.

It was a visit to the site in 2000 by then Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon that sparked the second intifada. Our landlord remembers watching smoke from the Old City soon after Sharon's visit, and thinking that things were about to turn bad.

The property developer has taken his family to live by the beach for two reasons: "The Arabs and the ultra-orthodox Jews." He feels there are too many of both in Jerusalem.

He says that before the second intifada he employed many Palestinians, and when he would visit nearby Bethlehem he would be treated like a king. Someone would kill a goat, and a feast would be prepared in his honour because he had given so many jobs to the Palestinians.

After the second intifada began, he remembers feeling unwelcome in Bethlehem, and felt intimidated as a Jew. As he drove out, he vowed never to return. He has never been back, and now employs few Palestinians.

Recently he pointed to the promenade near our place and predicted that one day there would be fighting along it between Jews and Arabs.

This is the sort of gloom taking hold in Jerusalem. As far as I can see, the only optimistic people are foreigners.

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Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman spoke for many Israelis this week when he said he did not expect any peace agreement to be reached in the next few years and that anyone who did ``doesn't understand the situation and is spreading delusions".

In Lieberman's world, Jordan's King Abdullah is presumably spreading delusions. He told the newspaper Haaretz this week he had a message for the Israeli public: the status quo could not be maintained, and if the current impasse continued: ``We are sliding back into the darkness."

Meanwhile, the Palestinians continued to tear themselves apart in the wake of the Goldstone report into the Gaza war.

Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas is believed to have withdrawn support for taking a resolution endorsing the report to the UN Human Rights Council.

His rivals in <u>Hamas</u> accused him of treason, but in a bizarre twist -- apparently to try to get himself out of a political bind -- Abbas announced an inquiry into who had authorised the decision to withdraw support.

Is there a phantom running the Palestinian Authority?

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Load-Date: October 9, 2009



Weekend Australian
October 10, 2009 Saturday
2 - All-round First Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 22

Length: 932 words **Byline:** John Lyons

Body

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Load-Date: October 9, 2009



Comment & Debate: Obama isn't helping. At least the world argued with Bush: For all the global love-in, the new president has led rich nations to neglect principled action and row back from climate deals

The Guardian - Final Edition
October 16, 2009 Friday

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Section: GUARDIAN COMMENT AND DEBATE PAGES; Pg. 36

Length: 958 words **Byline:** Naomi Klein

Body

Of all the explanations for Barack Obama's Nobel peace prize, the one that rang truest came from Nicolas Sarkozy. "It sets the seal on America's return to the heart of all the world's peoples." In other words, this was Europe's way of saying to America, "We love you again", like those weird renewal-of-vows ceremonies couples have after a rough patch.

Now Europe and the US are officially reunited, it seems appropriate to consider whether this is necessarily a good thing. The Nobel committee, which awarded the prize for Obama's embrace of "multilateral diplomacy", is evidently convinced that US engagement on the world stage is a triumph for peace and justice. I'm not so sure. After nine months in office, Obama has a clear track record as a global player. Again and again, US negotiators have chosen not to strengthen international laws and protocols but to weaken them, often leading other rich countries in a race to the bottom.

Let's start where the stakes are highest: climate change. During the Bush years, European politicians distinguished themselves from the US by expressing their unshakable commitment to the Kyoto protocol. So while the US increased its carbon emissions by 20% from 1990 levels, European Union countries reduced theirs by 2%. Not stellar, but clearly a case where the EU's break-up with America carried tangible benefits for the planet.

Flash forward to the high-stakes climate negotiations that have just wrapped up in Bangkok. The talks were supposed to lead to a deal in Copenhagen this December that significantly strengthens Kyoto. Instead, the developed countries formed a bloc calling for Kyoto to be replaced. Where Kyoto set clear and binding targets for emission reductions, the US plan would have each country decide how much to cut, then submit its plans to international monitoring - with nothing but wishful thinking to ensure this all keeps the planet's temperature below catastrophic levels. And where Kyoto put the burden of responsibility squarely on the rich countries that created the climate crisis, the new plan treats all countries the same.

These kinds of weak proposals were not altogether surprising coming from the US; what was shocking was the sudden unity of the rich world around the plan - including many countries that had previously sung the praises of

Comment & Debate: Obama isn't helping. At least the world argued with Bush: For all the global love-in, the new president has led rich nations to neglect princi....

Kyoto. And there were more betrayals: the EU, which had indicated it would spend between \$19bn and \$35bn a year to help developing countries adapt to climate change, came to Bangkok with a much lower offer, one more in line with the US pledge of . . . nothing. Oxfam's Antonio Hill summed up the talks like this: "When the starting gun fired, it became a race to the bottom, with rich countries weakening existing commitments under the international framework."

This isn't the first time a much-celebrated return to the negotiating table has resulted in overturned tables, with hard-won international laws and conventions scattered on the floor. The US played a similar role at the United Nations conference on racism in April. After extracting all sorts of deletions from the negotiating text - no references to Israel or the Palestinians, nothing on slavery reparations - the Obama administration decided to boycott anyway, pointing to the fact that the new text reaffirmed the document adopted in 2001 in Durban.

It was a flimsy excuse, but there was some kind of logic to it, since the US had never signed the 2001 agreement. What made no sense was the wave of copycat withdrawals from the rich world. Within 48 hours of the US announcement, Italy, Australia, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Poland had pulled out. Unlike the US, these governments had all signed the 2001 declaration, so they had no reason to object to a document that reaffirmed it.

It didn't matter. As with the climate change talks, lining up behind Obama - with his impeccable reputation - was an easy way to avoid burdensome obligations and look progressive at the same time: a service the US was never able to provide during the Bush years.

The US has had a similarly corrupting influence as a new member of the UN human rights council. Its first big test was Judge Richard Goldstone's courageous report on Israel's Gaza onslaught, which found that war crimes had been committed by both the Israeli army and *Hamas*. Rather than prove its commitment to international law, the US used its clout to smear the report as "deeply flawed" and to strong-arm the Palestinian Authority into withdrawing a supportive resolution. The PA, which faced a furious backlash at home for caving in to US pressure, may introduce a new version.

And then there are the G20 summits, Obama's highest profile multilateral engagements. At the April meeting in London, it seemed for a moment there might be some kind of co-ordinated attempt to rein in transnational financial speculators and tax dodgers. Sarkozy even pledged to walk out of the summit if it failed to produce serious regulatory commitments. But the Obama administration had no interest in genuine multilateralism, advocating instead that countries should come up with their own plans (or not) and hope for the best - much like its reckless climate-change plan. Sarkozy, needless to say, did not walk anywhere but to the photo session, to have his picture taken with Obama.

Of course, Obama has made some good moves on the world stage - like not siding with the Honduras coup government, or supporting a UN <u>women</u>'s agency. But a clear pattern has emerged: in areas where other rich nations were teetering between principled action and negligence, US interventions have tilted them toward negligence. If this is the new era of multilateralism, it is no prize.

This article first appeared in the Nation

www.naomiklein.org

Load-Date: October 16, 2009



The tragedy of the left's discourse on Iran (Part I)

Daily News Egypt September 8, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 1047 words

Body

The electoral coup and the subsequent uprising and suppression of the revolting voters in Iran have prompted all sorts of analyses in Western media from both the Right and the Left. The Right, mostly inspired by the neo-con ideology and reactionary perspectives, dreams of the re-creation of the Shah's Iran, looks for pro-American/pro-Israeli allies among the disgruntled Iranian public, and seeks an Eastern European type velvet revolution. As there is very little substance to these analyses, they are hardly worth much critical review; and one cannot expect them to try to understand the complexities of Iranian politics and society.

As for the Left in the West, confusions abound. The progressive left, from the beginning openly supported the Iranian civil society movement. Znet, Campaign for Peace and democracy, Bullet, and some other media provided sound analysis to help others understand the complexities if the Iranian situation.

Some intellectuals signed petitions along with their Iranian counterparts, while others chose to remain silent. But disturbingly, like in the situations in Gaza or Lebanon, where <u>Hamas</u> and Hezbollah uncritically became champions of anti-imperialism, for some other people on the left, Ahmadinejad has become a champion because of his seemingly firm rhetoric against Israel and the US.

Based on a crude class analysis, he is also directly or indirectly praised by some for his supposed campaign against the rich and imagined support of the working poor. These analyses also undermine the genuine movement within the vibrant Iranian civil society, and denigrate their demands for democracy, and political and individual freedoms as middle class concerns, instigated by western propaganda (a view shared by Shamenei, Ahmadinejad and his supporters).

MRZine and Islamists

The most bizarre case is the online journal MRZine, the offshoot of Monthly Review, which in some instances even publicized the propaganda of the Basij (Islamic militia) hooligans and criminals.

The website has given ample room to pro-Islamist contributors; while they can hardly be considered to be on the left, their words are appreciated by the leftists editing the site. One writer claims that the battle in Iran is about "welfare reform and private property rights", and that Ahmadinejad "has enraged the managerial class", as he is "the least enthusiastic about neo-liberal reforms demanded by Iran's corporate interests", and that he is under

The tragedy of the left's discourse on Iran (Part I)

attack by "Iran's fiscal conservative candidates". The author conveniently fails to mention that there are also much "corporate interests" controlled by Ahmadinejad's friends and allies in the Islamic Guard and his conservative cleric supporters, and that he has staunchly followed "privatization" policies by handing over state holdings to his cronies.

During the 1979 revolution, the late Tudeh Party, under the direction of the Soviet Union, was unsuccessfully digging deep and looking hard for "non-capitalists" among the Islamic regime's elements to follow a "non-capitalist path" and a "socialist orientation". Now it seems that MRZine magazine is beginning a new excavation for such a breed among Islamists, not understanding that all factions of the Islamic regime have always been staunch capitalists.

Azmi Bishara's imagined Iran

In "Iran: An Alternative Reading", Israeli Arab politician and former Knesset member Azmi Bishara argues that Iran's totalitarian system of government differs from other totalitarian systems in two definitive ways: Firstly, it has incorporated "such a high degree [of] constitutionally codified democratic competition in the ruling order and its ideology". Bishara does not explain however that these "competitions" are just for the insider Islamists, and all others, including moderate Muslims or the wide spectrum of secular liberals and the left are excluded by the anti-democratic institutions within the regime.

The Second differentiation Bishara makes is that "... the official ideology that permeates institutions of government ... is a real religion embraced by the vast majority of the people". He is right if he means the majority of Iranians are Muslim and Shia, but it is wrong to assume that all are religious and share the same obscurantist fundamentalist version as those in power. He also fails to recognize the existence of a large number of secular people in Iran, one of the highest percentages among Muslim-majority countries.

He praises "such tolerance of political diversity", "tolerance of criticism", and "peaceful rotation of authority" in Iran.

One wonders if our prominent Palestinian politician is writing about an imaginary Iran, or the real one. Could it be that Bishara has not heard of the massacres of thousands of political prisoners, chain killings of intellectuals, and silencing of the most able and progressive voices in the country? Doesn't he know that a non-elected 12-member conservative body (The Guardianship Council) only allows a few trusted individuals to run for President or the Parliament, and that the real 'authority', the Supreme Leader, does not rotate, and is selected by an all-Mullah Assembly of Experts for life? The unelected Leader leads the suppressive apparatuses of the state, and since 1993 has created his own "Special Guards of Velayat" (NOPO) for quick suppressive operations.

So much for tolerance and democracy.

Bishara undermines the genuine massive reform movement and claims that "expectations regarding the power of the reform trend ... were created by Western and non-Western media opposed to Ahmadinejad...". Had Bishara done his homework, he would have learned about the massive campaigns led by large number of <u>women</u>'s organizations, the youth, teachers and select groups of workers. He warns us of "elitism" and "arrogant classist edge", and implicitly dismisses these movements of "middle class backgrounds" and claims that these people are not the majority of young people but rather the majority of young people from a particular class". It is unclear on what basis he makes the assertion that most of the youth from poor sectors of the society support Ahmadinejad.

Saeed Rahnemais Professor of Political Science at York University, Canada.

Part II of this article will be published tomorrow, Wednesday Sept. 9, 2009.

Load-Date: September 7, 2009



Religious dogma has no place in the IDF

Guardian.com
July 6, 2009 Monday

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Length: 965 words

Body

ABSTRACT

Seth Freedman:Secular Israelis are increasingly concerned that the army is falling into the clutches of the national religious camp

FULL TEXT

A storm is brewing in Israel over the Israel Defence Forces' (IDF) chief rabbi's <u>opposition to women serving in the armed forces</u>, with politicians and pundits alike calling for his head in the wake of the controversy. Rabbi Avichai Rontzki's stance is based on his interpretation of Jewish law, which cuts little ice among secular sectors of Israeli society? many of whom express growing concern that the army is falling into the clutches of the national religious camp.

According to Haim Oron, leader of the New Movement-Meretz party:

Rontzki's comments highlight the trend where instead of religious Zionism adopting the values of the IDF and the country, the IDF and country are adopting the values of religious Zionism, in its nationalist and orthodox version. If this trend continues, the IDF may be transformed from an army of the people to Phalangists carrying religious artefacts.

His fears are not as far-fetched as they may appear to those who still view the IDF as a broadly secular state institution. During <u>Operation Cast Lead</u>, soldiers were issued with pamphlets from IDF chaplains that attempted to paint the conflict as no less than a holy war being waged on behalf of world Jewry. A friend of mine who was deployed to the Gaza border showed me one such leaflet, in which troops were told they were "fighting a war for the Jewish people", rather than on behalf of all Israel's citizens.

"I thought 'what would a Bedouin soldier make of such statements?'," he said. "The Bedouin soldier would be there to stop rockets falling [on his homeland], not to fight God's war." The jihadist bent of such propaganda is another sign of the "army's shift to the right", he explained. Statistics bear out his assertion, with 20% of officers hailing from national religious backgrounds, proportionally much higher than the make-up of the general population.

One senior IDF officer attributes the figures to the attitudes to army service among the national religious community versus those of the more secular populace. "The national-religious are replacing the kibbutzniks in the ranks of

Religious dogma has no place in the IDF

combat and command," he said. "They learn at home the importance of sacrifice for the nation and of giving of themselves for the state."

While most ultra-orthodox Israelis still <u>refuse to send their children to the army</u>, those from the national religious camp have no problem with their offspring serving the state in such a fashion; in fact, such a display of commitment to the country is endemic to the nationalist element of their communal politics.

At ground level the influx of soldiers adhering to religious laws and principles is not necessarily a bad thing for those against whom the troops are operating, since their strict observance of Jewish law requires them to behave in a more humane fashion than many of their less religious peers often do. However, on a wider level, the discord between religious and military leaders' stance towards Israeli policy places observant soldiers in a quandary when it comes to implementation of certain strategies.

A case in point was the <u>Disengagement</u> of 2005, when many of the religious members of my brigade refused to participate in the <u>evacuation of the settlement of Homesh</u> in which we assisted. Soldiers from settler backgrounds, as well as those simply ideologically opposed to the move, were treated with kid gloves by commanders anxious to avoid an internal confrontation, rather than dealing with their insubordination in accordance with army guidelines.

By backing down and allowing external factors to disrupt the regular chain of command, a precedent was set that is likely to come back to haunt the IDF if any similar withdrawal from the West Bank is attempted in the coming years. Settler leaders have been whipping their followers into an ever-growing frenzy ever since the first Disengagement, and their fighting talk acts to dampen the ardour of any politician or military strategist considering such a move, despite believing it to be in the long-term interests of Israeli security. The divergent paths taken by the state's leaders and the national religious hierarchy in terms of ceding land raises the very real prospect of a mass mutiny within the ranks of orthodox troops, and must not be overlooked by those with an interest in the stability of the region.

Much is made by the Israeli right of hostile forces having been co-opted into a wider religious war; with Islamic Jihad, *Hamas* and al-Qaida militias regularly held up as proof that Israel's enemies cannot be placated via negotiations or concessions. Those groups' religious convictions are, they assert, intractable to the point of no return, and the only way to fight against such intransigence is through the sights of a gun.

However, the same characteristics can, and should, be ascribed to a growing section of the IDF, especially in the wake of statements such as Rontzki's, as well as the military rabbinate's crusader stance during Cast Lead. On one level, Rontzki's "chauvinistic and patronising" attitude towards female soldiers can be easily dismissed as the ranting of a man utterly stuck in the past, who refuses to accept that the world has progressed past the patriarchal atmosphere prevalent in biblical times. But far more worrying is the fact that such backward-thinking fundamentalists should be permitted so much leeway to spread their influence among the country's soldiers, and afforded such positions of power within the IDF. Religious dogma has no place in such an institution; to allow such corrosive and dangerous thinking to pervade as sensitive an arena as Israel's armed forces is simply a recipe for disaster.

Load-Date: July 6, 2009



In Jerusalem, battle of Palestinian day camps

Christian Science Monitor July 16, 2009, Thursday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 6

Length: 928 words

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

Dateline: Jerusalem

Body

As she hands out paper and magic markers, Basima Alian quizzes her young campers in a sing-songy voice.

"How many times a day do we pray?" asks Ms. Alian, the head counselor.

"Five!" They respond in unison.

"Can a woman be muezzin?" she asks, referring to the individual who calls a Muslim community to prayer.

"No, only a man," one boy answers.

"How do we pray together in the mosque?"

"Men in the front, women behind them," a girl says.

Short lessons in Islam are part of the regular routine of this summer camp in Sur Baher, an Arab neighborhood of East Jerusalem that gained unwanted notoriety last year as the hometown of a Palestinian assailant.

The day has some time for exercise and play, but the main focus for the 4- to 9-year-olds is on building Muslim and Palestinian identity. They read passages from the Koran, sing religious anthems, and learn hadith - sayings of the prophet Muhammed.

Teaching Islamic values and Palestinian pride are certainly among the top priorities at the "Better Tomorrow" camp; indoctrination and extremism are not, say Alian and her boss, camp director Sufian Jadallah. But the camp is housed in an Islamist cultural center that Israeli police welded shut early last year, leaving behind a letter from the Interior Ministry. "This is a terrorist organization and is therefore being closed," Jadallah says, summarizing the terse letter he received, signed by the Israeli police. No other explanation was given and the center could not challenge the accusation, says Jadallah, who notes that the police are allowed to close down institutions deemed to be terrorist organizations.

"It is true that we are Islamist. Does that mean we are terrorists?" asks Mr. Jadallah, as kids get a bounce inside a lunar ride and listen to Islamic music. "Israel always uses the word 'terrorism' as a pretext for closing our institutions, but when we ask what they mean by that, they have no answers."

In Jerusalem, battle of Palestinian day camps

Since the Israeli closure order of the center, called the Culture Forum, wasn't renewed when it expired few months ago, Jadallah - who is also the head of the center - hired a welder to pry open the gates and doors of the center again. So far, the camp fun goes on, though the staff worries that they could be shut down at any time.

"Just the way they closed down the whole institution for no reason, they could come and close our camps," Jadallah says.

Jerusalem triples funding for alternative camps

That Israel sees such camps as a threat is not in his imagination. In recent years there has been alarm in the Israeli media over Palestinian summer camps run by Fatah and <u>Hamas</u>, some offering paramilitary training for teenagers. Now, even camps for younger children have come into question, and officials in the Jerusalem municipality say they're in a struggle to make municipal-run (read: Israeli) camps more affordable for the children of Arab East Jerusalemites.

"The Islamic movement is running summer camps with a very clear agenda: to indoctrinate young kids to a very strict religious viewpoint and what we know are very extreme messages, which of course we think is not the right thing," says Yakir Segev, a Jerusalem city council member who is in charge of the East Jerusalem portfolio.

"There's a competition for the hearts and souls of the kids," he says. "There are community centers which the municipality supports, which has summer camps which are more moderate."

To that end, the Jerusalem municipality tripled its budget this summer for city-funded day camps in East Jerusalem, Mr. Segev says, spending close to half a million shekels, or about \$128,000.

"What we are trying to do is to provide parents with an alternative, by offering low-cost programs that will be a counter to the extremists," he says.

Up to 8,000 children are now in such programs, a huge boost from previous years when funding for activities in Arab neighborhoods of East Jerusalem - which Israel annexed following the 1967 Arab-Israeli war - was low on the public agenda.

'We want to tell children Palestine is our land'

Those areas have gained more media attention over the past year after a number of violent attacks in predominantly Jewish West Jerusalem perpetrated by young men from East Jerusalem neighborhoods, including Sur Baher. A year ago, a Palestinian from Sur Baher killed three people and wounded 30 others when he rammed a bulldozer into a bus and cars on a busy Jerusalem street, raising alarm bells over extremists making inroads here.

"Not all the religious groups have extreme ideologies, but they often come together," Segev says.

The attack put Sur Baher on the map and, residents complain, has resulted in Israeli police cars prowling the neighborhood more often. Israeli authorities demolished the assailant's family home: the punitive step the state usually has taken toward suicide bombers. The increased tensions have been traumatic for the children, says Alian, and camp is a place to express that.

"Sur Baher has had a lot of problems in the past year, and we want to help support the children in that," says Alian, taking a break as the kids bop to an Islamic pop song. "We want to tell the children that Palestine is our land. And other than that, our camp has a few main goals: to teach the children the virtues of cleanliness of body and soul, to expand their knowledge of Islam, and increase their devotion to God." She hesitates for a minute as a girl tries to show her drawing of Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock, the third-holiest site in Islam. "Oh, and it's also for them to have some fun."

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Load-Date: July 16, 2009



If only life in Gaza was a movie

New Straits Times (Malaysia) December 27, 2009 Sunday

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Section: Pg. 22

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Byline: Marc Lourdes

Body

ONE of the most enduring Hollywood motifs is the battle between the good little guy and the big, bad, bullying forces of evil.

This theme has been repeated in galactic soap operas like Star Wars, boxing epics like Rocky, swords-and-sandals extravaganzas like Braveheart and, lately, CGI-laden epics like Lord of the Rings and Avatar.

Unfortunately, glorification of the little man is often limited to reel and not real life. It certainly, until very recently, did not apply in the never ending Israel-Palestine face-off.

The tragedy about the conflict is the way in which the Palestinians are out-muscled in almost every aspect of warfare - physical, economic and media/propaganda.

Israel's army is better equipped, better trained and greater in number than the Palestinian resistance. They have the support of the mighty United States.

They certainly have more wealth. They also, for the longest time, have had the support of a sympathetic global media.

The picture most often painted is one of brave Israeli forces putting their lives on the line to fend off hordes of bloodthirsty *Hamas* terrorists out to maim and kill innocent Israeli civilians in kamikaze attacks.

When I went there in January to cover the latest Gaza conflict, it was with this image floating at the back of my mind. The reality though, was very different.

At the Al-Shifa hospital, I saw men, <u>women</u> and children who'd had their limbs blown off by Israeli ordnance. I saw pictures of bodies piled upon other bodies. Some were victims of weapons like white phosphorus, which are in contravention of the Geneva Convention.

The statistics said it all. For every dead Israeli in the conflict, there were about 100 Palestinian bodies.

The carnage was as brilliant as it was diabolical. The incoming army pulverised the court complex, the International Red Cross building, the central police agency compound and ministry buildings, among others.

If only life in Gaza was a movie

The surgical precision of the destruction - some buildings were flattened while adjacent ones were untouched - testified to the fact that the attacks weren't random strikes. They were calculated to bring Gaza to its knees, administratively as well as militarily.

It wasn't just that. Marauding Israeli tanks avoided roads and made a beeline for villages, farms and homes, making sure the Palestinians were deprived of their homes and their food.

One scene in particular is still vivid in my mind. It is of a village between Rafah and Gaza, which made its living rearing and selling chickens.

When we (my counterpart from Harian Metro, our photographer and I) went there, we were confronted with the decaying and putrid forms of thousands of chickens (we would later learn that there were about 100,000 birds) amid the rubble of what was once a huge warren of coops.

We were told that they were blown apart by Israeli tanks.

The story doesn't end there. The villagers, all part of the extended Samuni family, managed to escape the attacking forces.

However, some laggards - I think there were 24 of them - were captured by the Israeli army. They were held for four days without food and water.

The army, before it left, ringed the house they were held in with explosives and blew them up.

There are other stories, too. For example, a group of Christian and Muslim doctors from Israel, in Palestine to help the legions of wounded, related how the Israeli government refused to allow volunteer Jewish doctors to enter Gaza.

A visit to a cemetery in Gaza also highlighted the fact that for Palestinians, sudden, violent death isn't the unexpected occurrence that is for most of us, but a sadly common fate.

A large number of gravestones indicated that the deceased had perished as a result of Israeli aggression.

These incidences are just the tip of the iceberg of atrocities the Palestinians have been subjected to since the formation of the state of Israel in 1948.

More than 78 per cent of their land was ripped away from them and arbitrarily handed over to the Jews.

The Palestinians, in 1967, also lost the West Bank area that they had originally been allocated.

Today, the displaced Palestinians and their descendants number more than the approximately six million Jews Adolf Hitler killed during the Holocaust.

But, like the Jews, the Palestinians refuse to simply lie down and die. For every tale of woe we heard, we saw with our own eyes a community that refused to accept defeat simply because they are outgunned and out-financed.

The adults were still defiant and the children still bright-eyed, even under the deadly wake of Israeli planes overhead.

They were still trying their best to live as normal a life as possible, even if that meant school, trade or romance would have to be sandwiched between gruelling shifts of digging smuggling tunnels to Egypt.

This time round, there is reason to hope that normalcy might one day return to Palestine and Israel. There has been a turning of the tide of global popular opinion.

No longer are Palestinian supporters relegated to the sidelines of the international pressure groups.

If only life in Gaza was a movie

Now, supporters of the cause range from Hollywood celebrities to Jewish professionals in Israel.

Amid such increasing international backing and with a new, more approachable US president in office, there might be hope that the Palestinians may one day get a fair shake after all. God knows, it's long overdue.

Yet, for every supporter, there are some naysayers who just won't go away, no matter what anybody tells them.

A classic example is a commentator on the nstgaza.blogspot.com blog.

The person, who called himself Gunasheel, responded to my assertion that "the Arabs here (in Palestine) aren't extremists or terrorists" very sarcastically indeed.

He said: "And you know this because?

"a. You lived there your whole life;

"b. you have documented proof or [sic] this?

OR;

"c. reporting out of emotional issues tied to religion?"

The sooner people like Gunasheel realise that the issue in Palestine is not one of race or religion, but one of a people, occupied unfairly, trying their best to overthrow the yoke of oppression, the sooner we will come to a peace accord in the land of milk and honey.

Until then, the only place we will see the little guy getting what he deserves is in a Hollywood fantasy.

(END)

Load-Date: December 27, 2009



Light in the Israel-Palestine darkness

Guardian.com

December 7, 2009 Monday

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Length: 1056 words

Byline: Seth Freedman, guardian.co.uk

Body

ABSTRACT

Seth Freedman: Initiatives such as the Jerusalem Interest-Free Microfinance Fund bridge a cultural gulf as well as helping economically

FULL TEXT

Sitting in a hotel lobby in East Jerusalem, <u>Jafar Sabbah</u> is strident in his assertion that both Israeli and Palestinian politicians are dragging their heels over seeking a resolution to the conflict. He says:

Neither side has an incentive to make peace. On the Israeli side, <u>the economy is booming</u>, exports are rising, and funding from Jewish philanthropists and the US government continues to pour in. On the Palestinian side, <u>Hamas</u> have an incentive for war because they receive money from Iran, while in the West Bank there is both corruption and [an overreliance] on the 'peace industry' [the NGOs and other organisations that partially prop up the Palestinian economy].

His frustration with the political status quo, combined with his pragmatic, business-minded approach to improving Israeli and Palestinian society, compelled him to establish the <u>Jerusalem Interest-Free Microfinance Fund</u> (JIMF), which provides loans to both Jewish and Arab residents of the city. Despite the ever-deteriorating political climate in which JIMF operates, the fund has enjoyed a year of remarkable success: after <u>granting funds</u> to an initial group of 20 borrowers, the concept has been rolled out on a larger scale, and applications are currently being processed for a further 50 loans.

The intentions of JIMF's trustees are twofold: "to alleviate poverty [and] to help to lay the foundations of community cohesion and peace-building by increasing the economic and life chances of Muslims, Jews and Christians within the city of Jerusalem". JIMF does not simply provide loans, but also runs training and mentoring programmes for those borrowing money, in order to enhance the recipients' prospects of making their businesses a success. At the same time, running joint sessions for Jews and Arabs is a perfect opportunity to expose the participants to their peers from the other side of the tracks. With doors to communal cohesion slamming shut all over the country as both Israeli and Palestinian leaders dig in their heels and refuse to co-operate at either state or street level, anyone

Light in the Israel - Palestine darkness

prepared to jam a foot in the doorframe, as JIMF do, deserves the strongest of support from both local and overseas backers.

"Some of the <u>women</u> had never talked to the 'other side' before," Sabbah notes. "This is a way to break down stereotypes and prejudices". He recalls some of the Arab recipients querying the intentions of the fund's donors, asking him why Jews would want to help them and whether there was a political agenda. "They were suspicious, but there is no hidden agenda, and no ulterior motive".

Two months ago, I saw first-hand the effect JIMF's work has had on the initial group of recipients. Several of the <u>women</u> came to address a group of Jewish youth movement workers from Britain, explaining how they have used their loans to expand their businesses, and how much of an impact the project has had on both their working and personal lives. While listening to their anecdotes and seeing the delight with which they spoke of their experience was heart-warming, it was during a break in the proceedings that the true value of JIMF's model came to light.

While the movement workers chatted among themselves in the auditorium, several <u>women</u> struck up their own conversation outside in the hallway, orthodox Jews and Arabs swapping stories of their working lives, the gulf between the communities from which they hailed bridged by their common goals and achievements in the world of business. Their stepping outside their comfort zones and making contact with those from the opposition camp is something vitally lacking in communities on both sides, resulting in a situation greatly detrimental to all with an interest in resolving the conflict.

The <u>women</u>'s cross-communal dialogue was the essence of Sabbah's vision for JIMF: "Economic development is the key to achieving peace in the city," he tells me this week, the significance of the location of our meeting not lost on him. The hotel is in <u>Sheikh Jarrah</u>, one of the most contentious neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem, where settlers and Palestinians are <u>constantly at loggerheads</u> over who has more of a right to property and land in the area. He says:

The whole issue of settlement expansion and house demolition will only do harm to the stability [of the region], causing frustration, anger, and making the Palestinians feel segregated and discriminated against - all of which are 'anti-business' factors. Instead, we must seek to improve people's daily lives, and connect the two groups with one another.

In a city as poor as Jerusalem - 40% of the residents live in poverty - the capital is an ideal place for JIMF to operate, as has been proved by the massive oversubscription to the second pilot phase of the project. "In Jerusalem, only 9% of Arab <u>women</u> and 45% of ultra-orthodox <u>women</u> are employed, so there is a great deal of scope for our work," says Sabbah.

On an individual level, JIMF has undoubtedly changed lives, both of the <u>women</u> who borrowed the money as well as their dependents who benefit from the fruit of their labour. However, an even greater achievement is the collective impact the project has had on both the Jewish and Arab communities, who have put aside sectarian splits and suspicions to work together to better their futures. At a time when there seems little about which to be hopeful in the region at political level, ground-breaking initiatives such as this are worth their weight in gold.

Many dismiss out of hand organisations that bring Israeli Jews and Palestinians together to challenge the divisive status quo, labelling the initiatives with the pejorative tag of "normalisation" - claiming that they gloss over the core of the conflict without doing anything to redress the essential inequality of the two sides.

However, in the case of JIMF, taking such a view is both unhelpful and short-sighted. The work undertaken by the fund is both productive and positive for all involved, and is a much needed light in the darkness that surrounds both Jerusalem in particular and the region as a whole.

· Comments on this article will remain open for 24 hours from the time of publication but may be closed overnight

Load-Date: December 7, 2009



BRINGING SEXY BACK, EK SÊ

Sunday Times (South Africa)

November 29, 2009

Magazine Edition

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Section: ARTS, CULTURE & ENTERTAINMENT

Length: 1051 words **Byline:** Neil Sonnekus

Body

BRINGING SEXY BACK, EK SÊ

It's not just wine and whisky that age with grace, Sexy Girls has a light touch and an acute meaning. By

SEXY GIRLS HHHH

Stars: Jamie Bartlett, Tina Schouw, Ivan D Lucas, Denise Newman, Jennifer Steyn

Director: Russell Thompson

A lot of upcountry people say Cape Town is a great place, it's just a pity about the people. But the more accurate statement should read: white upcountry people tend to say Cape Town is a great place, just a pity about the people - meaning, again, white people.

The Cape, of course, isn't just white, much as it tends to market itself as such. The others, "coloureds", are mainly seen by whites as gangsters who are safely tucked away on the Cape Flats and have, at best, linguistic charm.

And the blacks, mainly Xhosas, are mostly invisible - except when seen outside their shacks by tourists and upcountry types on the way from the airport to the city, and in Parliament on TV.

The strength of Thompson's 12-year-old film is that it not only acknowledges these anderskleuriges, but it shows that they are not just victims, but that there is actually a dynamic, or a relationship, between the precious whites and the "coloured" section of those people of a different hue in a country still obsessed with race.

And it does so with such a light touch, perhaps an even by-the-way or unintentional touch, that it's like a breath of Muizenberg air.

In fact, its main strength is that by avoiding any politicking it makes us acutely aware of the differences between us. For example, when our hero, Milo (Bartlett), gets cuckolded by his supercilious wife (Steyn) and one of those nauseating Cape New Age millionaires, he becomes accidentally involved in a Cape Flats gang and his mouth literally falls open.

BRINGING SEXY BACK, EK SÊ

He's been on the border, he knows how to fight (to use an expression from a song by the '80s Cape band Bright Blue), but he never knew this life existed in parallel to his. It's an important moment and it proves that simple, honest, old-fashioned storytelling will win the day.

Maybe filmmakers stare themselves blind against the fact that there isn't much contact between whites and blacks because they live so far apart historically and geographically, but it's a problem that Thompson cannily overcomes.

Setting the film on fairly neutral ground, where a run-down building called the Empire in Muizenberg becomes a kind of no-man's land, he can play out his ideas. A feature film, after all, is a work of fiction; it doesn't have to make itself a slave to apartheid like so many PC types ironically tend to do.

So who are the titular sexy girls? They are a gang of <u>women</u> who look after themselves because no one else will. Why are they sexy? For that very reason. They are not victims of anything or anyone. They know how to use their guns, okay?

They are <u>women</u> first and foremost and it's great to see Schouw and Newman not playing some suffering victims but full-blooded <u>females</u>, coming out with such classic lines as: "I can mos drive youse there." If others don't find that sexy, that's their problem.

What keeps the whole thing ticking along, regardless of some clumsy moments and booms in shot, is Thompson's quirky sense of humour. When Milo buys a second-hand BMW to impress his wife and compete with the New Age creep, it blows up; when a drunken father tries to rape his daughter, she digs her sharpened nail into his tongue and renders him useless, tuning him the odds.

This latter act not only highlights the everyday reality of rape on the Flats, it also underlines <u>women</u>'s ability to fight back, but without that suffocating, born-to-suffer air of so many professional martyrs.

Even the slow pace could be a reference to how fast things actually move in this neck of the woods, though sometimes it's a little too slow.

Pulling this all together is a magnificent performance by Ivan D Lucas, playing Roy Kirby, a gang leader who is comic Cape Flats menace personified. His preening, domineering, suspicious, scheming, vicious, nihilistic well-dressed gangsta is sex bomb and stand-up comedian rolled into one. It's the kind of performance that could easily have won an Oscar - with just a few adjustments to time and space.

Also, without preaching, Thompson quietly reminds us that if we are still separated by history and geography, the one thing that may bring us together - on street level, not in board rooms - is simply that two people, regardless of colour, will find each other.

The question, of course, is why has this film taken so long to come out on DVD. Is it because we're suddenly flavour of the month thanks to films like Tsotsi and District 9? Probably. But if that's the case, then there is an irony to that, too, because those films' makers - as well as Thompson - no longer live in this country.

P Special features include ... Scene selections.

BRÜNO HHH

Stars: Sacha Baron Cohen, Gustav Hammarstan

Director: Larry Charles

Part of Baron Cohen's success is that he highlights our differences, particularly our prejudices, and then confronts them in the most outrageous manner possible.

After all, who else would have the chutzpah to tell the Israelis and Palestinians that they have *Hamas* in common.

"Hummus," the two enemies protest. "Exactly," the uber-camp Brüno implies.

BRINGING SEXY BACK, EK SÊ

But then he will go one further and tell an al-Qaeda rep that Osama bin Laden really should shave his beard, it is soooo unsexy, you know? The response is chilling.

Not only does he highlight our differences, he challenges our common, secret desires. That is, a part of us wants to be famous (but do we really want to adopt a black baby, or is it just a trend?).

So he does anything and everything to be just that, demystifying along the way a sacred symbol like, say, the phallus - in his own, inimitable way.

And if this Austrian hairdresser is not quite as winning as Baron Cohen's previous creation, Borat, then the curious thing is that it has a way of staying with you - long after you've stopped sitting through the boring bits.

P Special features include ... Megatolle Extras, with Exterminated szenen [sic], including one with sporting legend Pete Rose, who conducts the interview while sitting on one of Brüno's Mexican gardeners' backs. It should have been in the main movie.

IT'S A CAPE TOWN THING: Jennifer Steyn plays the hero's wife who has an affair in Sexy Girls

Load-Date: December 1, 2009



<u>Letters</u>

The Jerusalem Post

November 30, 2009 Monday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 14

Length: 1140 words

Byline: Rabbi Barry Schlesinger, N. Hertzel Katz, Natalie Gilbert, Zvi Schreiber, Israel Pickholtz, Robyn Rotberg,

Marna Snyder, Stanley Barasch, Maria Errecarde

Highlight: Readers' Letters

Body

Missed messages

Sir, - It is extremely regrettable that you neglected to highlight the beauty of Saturday night's march and demonstration ("Barkat, vowing to run for one or two more terms, says Intel dispute is now being solved," November 29). Thousands of Secular, Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Masorti Jews marched together peacefully down the streets of Jerusalem, demanding freedom and mutual respect in the city.

The demonstration wasn't anti-ultra Orthodox Jews. The message was positive. The demonstrators called for religious pluralism in Jerusalem. Their message was that when Gen. Motta Gur proclaimed that "the Temple Mount is in our hands," he never thought to exclude <u>women</u> wearing talitot in the Kotel plaza.

The message articulated on Saturday night was that the Jerusalem's silent majority has opened its mouth - loud and clear.

RABBI BARRY SCHLESINGER

Rabbi of Kehilat Moreshet Avraham

Jerusalem

UN dialogue

Sir, - Last Friday you published a letter from UNRWA spokesman Chris Gunness ("Fundamentally flawed," Letters, November 27), inter alia explaining why there is still an Arab refugee problem notwithstanding the billions contributed to their settlement, and the number, space and wealth of so many Arab countries where they could and should have been settled.

Consider his explanation which I quote: "What perpetuates the refugee crisis is the lack of a durable peace [my emphasis] deal under which, according to all internationally accepted paradigms, the refugees plight must be resolved."

Israel, a small, poor country with limited means, attacked by five major powers on its birth, accepted and successfully settled many thousands of refugees, notwithstanding continuing aggression and terrorism. This was

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done without enormous sums of money being donated to achieve this humanitarian goal - and, Mr. Gunness, without a durable peace.

N. HERTZEL KATZ

Ramat Hasharon

Outraged by animal suffering

Sir, - I was outraged and deeply saddened to see the photo of the donkey covered in sticky tape so it would look like a zebra, and all this done to celebrate a religious festival ("Dressing up for the holiday," Photo, November 29). Anyone who has tried to take a band-aid off a hairy part of their skin will understand. The donkey's whole body has been covered, and the tape will no doubt be ripped off when the festivities have finished.

A short article on animal suffering in the name of religion would have been more in keeping with the standard of your newspaper.

NATALIE GILBERT

Jerusalem

Enough cliches

Sir, - I was disappointed that Friday's editorial, "It's not enough" (November 27), repeated the cliche that the Palestinians reject any Jewish State. In fact, the Palestinian Authority and Arab League have repeatedly called for two states, while Israel has been building settlements with the declared purpose of precluding a Palestinian state.

ZVI SCHREIBER

Jerusalem

Bibi bullied into a bad week

Sir, - Sometimes you have to pay protection money to a Chicago bully, but I would think that such payment would get you at least the appearance of protection. I mean, the idea is that the bully says he will protect you from "others," when he actually means he will refrain from beating you up himself. Then at least he keeps his end of the deal.

Caroline Glick and others ("Bibi's bad week," November 27) tell us that Netanyahu essentially paid protection money to the Obama administration and is now surprised that the supposed protector is coming back for more.

There was an easy solution to this. State in advance that the freeze on building becomes null and void the moment the Obama administration demands more. This clarification can still be made. Yes, it makes us look bad, but no worse that we look already.

ISRAEL PICKHOLTZ

Jerusalem

Sir, - Caroline Glick is almost certainly right when she states that release of many hundreds of Palestinian prisoners will result in further IDF hostages being taken in the future and possibly many Israelis being murdered in further terrorist attacks perpetrated by the released prisoners.

However, her condemnation of Prime Minister Netanyahu for agreeing to such a prisoner exchange does not take into account the actions of previous heads of state in agreeing to similar unreasonable prisoner exchanges, such as the "Jibril deal" in 1985 or the exchange in 2004 for businessman Elhanan Tannenbaum and the bodies of Israeli

Letters

soldiers. Morally there is no way Netanyahu can now refuse to agree to a similar disproportionate exchange, and there is no reason the Schalit family should be punished.

What she should have stated was that the proposed exchange be undertaken, but immediately followed by an Israeli declaration that it will continue to do everything in its power to return captive Israeli soldiers to their loved ones - not including, however, a release of hundreds of convicted terrorists. Instead, appropriate punitive action would be applied.

ROBYN ROTBERG

Kfar Saba

A sad departure

Sir, - My favorite columnist, Judy Montagu, a writer whose articles sparkled with her wit, her flair for language, and the personal message she imparted, is no longer at her desk because of cutbacks at The Jerusalem Post. She will be sorely missed by all those who, upon opening the paper, looked first for her articles.

MARNA SNYDER

Jerusalem

Another tactic

Sir, - After reading Charley J. Levine's article ("One for one," November 26) it occurred to me that there is another possible tactic that our government can use to secure the release of Gilad Schalit. Palestinian terrorists who have been caught, tried, convicted and sentenced to prison should, as long as Schalit is held captive, no longer be released when their prison terms are completed. This policy should be well-publicized so that the Palestinian street knows why their terrorists are not coming home after their sentences are up.

I know that people will say that this is harmful to our legal system, but is this more harmful than releasing them before their sentences have been completed, as was done in previous prisoner exchanges and may again be done in the present negotiations with *Hamas*?

STANLEY BARASCH

Ra'anana

A great and modest man

Sir, - Mr. Baruch Tenembaum presents a largely unknown and exciting facet of Angelo Roncalli ("A tireless friend," November 29).

While Roncalli earned a well-merited reputation as Pope John XXIII, who opened the dialogue with the Jews, his blessed role as rescuer of Jews during the Holocaust - and a few years later, his intervention in favor of the creation of the State of Israel - are certainly less well- known.

Congratulations to the Wallenberg Foundation and to the International Angelo Roncalli Committee for shedding light on the deeds of this great and modest man. One can only hope that Yad Vashem will posthumously grant him the title of Righteous Among the Nations.

MARIA ERRECARDE, Tel Aviv

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



A cul de sac called J Street; "The road to hell is paved with good intentions" - St. Bernard of Clairvaux, 12th century.

Globes [online] - Israel's Business Arena November 11, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 1070 words **Byline:** Lyon Roth

Body

Today, most political roads seem to lead to Washington DC. Once there, you will also discover that nearly every letter of the alphabet enjoys a real road or street named after it in one or more of the four quadrants of the city. Poor letter J does not have any street named after it in any quadrant. However, it now adorns the name of a new lobby that, according to its web-site, purports to be the "political arm of the pro-Israel, pro-peace movement."

J Street founder Jeremy Ben-Ami emphasizes passionately that the organization "is so clearly pro-Israel, is grounded in and based in Jewish values and a Jewish desire to support the State of Israel." It also boasts its own political action committee to fund candidates who endorse the group's objectives. Unfortunately, many legacy pro-Israel advocates, Jews and non-Jews alike, are confused. Perhaps trying to be all things to all people, J Street disregards what is still a rather complex matrix of issues arising from the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Ben Ami stresses that J Street rejects the "us versus them" thinking, opting instead for a non-partisan approach to the vexing dilemmas plaguing the Middle East. Sadly, however, its Pollyanna notions of regional peace neither conform to the practical realities confronting the parties who will have to achieve such peace, nor recognize certain partisan positions that remain diametrically opposed.

For example, the Palestinian insistence on a right of return for refugees is fundamentally incompatible with Israel's essential identity as a Jewish state. These can't be preserved simultaneously any more than one can be both Jewish and Christian simultaneously. J Street isn't convinced. According to Ben Ami, Israel need not be referred to as a "Jewish state." Rather the label "Jewish, democratic home in the state of Israel" ought to suffice.

All this reminds me of another faction pretending to advocate --with neither authority nor mandate -- the genuine best interests of its "constituents." Jews for Jesus was founded by Moishe Rosen in 1973. Born Jewish, Rosen converted and became a Baptist minister. His organization seeks to convert Jews who have not yet embraced the enhanced version of their theological beliefs. The group's efforts have been overwhelmingly rejected by all Jewish denominations. While its evangelical activities may be perfectly appropriate for Christians, aside from using a few Yiddish and Hebrew expressions, they have nothing to do with Judaism.

So, as Israelis like to say, "we've been in this movie before." Much as Jews for Jesus distorts the definition of membership (Jews) in order to expand its tent of adherents, J Street similarly manipulates the definition of "pro-Israel" to achieve its peculiar goals. And, like most distortions, it winds up resembling a bad movie. Some call the J Street version a comedy. Others think it's a horror film. To me, it's still mostly a mystery -- on multiple levels.

A cul de sac called J Street "The road to hell is paved with good intentions" - St. Bernard of Clairvaux, 12th century.

For starters, we have the burgeoning list of unanswered questions: How much of J Street's funding is actually contributed by Arab sources? First we heard 3%. A few weeks later, it was adjusted to 10%. What will the numbers be next month? Are there five major Arab donors, as initially reported, or over 30 major Arab donors, as recently disclosed? Does it matter? In my view it does.

When an organization receives hundreds of thousands of dollars from entities that are historically hostile to Israel's existence, all sorts of motive-related questions need to be addressed. Has founder Jeremy Ben Ami severed his ties to Fenton Communications, his former Washington lobbying firm, whose client, the Qatari government, retained the company this past March to spear-head an 18-month anti-Israel campaign on college campuses? Is that connection in any way related to J Street's abject refusal to criticize the UN-commissioned Goldstone Report, a prepackaged anti-Israel screed that is blatantly short on facts, sloppy on law, and unilateral in its condemnations? What is the real motivation behind J Street's decision to fight Israel's efforts to secure US sanctions against Iran?

One question that has been answered already is why J Street pulled the "pro-Israel" prefix from its messaging to students. It learned that several potential new recruits were turned off by that emphasis, so it's been reduced to "pro-peace." Moreover, much of the debate at the student sessions within J Street's recent conference focused on whether divestment initiatives should be directed only against products from the Israeli settlements or against all Israeli merchandise.

The deeper one digs, the sillier this gets. Designating J Street as a pro-Israel lobby seems as logical as having Michael Jackson, while he was alive, serve as the spokesperson for all Caucasians or nominating Renee Richards as the poster child for <u>female</u> tennis players. Theo Epstein, the manager of the Boston Red Sox, doesn't seek advice from the New York Yankees when reviewing next year's draft picks. Pepsi doesn't consult Coca Cola on branding new products. India doesn't cooperate with Pakistan on defense procurement strategies. These entities compete with each other on the field, in the marketplace, and in battle. Any organization that sees moral equivalence between <u>Hamas</u> raining thousands of lethal rockets on Israeli towns for eight years and Israel's Gaza incursion to disable those batteries all the while insisting on an immediate Israeli ceasefire -- simply doesn't get it.

Therefore, as one might expect, nearly all Israelis and most American Jews who see themselves as pro-Israel have never heard of J Street and certainly don't subscribe to the J Street agenda. Furthermore, while Ben Ami and friends remain frustrated that it is taking so long for Jews and Muslims to resolve their issues like good Christians, my thought is that if it doesn't look like a duck, doesn't walk like a duck, and doesn't talk like a duck, it isn't a duck.

To date, J Street doesn't look like a pro-Israel lobby, it doesn't walk like a pro-Israel lobby, and it certainly doesn't talk like a pro-Israel lobby. It's a street leading nowhere.

Lyon (Lenny) Roth is a senior executive at an international wealth management firm and a member of Ben Gurion University's Board of Governors.

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The Holocaust, Ku Klux Klan, and other claims put to the test; BNP ROW

The Independent (London)
October 24, 2009 Saturday
First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 10

Length: 1030 words **Byline:** Cahal Milmo

Body

"I do not have a conviction for Holocaust denial"

The BNP leader does not have a conviction for Holocaust denial because there is no such offence in English law. What he does have is a conviction in 1998 for inciting racial hatred by writing articles in The Rune magazine in which he denied the Holocaust and praised the Waffen SS. He was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment, suspended for two years, and fined £2,300. While in the witness box, Mr Griffin told the court: "I am well aware that the orthodox opinion is that six million Jews were gassed and cremated and turned into lampshades. Orthodox opinion also once held that the world is flat."

"I say that Churchill would belong in the British National Party because no other party would have him, [given] what he said in the early days of mass immigration into this country ... that 'they're only coming for our benefits system'."

The Churchill Archives at Cambridge University said yesterday it could find no such quotation. In reality, when he was a young MP, Churchill opposed an attempt to impose an Aliens Act, restricting immigration to Britain, saying he saw no need for such a measure. As Home Secretary, he championed naturalisation laws that would give British citizenship to all subjects of the Empire. Allen Packwood, director of the archives, said: "It is absolutely wrong to say that if he was around today, Churchill's political home would be the BNP. His natural instincts on social issues were often liberal. His criticism of Hitler's race and religious laws is well documented."

"My father was in the RAF during the Second World War while Mr Straw's father was in prison for refusing to fight Adolf Hitler."

Mr Straw has made no secret of the fact that his father, Walter, was jailed as a conscientious objector in 1939. His parents - an insurance salesman and a nursery school teacher - were pacifists who met in the Peace Pledge Union.

Griffin has not always been so proud of the RAF. In 1996, he accused British airmen of "mass murder" in the bombing of Nazi Germany.

"I have brought the BNP from being, frankly, an anti-semitic and racist organisation into being the only political party which, in the clashes between Israel and Gaza, stood full square behind Israel's right to deal with *Hamas* terrorists."

After his conviction for inciting racial hatred in 1998, Mr Griffin described Lord Carlile QC, the local MP who made the initial complaint, as "that bloody Jew". When asked in June this year if a black Welshman would be allowed to join the party, which is being forced by the Government's equality watchdog to allow black and ethnic minority members, Mr Griffin said: "There is no such thing as a black Welshman.... Our party acts for the indigenous people of these islands."

"(Islam) treats <u>women</u> as second-class citizens, it says that a woman victim of rape should be stoned to death for adultery ... it ordains as a religious duty the murder of Jews as well as other non-muslims."

An eminent Islamic scholar told The Independent that Mr Griffin's depiction of the tenets of Muslim faith and the Koran was misleading and offensive. Professor Abdel Haleem, director of the Centre of Islamic Studies at the University of London, said the Koran gave equal standing to <u>women</u> and contained "absolutely nothing" about stoning a rape victim to death. On the suggestion of a religious duty to murder Jews, Prof Haleem said: "This is an outrageous lie. There is nothing in the Koran that says anything like this."

"The indigenous people of this island are the English, the Scots, the Irish and the Welsh ... colour is irrelevant, it's the people who have been here overwhelmingly for the last 17,000 years. We are the aborigines here."

The latest research suggests the first people to colonise the British Isles were from the Iberian Peninsula and neither Anglo-Saxons nor Celts have had much impact on the genetics of inhabitants of the British Isles. Geneticists have also found evidence that African soldiers and slaves arrived in Britain during the Roman empire and intermarried with the population, meaning Britain's black population pre-dates the arrival of Christianity.

"Our immigration policy is supported by 84 per cent of the British people at present"

Mr Griffin appears to be referring to a poll conducted for The Sun last month which found 84 per cent of people were worried the UK population would reach 70 million by 2028. The poll asked no questions about compulsory repatriation of illegal immigrants or "reversing the tide of non-white immigration", as espoused by the BNP.

"I shared a platform with David Duke, who was once a member of the Ku Klux Klan, an almost totally non-violent one by the way... David Duke detests where I stand, he regards me as a sellout."

David Duke is a convicted fraudster and former Grand Wizard of the KKK. In his autobiography, he states "whites" should "work for the establishment of a separate homeland for African Americans". His website plugs an interview with the BNP leader, which it describes as "inspiring" and says the two men as sharing ideas which garner "tremendous support" among Europeans.

"It's time to shut the door because the country is overcrowded. Criminals and bogus asylum seekers should be deported. Everyone else can stay."

BNP policy is to forcibly repatriate around two million people who it claims are in Britain illegally and offer a financial inducement for "those of foreign descent" to leave the UK, regardless of whether or not they were born and raised here. The BNP's constitution is committed to "restoring, by legal changes, negotiation and consent, the overwhelmingly white make-up of the British population that existed in Britain prior to 1948".

"I cannot explain why I used to say those things (on the Holocaust)... I can't tell you the extent to which I've changed my mind, because [of] European law. Unfortunately, the French courts and the German courts would not recognise that freedom."

The Ministry of Justice said yesterday that an individual outlining why they no longer denied the Holocaust could not constitute an offence. French and German legislation outlaws Holocaust denial within the jurisdiction of those countries.

Load-Date: October 23, 2009



Intolerance on the Temple Mount

The Jerusalem Post September 27, 2009 Sunday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 14

Length: 956 words

Byline: DAVID KIRSHENBAUM

Highlight: The site is large enough to accommodate people of all faiths - yet only Muslims are allowed to worship

there

Body

Last week, our synagogue in Beit Shemesh made its annual High Holy Day week visit to the Temple Mount. We began the tradition six years ago when the site was reopened to non-Muslims. During the first three years following the start of the September 2000 war launched against Israel by the Palestinian Authority, *Hamas* and Hizbullah, the government decided to reward Arab terror by barring all non-Muslims from even setting foot on the Temple Mount.

Visiting the Temple Mount is a schizophrenic experience. When standing there, it is impossible not to be awestruck by the magnitude of where you are and the enormity of the colossal events that took place there. It is on the Temple Mount that both the First and Second Temple stood for nearly 1,000 years, where millions of Jews from all over the Land of Israel and the Diaspora made the three festival pilgrimages and where, according to Jewish belief, the Third Temple, ushering in the days of the messiah, is destined to be built. Throughout history, whenever and wherever Jews were engaged in prayer, they faced Jerusalem. And when in Jerusalem, they pray in the direction of the Temple Mount.

It boggles the mind to imagine your family tree and to consider when the last time anybody in the family line had been on the Temple Mount. Might that ancestor have been one of the survivors of the fighting that took place there prior to the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in 70 CE? Might it have been on Shavuot of that year, the final pilgrimage festival celebrated by the Jewish people prior to the destruction?

But now that I was standing in that holiest of places, which generations of Jews for 2,000 years could only dream of visiting, I was forbidden to pray. Simply moving my lips in whispered prayer could be grounds for removal. Why? Because I am a Jew. And only a Muslim can pray on the holiest site in Judaism. A Jew may not.

DURING THE War of Independence in 1948, the Old City of Jerusalem fell to the Jordanians. Nearly 1,500 Jews, including many <u>women</u> and children, were killed. While it was under Jordanian control, dozens of Jewish synagogues, many centuries old, were destroyed and the cemetery on the Mount of Olives, where Jews have been buried for 2,500 years, was desecrated. For 19 years, no Jew was allowed to set foot in the Old City or pray at the Western Wall, the retaining wall of the Temple Mount closest to where the Temples stood.

In June 1967, when Egypt, Syria and Jordan embarked on a war to annihilate the Jewish state, Israel recaptured Jerusalem's Old City. One of the most stirring announcements in Jewish history was the message transmitted from the front during the Six Day War: "The Temple Mount is in our hands."

Intolerance on the Temple Mount

But then, in a mind-boggling display of attempted appeasement of an enemy that just days before had sought Israel's destruction, defense minister Moshe Dayan decided to allow the Muslim religious council, the Wakf, to retain administrative authority over the Temple Mount. Thus, a truly bizarre and unacceptable situation developed.

Israel has scrupulously upheld Muslim worship at the Aksa Mosque, which was built just off the supposed site of the Temples, even when the site has been used to stone Jewish worshipers at the Western Wall and sermons are delivered calling for the demise of Israel and the US. Nor have Muslim prayer services been banned even in the worst periods of Arab terror attacks. During the just-completed Ramadan, hundreds of thousands of Arabs prayed at al-Aksa and held nighttime picnics on the Temple Mount breaking their fast. The garbage and leftover food items we saw strewn over the Temple Mount during our visit was appalling.

But in glaring contrast, Israel has, for the past 43 years, failed to challenge the Muslim ban on Jewish worship on the Temple Mount. On our visit, the number of Jews allowed up at one time was severely limited, we were checked for any religious items, which cannot be brought onto the Temple Mount by a Jew, and we were warned by the police not to even whisper a prayer.

THE STATUS quo is woefully offensive and intolerable. Never mind that at no time during the lengthy Muslim control over much of the Middle East did the Muslims ever designate Jerusalem as an imperial capital or even as a provincial or subprovincial capital. Even if we choose to overlook this very relevant history, the pattern of Islamic religious imperialism, exemplified by the Wakf's contemptible conduct on the Temple Mount, must not be ignored.

The problem is not simply that the Arabs have attempted to take as their own every site in Israel holy to Judaism, whether it be the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron, Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem or Joseph's Tomb in Nablus. But in doing so, they have consistently attempted to obliterate the historic Jewish connection and claim to each of those sites.

In the same manner, in the years following the Oslo Accords and Israel's withdrawal from Bethlehem, a concerted policy by the Palestinian Authority to Islamicize the city and terrorize the Christian population resulted in a reduction in the percentage of Christians living there from 60 percent to less than 15% today.

We pay a terrible price when we close our eyes to the trampling of human rights and religious freedom out of fear of enraging the Muslim world. The Temple Mount is a huge area. It is the length of nearly five football fields north to south, and nearly three football fields east to west. It is certainly large enough to accommodate the ancient call of the prophet Isaiah recited in fervent prayer by Jews on Yom Kippur: "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations."

The sooner we take action to help bring this about, the better.

Graphic

Photo: Room for all. The Temple Mount in Jerusalem's Old City. (Credit: Ariel Jerozolimski/The Jerusalem Post)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



<u>Letters</u>

The Jerusalem Post

September 9, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 14

Length: 1112 words

Byline: Deena Spigelman, M. Hagenauer, Moshe Miller, David Jacobs, Aaron Bashani, Frances Dash, Jock L.

Falkson, Marcella Wachtel, Naomi Chazan

Highlight: Readers' Letters

Body

Ask forgiveness

Sir, - We have finally found the solution to uniting Arabs and Israelis, and it's all thanks to the haredim. Just have them threaten to move into your neighborhood, and everyone in the vicinity will join forces against them ("Arabs, kibbutzniks forge unlikely alliance against proposed haredi city east of Hadera," September 8).

"Of course," you say, "I understand that they can't all fit into Mea She'arim. Just don't send them here."

It seems that after failing to find Jerusalem neighborhoods that would accept them, they try to build new communities suited to their lifestyle so as not to "bother" their Jewish brothers; but this is not acceptable, either. Nobody wants them anywhere around.

Doesn't this all sound too familiar? Have these kibbutzniks already forgotten why their kibbutzim were founded in the first place?

Let's replace "haredim" with "Jews" and "kibbutzniks" with "Europe," then remind ourselves that we are approaching Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, when we pray to our Maker for forgiveness.

DEENA SPIGELMAN

Jerusalem

Haredi 'ad'

Sir, - Riots against a parking lot open on Shabbat, and against autopsies; protests against the detaining of a suspected abusive mother; an attack on an Arab taxi - this summer's advertising campaign for the haredi life-style, geared toward the secular public and under way in Jerusalem, has been absolutely stunning ("Eda Haredit calls to tone down Jerusalem demonstrations," September 3).

Next time there's a haredi riot, not the police but a cordon of local leading rabbis should stand up against the rioters. If that doesn't work, jail would give them an opportunity to think things over. I suspect that quiet would quickly resume.

Letters

M. HAGENAUER

Jerusalem

Sir, - As these people are a tiny minority, and the majority of haredim want to find solutions in more constructive ways, I call on the media to balance its images by showing the haredim also involved in wholesome community and family activities.

These aggressive protesters don't speak for me, my family or my community.

MOSHE MILLER

Baltimore

Where were you then?

Sir, - Brian Walt and Brant Rosen state "kol yisrael arevim zeh le zeh" - that all Jews are responsible for each other. They then go on to remind us that Jews are not only responsible for Jews, but for all mankind and, by extension, for the people of Gaza ("Time for a moral reckoning," September 8).

The latter part of what they say would be more credible if they had only heeded the former.

Where were these rabbis during the years of terror rockets raining down on Southern Israel before the Gaza blockade? Did the rabbis protest the suicide bombings in our restaurants, cafes, hotels and streets before the Gaza blockade?

Did they attend the funerals of the innocent men, <u>women</u> and little children killed in Arab drive-by shootings before the Gaza blockade? Did they even offer their condolences?

Did they cry out to the world when our soldiers were captured, some of them murdered, at the hands of terrorists? Where was their Fast For Israel website?

Yes, Rabbis for Gaza: Kol yisrael arevim zeh le zeh.

DAVID JACOBS

Efrat

'Re-engagement' man

Sir, - Kadima strategist Eyal Arad, in accusing the prime minister of "whitewashing," is engaging in the ultimate doublespeak - similar to his coining of the term "disengagement" for the 2005 withdrawal from Gaza ("Netanyahu 'unfreezes' settlement terminology," September 7).

Netanyahu should also ban the term "disengagement" from official use. He can substitute the more neutral "withdrawal."

When I visited Gush Katif before the abandonment of our strategic Philadelphi line on the international border, I saw a huge banner declaring "No to Disengagement" and sensed immediately that Sharon would win. With Arad's help, he had tricked the defenders of Gush Katif into adopting his own agenda and terminology.

The vast majority of Israelis wanted to disengage from the Arabs - mostly a personal preference rather than a strategic consideration. I regard it as the height of hutzpa for Arad to declare that Netanyahu is making a mistake by trying to use terminology to his advantage.

Letters

And what a fleeting "disengagement" Arad and Kadima gave us! They sealed, in Cast Lead, our "reengagement" against <u>Hamas</u> in Gaza. And it will not be the last. Many more of our boys are yet likely to die for Arad's all-too-successful spin.

He should be retired, and we should admit our responsibility for having been so easily duped.

AARON BASHANI

Jerusalem

Glick on Iran

Sir, - I am a longtime and committed reader of Caroline Glick's column. My belief is that there is nobody here in Israel who more accurately has her finger on the tactical and strategic pulse of this region, as well as on that of the United States, and of the existential danger with which we here in Israel are confronted.

Ms. Glick's take on Iranian war preparation ("Time's up on Iran," September 4) eerily reflected what Adolf Hitler was doing in the early 1930s. We remain immobilized at our peril.

Based on Caroline Glick's knowledge and understanding, my question is: Why is she not the chief adviser in the inner cabinet of Binyamin Netanyahu? Given the lackluster performance of our government, Netanyahu would be well- advised to appoint her to such a position.

FRANCES DASH

Zichron Ya'acov

The very minimum,

one would think

Sir, - Re Ephraim Asculai's "The IAEA's credibility is at stake" (September 7), I am amazed that this UN committee has not simply asked to see the building - or at least its architectural plans - that is intended to house the "electricity-generating plant" Iran claim it needs nuclear power for.

JOCK L. FALKSON

Ra'anana

Send 'em back

whence they came

Sir, - I read with dismay the report about the neo- Nazi gang in Petah Tikva made up of Russian immigrant youths, several of whom have in the past been jailed for assault ("Neo-Nazi resurgence feared in Petah Tikva shul vandalism," September 7).

My question is: Why must we put up with neo-Nazis? Why not send them back to where life was clearly better for them?

The police source quoted said the authorities are determined to put a stop to this activity. Putting these youths in jail will only give them breathing space, and is anyway only a temporary solution.

Let us send them back to where they came from. Whatever they came here for, they evidently didn't find it.

MARCELLA WACHTEL

Jerusalem

Letters

Best of editors

Sir, - I was shocked to hear of Abigail's Radoszkowicz's untimely death. She was the best of editors: sensitive, encouraging, punctilious and understanding. Working with her was always a pleasure. She will be sorely missed.

I join the staff of The Jerusalem Post and Abigail's family in mourning her passing.

NAOMI CHAZAN, Jerusalem

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Protecting human rights is never 'interference'

The Jerusalem Post August 13, 2009 Thursday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 14

Length: 1047 words

Byline: JEFF HALPER

Highlight: Just as it is appropriate for Israel to intervene when Jewish human rights are threatened abroad, so too is it appropriate for foreign governments to intervene to strengthen human rights in Israel. Right of Reply. The writer

is director of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD).

Body

The article entitled Spain funds 'summer camp' for foreign volunteers to rebuild demolished illegal Palestinian homes, which merited the front page of The Jerusalem Post (August 10), would seem somewhat of a non- story. After all, Israel and the US funded NGOs assisting Jews in the Soviet Union.

Israel went so far as to argue that the human rights provisions of the UN Charter granted it the right to speak and act on behalf of persecuted Jews even if they were not Israeli nationals. Anyone approaching Jerusalem encounters the "Sakharov Gardens," named for Andrei Sakharov, a Soviet human rights figure who could not have survived without the political support of outside governments - a close friend, by the way, of Natan Sharansky, whose own release from the Gulag was made possible by the intervention of foreign governments.

Israel has long and openly justified its interventions in countries like apartheid South Africa and Argentina under the military dictatorship as a way of defending the local Jewish communities. So-called pro-Israel organizations in the US are well known for advocating support for pro-democracy groups in Iran and Egypt. And doesn't Israel intervene deeply in American internal politics when, through AIPAC, its lobby in Washington, it attempts to get "friends of Israel" elected to Congress and de-elect more critical members?

HERE I will say something that may surprise: Israel should intervene in situations when human rights are threatened, be they of Jews or of any other people. Indeed, Israel was one of the first countries to urge the governments of the world to employ universal jurisdiction in prosecuting Nazi war criminals. In doing so it recognized the essence of human rights - the notion that they are universal. "Universal jurisdiction" means, as Israel pointed out in the wake of the Holocaust, that safeguarding the rights of individuals and peoples is not the exclusive domain of the government involved, but is the business of the entire international community.

In urging universal jurisdiction on the international community, Israel rejected categorically the contention that the treatment of one's own citizens or people under one's control is a "domestic, internal matter." This was the argument used by the most nefarious of regimes: Hitler's claim that Germany's "Jewish problem" was an internal issue and that foreign governments should "butt out" is the most notorious, but it's been repeated by Russia in regard to Chechnya, China in regard to Tibet and the Serbs in their campaign of "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia to mention just a few. Human rights organizations are the favorite targets of oppressive regimes.

Protecting human rights is never 'interference'

One of the major instruments in enforcing universal human rights is the Fourth Geneva Convention, approved by the UN in 1949 and ratified by Israel. It provides a double layer of protection for people living under occupation: The occupying power is held responsible for the well-being of the people under its control, but so is the entire international community. While Israel refuses to apply the Fourth Geneva Convention to the occupied territories, denying that it even has an occupation (a position rejected by every country in the world, including its American patron), in fact all governments and court systems are required under universal jurisdiction to prosecute violations of human rights and to intervene on behalf of the peoples being oppressed.

This is no mere academic issue. Had the Fourth Geneva Convention been adopted and enforced by the international community in 1939 instead of 1949, the worst of the Holocaust could have been averted.

SO WHAT'S wrong with Spain supporting human rights organizations such as the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD), Breaking the Silence, Rabbis for Human Rights, the Coalition of <u>Women</u> for Peace and ACRI, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel? Just as it is absolutely appropriate for Israel to intervene when Jewish human rights are threatened abroad, so too is it absolutely appropriate for the Spanish government to intervene to strengthen human rights in Israel while offering protection to the Palestinians whose homes are being demolished.

But it isn't enough.

While I'm grateful that countries like Spain pursue their international responsibilities as guarantors of human rights, the occupation is robbing Israel of its soul. The fact that government officials and the media criticize "foreign intervention" yet ignore the reasons for it - in this case Israel's demolition of more than 24,000 Palestinian homes in the occupied territories since 1967 with no "security" justification at all - puts our country in the company of disreputable regimes under which Jews have traditionally suffered or against which they have struggled. If we cannot end this occupation on our own, I would ask Spain and the rest of the international community to intervene even more forcefully. Forget the pointless negotiations.

Merely enforcing the Fourth Geneva Convention would cause the occupation to collapse of its own illegality and immorality.

As for all those Israeli officials who nevertheless complain about foreign intervention in Israel's "internal affairs," I would simply point out a geographical and political fact: Neither the occupied territories nor their Palestinian residents are "internal" to Israel. Both are external. Our oppression of the Palestinians has nothing to do with the State of Israel. It is rather disingenuous, therefore, to argue that Spain, by supporting ICAHD's rebuilding of Palestinian homes illegally demolished in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention is somehow "interfering."

Finally, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's spokesman Mark Regev crosses a line of libel when he accuses me in the article of "justifying terror." My views are well known and readers can view many of my presentations on YouTube. I always condemn terrorism, the killing or harming of innocent civilians. But, again, I take the human rights approach which condemns all forms of terrorism, whether that of non-state actors like *Hamas* or that of states, certainly including Israel.

Let's start taking responsibility for our policies and actions so that other countries - who are not our enemies - will not find it necessary to "intervene."

Graphic

Photo: PARTICIPANTS in ICAHD's Rebuilding Camp take a break in front of a rebuilt Palestinian home in Anata (Credit: Courtesy of ICAHD)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



As a CIA spy, I saw in Iran what the West cannot ignore; We must defend freedom in Iran soon - or deal with nuclear-armed fanatics later.

The Christian Science Monitor August 5, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 995 words

Byline: Reza Kahlili

Body

Today the West must make one of the most important decisions of our era. Will we defend what remains of democracy and freedom in Iran, or will we succumb to Tehran's murderous government? It's a question that goes to the heart of our own security. Iran is a thugocracy of Islamic mullahs, and it will soon have nuclear arms.

Any misconception about the intentions of fanatics with nuclear bombs will have grave consequences. I know because I spent years alongside them as a CIA spy working under cover in Iran's Revolutionary Guards starting in the 1980s. The Guards Corps was set up as a check on the regular Army and to serve and secure the Islamic revolution. Thirty years of Western appeasement hasn't stopped them from terrorizing the West - or Iranians. Today, with Tehran's leaders caught in a power struggle over the June 12 election and the legitimacy of the regime, the Guards, led by zealots, are calling the shots. The Guards - and the hardliner clerics they protect - are vulnerable, however. This summer's grass-roots uprising has put them on the defensive. A strong Western hand now could tip the balance. We don't have a moment to lose. If we can't upend the Guards now, how can we do so once they have nuclear bombs? Washington could lead the way by refusing to recognize President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who earlier today took the oath of office for his second, four-year term. Instead, the United States should demand the freedom - and the freedom of speech - for all who've been arrested and tortured in recent weeks. And we should toughen sanctions to include cutting off Iran's gasoline supplies. The people of Iran are desperate for a show of support from the West. By standing with them, we can uphold our duty to defend democracy and take a stand for the security of the free world. Such a stand would mark a radical policy change. For the past 30 years, the West has tried very hard to appease Iran's mullahs. In the 1980s, I helped make known a secret pact between Iranian mullahs and some European governments. Thirsty for Iranian oil, the Europeans gave the go-ahead to Iranian agents to assassinate opposition members abroad without interference, as long as European citizens were not at risk. Hundreds of dissidents were gunned down. The US has also been guilty of trying to appease the mullahs. Almost every administration after the 1979 Iranian Revolution has tried in vain to create better relations through back channels. Yet those efforts haven't stopped Iran's rulers from arming terrorists, taking hostages, and suppressing their own people. The brutal killing of Iranians by their leaders that we're seeing today is nothing new. Ruling clerics have been killing political opponents, along with their families and friends, for 30 years - but inside prison walls. I've been inside those walls and I've seen teenage girls who were raped before execution so they were no longer virgins and therefore, according to their Islamic beliefs, couldn't go to heaven. I've seen hundreds hung on cranes. I've seen women and men lined up in front of firing squads after being severely tortured; their families would be forced to pay for the cost of the bullets. Western officials were quite aware that this was happening, but they let their thirst for oil blind them. Today, however, the screams of Iranians young and old calling for democracy and freedom cannot be ignored. The post-election uprising has started the countdown of the end of the thugocracy in Iran. This is the desire of the Iranian people. It should be our desire, too. So far, the West As a CIA spy, I saw in Iran what the West cannot ignore We must defend freedom in Iran soon - or deal with nuclear-armed fanatics later.

has kept fairly quiet about Iran's unrest. President Obama and others say they don't want to give credence to Tehran's claims of a Western conspiracy behind the protests. And by not ruffling the regime's feathers, they hope to negotiate improved ties and resolve the nuclear impasse. But how do you negotiate with a government composed of terrorists? Right now, the Revolutionary Guards have near-complete control of Iran. This terrorist organization is expanding its power throughout the Middle East. Its ultimate goal is to bring the demise of the West. With the help of North Korea, the Guards are working on long-range ballistic missiles in tests that are concealed by their space project. The Guards have also accelerated their production of Sejil, solid fuel missiles, and are working nonstop to improve the range of those missiles. Today they can strike Tel Aviv, Riyadh, US bases in Iraq, and the US Navy's Fifth Fleet headquarters in Bahrain. Their goal is to be able to target all of Europe. The Guards are also working on their nuclear bomb project in facilities unknown to the West. Iran's defense minister, Mostafa Najjar, who oversees the development of missile and nuclear technology, was in charge of the Revolutionary Guards forces in Lebanon that facilitated the attack on the Marine Corps barracks in Beirut on Oct. 23, 1983, killing 241 US servicemen. The current deputy defense minister, Ahmad Vahidi, who oversees the distribution of arms and missiles to terrorist groups such as Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, and Hamas, was the commander of the Guards' elite Quds Forces and the chief intelligence officer of the Guards in charge of the terrorist activities outside of Iran. Mr. Vahidi is currently on Interpol's Most Wanted List for the attack on the Jewish community center in Buenos Aires on July 18, 1994 that killed 85 and injured more than 100. Many Iranian officials have Interpol arrest warrants, and even supreme leader Ayatollah Khamenei has been recognized in courts as one who has ordered such acts. Fanatic radicals such as these are incompatible with a free Iran. This is the best opportunity in 30 years to change course and stop succumbing to thugs. Will we seize it? "Reza Kahlili" is a pseudonym for an ex-CIA spy who requires anonymity for safety reasons. He is writing a book about his life and experiences as a CIA agent in Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

Load-Date: February 19, 2010



As a CIA spy, I saw in Iran what the West cannot ignore

Christian Science Monitor August 5, 2009, Wednesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 9

Length: 999 words

Byline: Reza Kahlili

Dateline: Los Angeles

Body

Today the West must make one of the most important decisions of our era. Will we defend what remains of democracy and freedom in Iran, or will we succumb to Tehran's murderous government?

It's a question that goes to the heart of our own security. Iran is a thugocracy of Islamic mullahs, and it will soon have nuclear arms. Any misconception about the intentions of fanatics with nuclear bombs will have grave consequences.

I know because I spent years alongside them as a CIA spy working under cover in Iran's Revolutionary Guards starting in the 1980s.

The Guards Corps was set up as a check on the regular Army and to serve and secure the Islamic revolution. Thirty years of Western appearsement hasn't stopped them from terrorizing the West - or Iranians. Today, with Tehran's leaders caught in a power struggle over the June 12 election and the legitimacy of the regime, the Guards, led by zealots, are calling the shots.

The Guards - and the hardliner clerics they protect - are vulnerable, however. This summer's grass-roots uprising has put them on the defensive. A strong Western hand now could tip the balance.

We don't have a moment to lose. If we can't upend the Guards now, how can we do so once they have nuclear bombs?

Washington could lead the way by refusing to recognize President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who earlier today took the oath of office for his second, four-year term. Instead, the United States should demand the freedom - and the freedom of speech - for all who've been arrested and tortured in recent weeks. And we should toughen sanctions to include cutting off Iran's gasoline supplies.

The people of Iran are desperate for a show of support from the West. By standing with them, we can uphold our duty to defend democracy and take a stand for the security of the free world.

Such a stand would mark a radical policy change. For the past 30 years, the West has tried very hard to appease Iran's mullahs.

As a CIA spy, I saw in Iran what the West cannot ignore

In the 1980s, I helped make known a secret pact between Iranian mullahs and some European governments. Thirsty for Iranian oil, the Europeans gave the go-ahead to Iranian agents to assassinate opposition members abroad without interference, as long as European citizens were not at risk. Hundreds of dissidents were gunned down.

The US has also been guilty of trying to appease the mullahs. Almost every administration after the 1979 Iranian Revolution has tried in vain to create better relations through back channels. Yet those efforts haven't stopped Iran's rulers from arming terrorists, taking hostages, and suppressing their own people.

The brutal killing of Iranians by their leaders that we're seeing today is nothing new. Ruling clerics have been killing political opponents, along with their families and friends, for 30 years - but inside prison walls.

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As a CIA spy, I saw in Iran what the West cannot ignore

"Reza Kahlili" is a pseudonym for an ex-CIA spy who requires anonymity for safety reasons. He is writing a book about his life and experiences as a CIA agent in Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

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Load-Date: August 5, 2009



Too gung-ho? Israel's military rabbis draw criticism

The Daily Star (Lebanon) August 18, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 1099 words **Byline:** Daily Star Staff

Body

Most Israelis expect their military rabbis to confine themselves to such tasks as making sure the army provides kosher food and respects the Sabbath. But lately, some of them are asserting their own idea of Jewish virtue at the risk of stepping into the country's culture wars. Some critics worry that the rabbinate and its charismatic chief, Brigadier General Avichai Rontzki.

Matti Friedman

Associated Press

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM: Most Israelis expect their military rabbis to confine themselves to such tasks as making sure the army provides kosher food and respects the Sabbath. But lately, some of them are asserting their own idea of Jewish virtue at the risk of stepping into the country's culture wars. Some critics worry that the rabbinate and its charismatic chief, Brigadier General Avichai Rontzki, are infusing a militant mix of Judaism and nationalism into a traditionally secular institution that embodies the Israeli consensus.

On the Palestinian side, Islamic hardliners already see their war with Israel through an uncompromising religious lens, and the rabbinate's critics warn that Israel must not follow suit and risk pushing the conflict closer to a zero-sum holy war.

When Israeli soldiers massed on the Gaza border for the country's offensive against <u>Hamas</u> militants six months ago, uniformed rabbis stood amid the tents and tanks, reciting prayers with the men as they prepared for battle. When the troops went into Gaza, Rontzki went in with them.

That might not have seemed unusual, but some rabbis went much further, distributing pamphlets that put the conflict firmly in religious terms. One suggested a parallel between today's Palestinians and the Philistines, the biblical foes of the Israelites.

After criticism arose, the army condemned the pamphlet and Rontzki said it was distributed without his knowledge.

But the critics say it was in line with a pattern that goes against the heterogeneous nature of Israel's conscript army.

Too gung-ho? Israel 's military rabbis draw criticism

Although mostly Jewish, the Israel Defense Forces' estimated 175,000 regular troops include some Muslim Arabs and immigrants from the former Soviet Union who identify as Christians. The military's advocate general is an Orthodox Jew, and the editor of its official magazine is openly gay.

All soldiers have access to their own clergy and observe their religions' holidays, though only Jewish chaplains wear uniforms and serve in the military rabbinate.

Rontzki was given the job in 2006, after relations between the government and the settler movement were soured by Israel's removal of 8,000 settlers from Gaza the year before.

Claiming Gaza was Jewish land, and fearing Jewish settlements in the West Bank would be next to go, some settlement supporters called on soldiers to refuse orders and even to dodge the draft. Rontzki, himself a West Bank settler, was not among the resisters. A former combat officer who came to religion as an adult and had become an influential rabbi, he seemed the perfect candidate to heal the rift.

The army chose Rontzki "instead of a more moderate personality with the hope of avoiding the kind of problems discussed around the withdrawal from Gaza," said Gershom Gorenberg, an Israeli historian who has studied the settler movement.

"In the process, it has given a very prominent pulpit to someone whose views on other issues are extremely controversial," he said.

Rontzki pioneered a new arm of the rabbinate dedicated to Jewish education, dubbed the Jewish Consciousness division.

During the Gaza war his staff distributed colorful pamphlets exhorting soldiers to victory, accompanied by prayers, photographs of uniformed men in prayer shawls, and a number to call with questions of religious law.

Rabbis have always been a visible component of military life, ministering to troops in the field and officiating at soldiers' funerals. But as the political clout of religious Israelis has grown in recent years, so has the sensitivity of secular Israelis to signs of religious influence in state institutions, especially the military.

"Under Rontzki's command, the rabbinate is giving the conflict a religious overtone, and they are also using their free access to soldiers to work toward political goals," said Michael Sfard, an attorney for Yesh Din, an Israeli human rights group. Those goals, critics like Sfard say, include making sure the West Bank, claimed by the Palestinians as part of their future state, remains in Jewish hands for good.

Rontzki has been accused of speaking out against military service for Israeli <u>women</u> - he denies it - and after Bamahane, the army magazine, profiled a homosexual major, Rontzki wrote to several senior officers to protest.

Israel's army is proud of the opportunities it provides to <u>women</u> and openly gay soldiers. "A senior [Israeli Army] officer who believes that it would be better for <u>women</u> not to be drafted and that homosexual soldiers should be erased from official army publications does not deserve to serve in his position," the Association for Civil Rights in Israel wrote to the military chief of staff.

The military responded that Rontzki was expressing his own personal opinions. It declined to let Rontzki be interviewed, but Major Avital Leibovich, a spokeswoman, said his actions were in line with military orders.

"The jobs of the rabbinate have not changed," Leibovich said. "The rabbinate is not supposed to be a substitute for the commander on the ground, but to give a spiritual boost to a religious soldier who might need it." The rabbinate's new approach comes at a time of rising Orthodox influence in the military's combat units. Elite troops once came predominantly from the socialist kibbutz movement; today they are more likely to be people like Rontzki - skull capped, seminary-educated and steeped in an ethos of national service, sacrifice and building settlements.

The military does not keep statistics on religious affiliation, but it is clear that more religious Jews are making their way up the ranks. Some estimates say a quarter of the troops now completing combat officers' training are

Too gung-ho? Israel 's military rabbis draw criticism

religious. However, skullcaps like the one worn by 57-year-old Ronzki are still rare among the top brass, which remains overwhelmingly secular.

Some Orthodox leaders and educators voice concern that serving alongside secular conscripts weakens religious conviction. One of Rontzki's goals has been to counter that tendency.

Most in the army think Rontzki's activist Judaism is good for morale, said Yaakov Amidror, a retired general who is Orthodox himself.

Rontzki "has pushed himself into areas the military rabbinate never went before," Amidror said.

Load-Date: August 17, 2009



Playing Russian roulette

The Jerusalem Post August 9, 2009 Sunday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 14

Length: 1007 words

Byline: FRIMET ROTH

Highlight: The writer and her husband founded the Malki Foundation (<u>www.kerenmalki.org</u>) in their daughter's memory. Malki Roth was murdered in the Sbarro restaurant massacre of 2001. The foundation provides concrete support for Israeli families of all faiths who care at home for a special-needs child.

Body

Eight years ago my family and I spent this week sitting on low chairs, sobbing, embraced by friends and family. Media reports of the August 9 Jerusalem Sbarro suicide bombing in which our daughter Malki had perished did not reach us then.

Reading these reports now has taught us much about the West's attitudes toward terrorism against Israelis. Even in real time, the attacks that ravaged Israel during the second intifada were minimized by foreign correspondents. Protective of the myth of a "cycle" of violence, they downplayed Palestinian aggression and inflated Israel's meek reactions.

In August 2001, only the truly delusionary could fail to see that terrorism enjoyed the upper hand; Israel was stumped.

Fifteen men, <u>women</u> and children had just been blown up while they ate lunch in downtown Jerusalem, yet thengovernment spokesman Ra'anan Gissin promised a "measured, proper response."

In his initial report on the massacre, New York Times journalist Clyde Haberman did not focus first on details of the terror attack. He was more struck by Israel's reaction, calling it the most sweeping assault to date on the Palestinian Authority.

His follow-up report, dated August 11, was entitled "Israelis grieve, and strike back." What was Haberman talking about? Israel had "retaliated" by "occupying over nine buildings in east Jerusalem and its outskirts, most significantly Orient House... [it] also fired missiles that destroyed a police headquarters in Ramallah. No one was injured, though." It would be hard to imagine a more emphatic turning of the other cheek.

The moral of the story is one that Israeli leaders still find hard to digest: The West will rebuke Israel even if it behaves suicidally. It will aim the most censorious language at the most restrained behavior.

STRIVING FOR a perfect report card is even more Sisyphean in the Obama era. At least the Sbarro attack was referred to unflinchingly as "terrorism." Today the T-word is being eradicated from the White House's lexicon.

Playing Russian roulette

In his June 2009 Cairo address, President Barack Obama avoided it entirely. He referred to Muslim terrorists with this tongue-twister: "Violent extremists [who] have exploited these tensions in a small but potent minority of Muslims." The deletion of "terrorism" is not simply a question of semantics. It is but one element of a calculated strategy. In February, Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano dropped the terms "terror" and "vulnerability" from remarks delivered to the House Homeland Security Committee.

An official memo from the US National Counterterrorism Communication Center directs the replacement of "terrorists" with words like "extremists" or "totalitarians." The center has also drafted official guidelines in its publication, "Terminology to Define the Terrorists: Recommendations from American Muslims, a Guide for US Government Officials."

But the victims of Palestinian terrorism will not allow those events to be forgotten. We know that our survival depends on remembering them.

One telling image from those years is of Palestinians in Ramallah, a town 15 minutes from our home, dancing at night in the streets and handing out candies. They were celebrating the Sbarro attack, our child's murder.

Any Western leader who solicits Israel's support for a Palestinian state will need to prove that our neighbors have been transformed. Radically. We would be mad if we didn't demand that.

BUT THERE is no such evidence.

Quite the contrary. Mahmoud Abbas, "moderate" darling of the West, doesn't hide his enduring esteem for terrorism. That is, not from his Muslim audiences. In March 2008, he told the Arabic-language Jordanian newspaper, Al- Dastur: "I was honored to be the one to shoot the first bullet in 1965," when Fatah launched its terror campaign against Israel.

To this day, Abbas rules under a huge photograph of his mentor, Yasser Arafat. But that is not the only terrorist whom Abbas emulates.

In May, Palestinian Media Watch noted that Abbas's Palestinian Authority named a new US-funded computer center after the "martyr" Dalal Mughrabi, who in 1978 led one of the most deadly terror attacks in Israel's history, murdering 37 Israelis, including 12 children. Last summer the PA sponsored the Dalal Mughrabi football championship for children and a summer camp named for Dalal Mughrabi.

In March, PA TV celebrated the 31st anniversary of the Mughrabi massacre as "one of the most important and most prominent special operations" carried out by a team of heroes.

In March 2008, Abbas declared to the Jordanian newspaper, Al-Dastur: "Now we are against armed conflict," explaining "because we are unable." He then added, "In the future stages, things may be different."

Two top Fatah figures, Rafik Natsheh and Muhammad Dahlan, are more forthcoming. In March, Dahlan called on <u>Hamas</u> not to recognize Israel's right to exist, pointing out that Fatah, the largest PLO faction, had never done so either. Since Operation Cast Lead, Dahlan has served as a special adviser to Abbas, and is certain to play a central role in any post-Abbas government.

Last week Natsheh, a member of the Fatah central committee and chairman of the faction's disciplinary "court," confirmed Dahlan's assertions in an interview with Al-Kuds al-Arabi. He added that Fatah has no intention of ever recognizing Israel.

CAN THESE unequivocal signs of aggression toward Israel be ignored? We are enjoying a lull in Palestinian attacks. But that is only due to Israel's abandonment of its post-Sbarro "measured" tactics. Today it relies on regular preemptive arrests in the West Bank, checkpoint vigilance, the partially built security barrier and, thanks to several major military operations, the power of deterrence.

Playing Russian roulette

The current calm is not due to any Palestinian metamorphosis. The US may have deleted terrorism from its politically correct dictionary, but it is alive and well in the hearts and minds of some Palestinians. Proceeding as if it weren't is like playing Russian roulette - with five rounds in the chamber and the gun pointed at Israel's head.

Graphic

Photo: THE SIXTH Fatah conference has been marred by internal conflict on the movement's future and its stance on Israel, with some still advocating violent resistance. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Gov't strikes back against 'biased' human rights NGOs. PMO likens fundraising for human rights in Riyadh to feminists 'asking Taliban for a donation'

The Jerusalem Post
July 15, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1 **Length:** 1066 words

Byline: HERB KEINON Highlight: Lead Story

Body

In the opening shot of a battle Jerusalem has decided to wage with NGOs it deems biased against Israel, the Prime Minister's Office on Tuesday slammed a recent Human Rights Watch (HRW) fundraising delegation to Saudi Arabia as evidence the organization has lost its "moral compass."

"A human rights organization raising money in Saudi Arabia is like a <u>women</u>'s rights group asking the Taliban for a donation," Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's spokesman Mark Regev said Monday.

"If you can fundraise in Saudi Arabia, why not move on to Somalia, Libya and North Korea?" he said. "For an organization that claims to offer moral direction, it appears that Human Rights Watch has seriously lost its moral compass."

Sarah Leah Whitson, director of HRW's Middle East and North Africa Division, responded by telling The Jerusalem Post that there was a need to distinguish between a government and its people, and to conflate the two was "misguided at best."

"Certainly not everyone is tainted by the misconduct of their government," she said, stressing that her organization did not take money from any governments around the world, but did solicit funds from individuals and foundations worldwide.

"There are private individuals in Saudi Arabia who are not part of the ruling government," she said.

Regev's comments came two weeks after Israel was ripped for alleged misconduct during Operation Cast Lead in reports issued by HRW and Amnesty International, two of the highest-profile human rights NGOs. Israel has decided to take a much more aggressive stance toward future reports issued by these organizations, the Post has learned.

"We will make a greater effort in the future to go through their reports with a fine-tooth comb, expose the inconsistencies and their problematic use of questionable data," one senior official said.

Gov't strikes back against 'biased' human rights NGOs. PMO likens fundraising for human rights in Riyadh to feminists 'asking Taliban for a donation'

"We discovered during the Gaza operation and the Second Lebanon War that these organizations come in with a very strong agenda, and because they claim to have some kind of halo around them, they receive a status that they don't deserve," he said.

The Foreign Ministry is currently considering how best to expand its focus and deal more systematically with this issue, and it is assumed this will be done together with the Prime Minister's Office, the Post has learned.

At a press conference last week, Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman said the Foreign Ministry was currently involved in a reform that would place a much greater emphasis on dealing with NGOs, which Lieberman said were replacing diplomats as the engine for setting the international community's agenda.

Regev's comments on HRW were triggered by an op-ed that appeared Tuesday in The Wall Street Journal's online edition, reporting that a delegation from the organization recently visited Saudi Arabia to raise money from wealthy Saudis by highlighting the group's activities against Israel.

This op-ed, written by David Bernstein - a law professor at Virginia's George Mason University - was based on a report issued by NGO Monitor two months ago, which itself was based on an article on the visit that appeared in the Saudi English-language newspaper Arab News.

According to the Arab News story from May, a delegation of senior members of HRW were in Saudi Arabia and commended at a dinner attended by prominent members of Saudi society, human rights activists and dignitaries for work on Gaza and the Middle East as a whole.

According to the report, HRW presented a documentary and spoke on the report they had compiled "on Israel violating human rights and international law" during the Gaza operation.

"Human Rights Watch provided the international community with evidence of Israel using white phosphorus and launching systematic destructive attacks on civilian targets. Pro-Israel pressure groups in the US, the European Union and the United Nations have strongly resisted the report and tried to discredit it," Whitson was quoted in the paper as saying.

Whitson, according to the Arab News report, pointed out that the group had managed to testify about Israeli abuses to the US Congress on three occasions.

"US President Barack Obama and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called on Israel and the <u>Hamas</u> authorities in Gaza to cooperate with the United Nations fact-finding mission to investigate the allegations of serious Israeli violations during the war on Gaza," she was quoted as saying.

Gerald Steinberg, the executive director of the Jerusalem-based NGO Monitor, which monitors humanitarian NGOs working in or compiling reports about Israel, called Saudi Arabia one of the world's greatest human rights violators and said that for a human rights organization to go there looking for funds was "grossly immoral."

Steinberg said that HRW had turned to the Arab world for funds since some of its major Jewish donors had stopped contributing to the organization because of its stance on Israel.

He added that it was disingenuous for Whitson to say the organization was soliciting individuals in Saudi Arabia, not the government, since the wealth that the organization was soliciting in Saudi Arabia "can only be part of the Saudi elite," and the elite were an integral part of a regime and system notorious for human rights violations.

Whitson slammed both NGO Monitor and Bernstein for not calling her to check their facts, and said that if they had done so they would have been informed that - contrary to the impressions left by their reports - HRW did discuss Saudi human rights violations during the delegation's visit.

She dismissed NGO Monitor as a "propaganda organization."

Gov't strikes back against 'biased' human rights NGOs. PMO likens fundraising for human rights in Riyadh to feminists 'asking Taliban for a donation'

Steinberg said that e-mail queries his organization had left with Whitson and HRW executive-director Kenneth Roth on the matter had gone unanswered.

Whitson dismissed the impression left in the Arab News report that the organization's sales pitch in Saudi Arabia had been based on its work slamming Israel, saying there was Saudi press censorship, and it was clear that HRW's work in Gaza was the angle that the authorities in Riyadh would want to highlight.

Whitson said that while in Saudi Arabia, HRW had met with the government's human rights commission and had private dinners, "just as we have private dinners in Tel Aviv, London and New Delhi."

She said the group had Saudi donors, but - citing her organization's policy - would not identify them or say how much money had been raised on the recent visit to the Saudi kingdom.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



All in the worst possible taste; FILM OF THE WEEK BR??NO (18) Larry Charles (83 mins) ** STARRING Sacha Baron Cohen, Gustaf Hammarsten

Arts & Book Review
July 10, 2009
First Edition

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Section: FILMS; Pg. 10

Length: 964 words

Byline: Reviews by Anthony Quinn

Body

How far can you go? Put that question to Brüno, Sacha Baron Cohen's flamboyantly gay Austrian fashionista, and he would most likely provide you with an explicit demonstration involving sex toys and human orifices. That far. Now the subject of his own mockumentary, Brüno doesn't so much push the envelope as tear it into squares and use it as bog-roll.

There are provocations here so inflammatory they make you wonder how on earth the cast and crew managed to escape with their lives. Like the scene in which a half-naked Brüno parades through an orthodox neighbourhood in Israel and then has to flee a posse of furious Hasidic Jews. Or the scene in which he shows off his black baby ("I called him OJ") to a daytime TV audience of outraged African-Americans.

Or the scene in which he goes hunting in the woods with a trio of rifle-toting good ol' boys whom he tries to seduce in their tents after lights out. The busiest person on the set, you suspect, was Baron Cohen's getaway driver.

This might be a more pertinent question: How far can you go and still be funny? Baron Cohen and his team of writers and producers scored a huge and deserved hit with their 2006 comedy Borat, setting the bar of obnoxiousness so high as to seem in constant danger of breaking their necks. Yet Borat, for all his crude antipathies towards Jews, Gypsies, gays and <u>women</u>, was a different creature, venturing so deeply into cluelessness and gaucherie that he came out the other side looking amiable.

He was a badly-dressed bumpkin whose journey of discovery to America put a whole new slant on the innocent abroad. What made him so funny was that he managed to be offensive and weirdly charming at the same time.

That trick has not been repeated here. Brüno is possessed of something, but it's definitely not charm. Where Borat seemed ingenuous, Brüno is altogether more knowing, and his avowed career plan - "I wanna be a shtar in a huge Hollywood movie" - puts us on alert. For starters, he's already got his own TV fashion show ("Funkyzeit mit Brüno"), so his subsequent naivety about the media - on which the whole comedy is premised - feels utterly bogus. The story begins with Brüno's ostracism from the fashion world after he misbehaves at one of the shows: or, as he puts it, "For the second time in a century the world had turned on Austria's greatest man, just because he tried something different." His crypto- Nazi leanings is another unpleasant little dab of character that's designed to alienate. And so, like many a talentless half-wit before him, he heads out for Los Angeles in enthusiastic pursuit of

All in the worst possible taste FILM OF THE WEEK BR??NO (18) Larry Charles (83 mins) ** STARRING Sacha Baron Cohen, Gustaf Hammarsten

celebrity, accompanied by a slavish personal assistant, Lutz (Gustaf Hammarsten), who happens to love him. In this regard he is surely unique.

Brüno, the film, shares with Borat a fascination with the grotesque distorting lens of fame, with what people, mostly Americans, are prepared to do and say if they know a camera is trained on them. One-time popstar Paula Abdul, for example, is tricked into talking about her charity work, but when she's been invited to sit upon a Latino gardener ("Mexican chair people," Brüno styles them) for that interview, pieties such as "You give love to other people" have a hollow ring. Brüno, the star, however, keeps scrambling our responses, because he is often more contemptible than the people he sets up. Somehow, he wangles an interview in a hotel room with one-time US Presidential candidate Ron Paul, who eventually storms out of the place, complaining, quite truthfully, that his interviewer made a pass at him. I found his affronted reaction perfectly understandable. Later, Brüno visits a pastor who specialises in "converting" gays to the ways of straightness, and seeks advice as to what heterosexual activity he might safely pursue.

The pastor's suggestion that he lift weights - "there's nothing like building up your muscles around other men who aren't gay" - is abjectly laughable, but his evident sincerity in wanting to help makes him more sympathetic to us than his secret tormentor.

Occasionally, Brüno's wilful ignorance hits the funny bone dead-on. On a visit to the Middle East he sets up a dialogue between a hard-line Israeli and his Palestinian oppo, with himself in the role of peacemaker (he's heard that's what celebrities do). Typically, Brüno manages to confuse <u>Hamas</u> with hummus, and soon obliges the Israeli to point out, with amazing forbearance, "We both agree that hummus is very healthy."

They both agree, announces Brüno - job done! But the dreadful "peace" song he then sings for them isn't funny at all, and the way he gets the enemies to join hands is horribly embarrassing. (I watched much of this film through latticed fingers). The scene illustrates a notable, and regrettable, weakness in the film-makers' mindset - it's the point at which humour edges almost into nihilism.

Nothing has any meaning outside of mockery; ours is a world of vanity and gullibility, goes the thinking, so let's just keep poking a stick at it. There's something joyless about this perspective, and it's oddly exhausting, too. Some might find the contrivance ingenious - how, for instance, did they manage to get Brüno inside a swingers' orgy? Was that dominatrix for real? But when you start puzzling over the the complicity involved the joke withers and dies.

This isn't to say that Brüno will not be a massive hit. There's an appetite for "out-there" comedy, and the 18 certificate the film has been awarded will tip the wink to audiences: if you thought Borat (only a 15) was outrageous...

Of course, there are laughs, and if audacity were the only principle by which film-making achievement were judged the movie would be a knockout. But having groaned and winced through most of its 83 minutes I couldn't wait to get out of there.

Load-Date: July 9, 2009



The Daily Gleaner (New Brunswick)

July 6, 2009 Monday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. C2

Length: 1089 words

Body

Re: Child killed on ATV

Here we are less than one week after school let out for summer vacation and the first child has been killed riding an adult's ATV.

When are people going to wise up and realize these machines are not toys or babysitters?

Four children on an ATV, no supervision and they do not know if charges will be laid.

If they are not going to lay charges why bother having laws to prevent this behavior?

Weekly, I hear children brag about riding their parents ATV. Upon approaching the parents about proper size equipment and getting their child a safety course, I am usually met with a shrug of shoulders and "yes but my kids are responsible and I only let them ride in the yard."

I'm curious, if your children get killed in your yard does that make them any less dead? Is that how you want to remember your summer vacation?

The N.B. ATV Federation offers training courses for children on proper size equipment and with proper safety equipment. Please contact them and make sure that your children and you are properly trained. It's one afternoon out of your life.

A 500-pound machine and children do not mix.

Saying "no" to your children is not the worst thing in the world.

Losing them because you said "yes" is.

Let them ride responsibly.

Nancy Daamen

Hardwood Ridge, N.B.

Words were shocking

Re: Letter published June 25 called Suicide bombings are act of desperation

Justifying suicide bombing as an "act of desperation" is shocking.

The murder of innocent civilians is nothing to justify.

What exactly about the situation warrants desperation?

Is it the numerous peace proposals Israel has offered the Palestinians that they have refused? Or is it merely the existence of Israel itself that bothers these terrorists?

If the United States were to supply *Hamas* with modern armaments, you're right, they wouldn't launch rockets, but there would also be no more Israel.

And, after we provide them with these arms, rest assured, the suicide attacks will continue and their new excuse will be that they have not received enough weaponry.

Vicky Tobianah

Richmond Hill, Ont.

Move is cause for celebration

Re: Kelly Lamrock's removal as education minister

The demotion of Kelly Lamrock as education minister, all-too-long in coming, should be cause for widespread celebration for those with children.

His pompous and arrogant reign leaves behind a wasteland and has set education back 40 years in this province. After blowing \$3.5 million to move the location of Albert Street School on a whim, he then embarked on the most misconceived change to elementary education in a generation, that of eliminating early French immersion.

In the course of things, he found time to all but do away with school libraries, as well as to extensively cut back teaching assistants, the key pillar of inclusive education.

This cabinet shuffle, however, will inevitably be too little too late for Shawn Graham who has been asleep at the switch for most of his mandate and has been impervious to the rising tide of public discontent.

Filip Vanicek

Fredericton

Graduation was eve-opening

Re: Education for Ecole Sainte-Anne students

Congratulations to the newly graduated class of 2009 from Ecole Sainte-Anne.

It was eye-opening to be reminded that these lucky few francophone grads have been delivered their education - never having to change school, suffer the emotional/physical trauma of having to move to another school, losing contact with friends, as well as familiar and trusted educators.

I wonder how the students and parents of non-francophone schools view this issue.

Do they view the situation at Ecole Sainte-Anne as one they should also be entitled? Would they like a medical centre on campus dedicated to their language group?

How do they feel about education dollars being spent on a system supposedly promoting bilingualism, but strongly suggests linguistic exclusion?

I am aware this is a touchy issue in N.B. that politicians duck at every opportunity.

It's the people who must speak out, if only to stem the fiscal bleeding of taxpayer dollars in yet another example of duplication of service.

James Thompson

Fredericton

'I miss you, buddy'

Re: June 24 article on Corey Joseph Hayes

I just wanted to express my thanks to The Daily Gleaner for publishing another article in memory of Trooper Corey J. Hayes.

I grew up in the Ripples area and went to school with Corey and the rest of his brothers. I think everyone considered Corey their best friend because he always made it so easy to smile and laugh.

Corey had the best family around.

Bert and Donna were always running around with those boys, whether they were fishing, building dens or taking diving lessons together. When you met them anywhere, they would always stop and have a chat and make your day, just like Corey always did. When you're driving down Route 670 and you see the yellow ribbons, it's hard not to get choked up.

But I always try to remember all of the good times I've had with Corey and the rest of his family.

I wish all the best to the family in their involvement with the Canadian Forces, for they are already heroes in my book and the world needs more people like them fighting for us.

Corey's picture is, and always will be, in my kitchen to remind me of friendship, heroism and, above all, his great sacrifice for our freedom.

I miss you, buddy.

Beth McCoy

Ripples, N.B.

More *female* MLAs should be named to cabinet

Re: Recent cabinet shuffle by Premier Graham

I find it disappointing that, when given the opportunity to make cabinet changes, the premier chose to move his only *female* minister to another department.

He could have taken this opportunity to promote other <u>female</u> MLAs to cabinet positions. Clearly, the premier doesn't have the trust he should have in his <u>female</u> members.

The Graham government holds 33 seats in the legislature and only four of these seats are held by <u>women</u>. The cabinet has just one woman, Mary Schryer.

I congratulate Schryer on her move to the portfolio of minister of health, but am saddened that the premier has lost another opportunity to include more <u>women</u> in his cabinet. <u>Women</u> are huge contributors to politics and bring a unique and valued perspective to the table.

Our former premier, Bernard Lord, certainly agreed and appointed myself and colleagues, Rose-May Poirier, Madeleine Dubé, Kim Jardine and (then) Joan McAlpine to cabinet positions.

I am confident when elected premier, our leader, David Alward, will see the value in ensuring <u>women</u> are given positions in his cabinet.

Margaret-Ann Blaney

MLA and Opposition critic for issues relating to the status of women

Load-Date: July 6, 2009



From Ruddock to the the front line; current affairs

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

July 2, 2009 Thursday

First Edition

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Section: GREEN GUIDE; Pg. 15

Length: 924 words **Byline:** Paul Kalina

Body

LIKE many in the news business, Mike Carey has a knack for finding those with a nose for a good story.

He got wind of Sophie McNeill when he was a producer on SBS' Insight. A researcher had read in a university newspaper about a student from Perth who, aged 16, had made her way to East Timor during her summer holiday to film a documentary about a group of former refugees.

It piqued his curiosity, and a message was left asking McNeill to contact him.

That call led to a commission for a half-hour report about an asylum seeker who had died in detention at Port Hedland. As part of the story, the green reporter talked to Philip Ruddock, the former immigration minister.

Carey laughs as he recalls what happened. "Ruddock patronised her a lot, called her 'little girl' and she just carved him up. It was really funny."

Far from being humiliated, let alone intimidated by what happened on her first assignment, McNeill refused to leave the SBS building. "I quit uni and moved from Perth to Sydney and was forever corrupted," she says.

Carey, now an executive producer at the ABC, recalls the uni drop-out as "an independent thinker, willing to challenge things, not a formula person ... fearless and very ambitious".

His hunch about McNeill has paid off. At 24, McNeill is a full-time correspondent with SBS' Dateline and last year's recipient of the Young Australian Journalist of the Year award.

Her father, Gerard McNeill, is a former manager of the Fremantle Dockers - "you could say I had sympathy for the underdogs from a young age", McNeill quips - and her mother a physiotherapist, who returned to university to study after her divorce.

McNeill was inspired to make the East Timor documentary after befriending a group of refugees who had been airlifted from a UN compound to Perth in 1999. The refugees were later repatriated to Dili at the height of the wet season and had told McNeill about outbreaks of malaria and TB.

She was also spurred on by John Pilger's controversial book Hidden Agendas.

From Ruddock to the the front line current affairs

"I wanted to do what he was doing, telling people's stories and exposing things they didn't know about. It happened when I was at a young and impressionable age. I was 15, 16. If I wanted to shoot anything I had to do it myself, and, lo and behold, that became a job," she says.

Speaking from Kabul, where she is currently working on a story about human rights abuses and the hardships of everyday life eight years after the fall of the Taliban, McNeill laughs off suggestions that she was a high-school nerd.

A cadetship at SBS led to a job with Dateline, which has taken her abroad for the past three years, to the US and then the Middle East.

She is one of five people featured in the new five-part series Journos, which follows a handful of Australian journalists working around the world.

McNeill describes herself as a child of the September 11 generation. "I was at high school when it happened and it shaped my view of the world. It's shaped my fascination with this part of the world," she says.

She says youthfulness was a distinct advantage when it came to reporting from the region. "Look at Iran, where half the population is under 25. In Gaza, everyone basically is under 18.

"We hear from leaders and key officials but there are all these amazing stories from the younger generation that need to be told.

"Go hang out with the 18-year-olds in Gaza; they're the ones who have been living this last 10 years of history."

Being a <u>female</u> reporter in the Middle East also has its benefits. "I was filming in Gaza and the <u>Hamas</u> policemen were arresting journalists and taking their cameras but they left me alone. I don't know if it was because they didn't want to put me in handcuffs and shove me in the back of a van, if they felt they couldn't do that to a young lady.

"Whatever the reason, I was one of the few journalists they didn't arrest that day."

Contrary to the stereotype of the foreign correspondent, McNeill dislikes travel and being branded an adrenalin junkie.

In Journos, we see her undertaking a particularly dangerous journey in northern Iraq, which required her to travel in a heavily-armed convoy.

"I took no pleasure or excitement from it, I was terrified. In a way that's a good thing because the local people who have to drive down this road every day, they're terrified too. It's not a thrill-seeking adventure for them. They have to drive that road every day to go to the market to buy food.

"I'll take this small risk because it helps me tell the story. My parents get freaked out ... My father told me you're a good journalist but a terrible daughter. Maybe it's good to be terrified because you know what it's like to live there."

McNeill is clearly at home with the brand of current affairs coverage practised by Dateline, in which video journalists work on their own, focusing on what's happening at the grassroots level rather than in the corridors of power.

"At Dateline we'll try to make it more observational and involve the audience more in the process," she says.

"It's hard to get people involved in these stories, they're too depressing, they're far away, but if you're making it personal and making viewers part of the discovery process ...

"When you're crammed into the back of a small taxi or you're with someone in a prison and she turns around and tells you something hoping that the prison guard doesn't understand English ...

"With so much news you get like 30 seconds of some disaster and there's no persuasion for the viewer to be drawn into it."

Journos screens Sunday at 9.30pm on SBS One. Critic's view, page 30

Graphic

PHOTO: Dateline reporter Sophie McNeill, with children in Iraq, aims to "make it personal" for viewers.

Load-Date: July 1, 2009



International: Middle East: Comedy and cappuccinos: allure of normal life triumphs in West Bank 'ghost town': As checkpoints ease, Arab-Israelis are returning to Nablus as eager consumers

The Guardian - Final Edition
July 17, 2009 Friday

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Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 23

Length: 994 words

Byline: Rachel Shabi, Nablus

Body

The queues for Transformers and WALL-E outside the plush new picture house in Nablus have been long, but they are even longer for the latest blockbusters from Egypt and Lebanon.

Residents of the West Bank city marvel at the posters depicting a red-robed Haifa Wehbe, the popular Lebanese actor and singer, as well as the billboards for Egyptian comedies.

There has not been a cinema in Nablus for more than 20 years but this new 174-seat theatre, built for about £1.2m, even has a bright, modern cafe that will soon be serving cappuccinos and non-alcoholic cocktails alongside popcorn in five flavours.

Outside, the streets are bustling with shoppers piling out of coaches, and thronging the city markets - doubling trade according to several shopkeepers. Peddlers swirl around the shoppers, plying thimbles of coffee, sweets, plastic toys and dish cloths rapidly unpacked from piles of cardboard boxes.

"Everything has changed, completely," says 29-year-old Feno, who runs a designer jeans store in the Nablus casbah. "There are more cars, more people everywhere, it is easier to travel around and all the businesses and shops are open late."

Israel has recently eased restrictions at the four checkpoints surrounding Nablus, reportedly in response to US pressure. Huwara checkpoint, south of the city, was once the worst West Bank bottleneck, with its gruelling queues, exacting permit requirements and ban on all but pedestrian passage. Now, Israeli soldiers wave cars through unchecked, and, for the first time since 2000, Arab-Israelis can visit Nablus.

For the past few Saturdays they have arrived in droves, coming in private buses bearing Hebrew signs, or in yellow-plated Israeli cars, parking at new meters along the freshly painted kerbs.

"I organised a bus full of <u>women</u> to come shopping here today," says Rose Khutaba, who lives in a village near the Arab city of Sakhnin, northern Israel. At a shoe store where her daughter tries on trainers priced at a quarter of their

International: Middle East: Comedy and cappuccinos: allure of normal life triumphs in West Bank 'ghost town':

As checkpoints ease, Arab-Israelis are returning t....

cost in Israel, she notes: "It is a lot cheaper here." Khutaba has not visited the West Bank in more than 15 years. "We feel more at home here," she says. "We like the smell of the land, the Arab atmosphere."

Nablus was one of the hardest hit West Bank cities in the second intifada that erupted in 2000, when Israeli tanks and Palestinian fighters clashed in raging street battles. Israeli curfews, raids and checkpoints ensued and the once bustling, economic capital became a gang-ridden, crime-afflicted ghost town.

"Nablus was a city with no soul," says Lena al-Aghbar, a secretary at Nablus's An-Najah university. "But now we are happy to see everyone is coming back."

Residents say it is not just the new checkpoint policy that has brought improvements. It is also that the Palestinian Authority is now able to run a proper police force across West Bank cities, stepping into what had been a lawless void.

Amer Hijjawi, who runs a wedding and formal dress shop in Nablus with clients across the West Bank, recalls the previous street violence. "The gangs broke all the laws," he says. "They had no respect for culture, nothing. They just used the absence of law to do what they wanted." Gunfights replaced the gunfire of the intifada. Hijjawi had to refit his upper-level store three times in the same year as the battles below smashed his glass shopfront, crushing mannequins and puncturing rows of swish evening gowns with bullet holes.

About a year ago Hijjawi leaned across his desk to switch TV channels and a bullet flew past where his head had been seconds earlier.

Other traders talk of armed men running protection rackets, while street battles often caused storekeepers to shut shop in the middle of the day.

"Now we are going back to normal,"

says Hijjawi at the family's 30-year-old boutique. "And the first thing to improve has been my mental wellbeing."

But there's a limit to what the beefed-up Palestinian Authority police can do.

"Most robberies happen by night, because this is when the Israelis are operating so it is a chance to go and commit some crimes," says Ahmad Abu Alrub, deputy chief of the Nablus police.

Agreements with Israel stipulate that Nablus's local police cannot patrol the streets between midnight and morning, says Abu Alrub. The Israeli army often enters the city by night on what it defines as security-related activity; but crime comes under the jurisdiction of the PA police.

In the past month, eight schools were burgled after dark, while Israeli forces were in the area. Just a few days ago, says the police deputy chief, robbers used the cover of an Israeli army raid in the old city of Nablus to break into a store.

And while Nablus residents might trust the blue-uniformed local police, they are less enthusiastic about the greenclad officers of the PA's national security forces. "God only knows what happens to the people they catch," says one man. "We expect our enemy to punish us but we cannot understand when our own people treat us like enemies, and solve problems using force and torture."

The US-trained national security forces have arrested hundreds of <u>Hamas</u> members in the West Bank. Some Palestinians cite co-ordination between Israel and the "green forces" as proof of the Palestinian Authority implementing the occupation for the Jewish state.

A month-long shopping festival which started last week was welcomed by traders and residents, but there is widespread scepticism about the focus on the West Bank's economy rather than a full political settlement of the conflict.

International: Middle East: Comedy and cappuccinos: allure of normal life triumphs in West Bank 'ghost town':

As checkpoints ease, Arab-Israelis are returning t....

Farouq al-Masri, manager at the new Nablus cinema, says: "Israel is always trying to make it look as though the occupation has ended, rather than actually ending it."

Residents are wary of putting faith in relaxed measures which Israel can just as rapidly revoke. "Any talk of an economic peace without a complete peace settlement and an ending of the occupation is misguided," says al-Masri. "You can't ever take the politics out of the situation, not here."

Load-Date: July 17, 2009



International: Middle East: Comedy and cappuccinos: allure of normal life triumphs in West Bank 'ghost town': As checkpoints ease, Arab-Israelis are returning to Nablus as eager consumers

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"Most robberies happen by night, because this is when the Israelis are operating so it is a chance to go and commit some crimes," says Ahmad Abu Alrub, deputy chief of the Nablus police.

Agreements with Israel stipulate that Nablus's local police cannot patrol the streets between midnight and morning, says Abu Alrub. The Israeli army often enters the city by night on what it defines as security-related activity; but crime comes under the jurisdiction of the PA police.

In the past month, eight schools were burgled after dark, while Israeli forces were in the area. Just a few days ago, says the police deputy chief, robbers used the cover of an Israeli army raid in the old city of Nablus to break into a store.

And while Nablus residents might trust the blue-uniformed local police, they are less enthusiastic about the greenclad officers of the PA's national security forces. "God only knows what happens to the people they catch," says one man. "We expect our enemy to punish us but we cannot understand when our own people treat us like enemies, and solve problems using force and torture."

The US-trained national security forces have arrested hundreds of <u>Hamas</u> members in the West Bank. Some Palestinians cite co-ordination between Israel and the "green forces" as proof of the Palestinian Authority implementing the occupation for the Jewish state.

A month-long shopping festival which started last week was welcomed by traders and residents, but there is widespread scepticism about the focus on the West Bank's economy rather than a full political settlement of the conflict.

International: Middle East: Comedy and cappuccinos: allure of normal life triumphs in West Bank 'ghost town':

As checkpoints ease, Arab-Israelis are returning t....

Farouq al-Masri, manager at the new Nablus cinema, says: "Israel is always trying to make it look as though the occupation has ended, rather than actually ending it."

Residents are wary of putting faith in relaxed measures which Israel can just as rapidly revoke. "Any talk of an economic peace without a complete peace settlement and an ending of the occupation is misguided," says al-Masri. "You can't ever take the politics out of the situation, not here."

Load-Date: July 31, 2009



The Jerusalem Post

December 30, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 14

Length: 1085 words

Byline: Mitzi Klein, Miriam (Mickey) Blumberg, Jenny Weil, Marchal Kaplan, Uri Hirsch, Dr. Rachel Birati, David

Geffen, Rosy Frier-Dryden **Highlight:** Readers' Letters

Body

Thank you, Gil Troy

Sir, - My thanks to Gil Troy for focusing on the horrific story of the I7-year-old new immigrant being subjected to alleged police beating and brutalization by other prisoners, after being arrested on a minor offense ("The Galilee 'rape nightmare' tests us all," December 29).

His heartbroken mother asked, "How could this happen in Israel?" Since reading of this travesty of justice, I have asked myself this question as well, and as Israelis - whether new immigrants or not - we should all be asking this question of our government leaders and law enforcement officials. Are we a civilized society or not?

This tragic story highlights the need for reform throughout the police service at the highest level and without delay.

MITZI KLEIN

Jerusalem

Sir, - When I first read about the shocking treatment meted out to the young man from Karmiel, I could not stop thinking about the boy and his family, who, like my late husband and myself, came to live in Israel with our children, because we strongly believed in actively pursuing Zionist ideals and Jewish values in our own homeland.

I want to thank Gil Troy for pointing out the lack of response on behalf of our leaders and the general public. Our collective silence is deafening.

I wish that there were something I could do or say to this boy and his family that would make their lives somehow bearable after this awful experience, and hope perhaps they will still find a way to remain with us.

MIRIAM (MICKEY) BLUMBERG

Jerusalem

Making a distinction

Sir, - It was interesting to see two articles next to each other in the Post: "Iran seeks to separate the sexes" and "Poll: Vast majority of Israelis oppose gender- segregated buses" (December 28). Iran wants to impose religious Muslim views on its entire population, whereas the haredim want only segregated buses. Only a small segment of Israel's religious population has fundamentalist ideas. Thank God for the difference.

JENNY WEIL

Jerusalem

Sir, - Since there is such massive discord regarding the gender-segregated buses, I have a modest proposal (with apologies to Jonathan Swift) that should satisfy all parties.

Because the <u>women</u> object to being sent to "the back of the bus" - with all that it connotes - we shall seat them at the front. Ah, but then there would be objections that the men would be sitting in back, viewing all the <u>women</u>. The solution? Have the back seats face the rear, and men will board at the back as **women** do now. How about it?

MARCHAL KAPLAN

Jerusalem

Words aren't enough for Carter

Sir, - The only way Jimmy Carter's apology could be fully accepted is if he were to renounce his former statements around the world where he made the original anti Israel comments ("Carter offers apologies to Jewish community," Internet Edition, December 22). In addition, he would have to rewrite his book Palestine: Peace not Apartheid. Then, and only then, he might be forgiven - and who knows? Maybe in the future there will be streets in Israel called "Rehov Carter."

URI HIRSCH

Netanya

Solomonic advice

Sir, - In agonizing over how Gilad Schalit might be freed without compromising the safety of the nation, I found David Horovitz's advice most compelling: "There's no simple decision, but there is a right one. And it's not for the people of this nation, held hostage by <u>Hamas</u>, to take. That's why we have leadership" ("Editor's Notes: A nation held hostage," December 28).

I doubt King Solomon himself could have put it any better.

DR. RACHEL BIRATI

Melbourne

Memories of the 'Exodus'

Sir, - The death of the heroic captain of the Exodus ("Captain of the 'Exodus,' Ike Aranne, dies at age 86," December 24) brought back personal memories of the summer of 1947. When the ship began its voyage in July of that year, my friends and I were at Camp Rutledge, Georgia, for a month of summer fun.

At breakfast one morning, a counselor whose last name was Maslia and whose cousin, a young bride, had just gone to Palestine, stood up on a table so we could all see him. He announced that we, as American Jews, had to show support for those Jewish World War II survivors whom the British were trying to keep out of Palestine. None of us were au courant to the news of the day about this ship, but we thought, why not help them.

After eating, making our bunks and being inspected, we were led out to the ballfield, where all the counselors had put together pieces of wood of all sizes, plus hammers and nails for building. Some people really knew what to do, so after a couple of hours, we had our own own boat. We painted it and labeled it with stars of David in all sizes. The camp truck pulled up; the strongest counselors loaded the boat on the truck, and it was hauled to the lakeshore.

The campers, boys and girls, were sent back to our bunks and told to dress in the worst clothes we had. Next we were marched down to the waterfront, where this boat was floated. Orders were shouted at us: "Into the water, push the boat out as far as you can - return to shore."

Dripping wet, we left the water and heard quite clearly: "You are all free, as we hope those across the ocean on that ship might be" (I did not know the name "Exodus" until the book came out). The song leader grabbed the final moment as she led us in singing "Artza Alinu."

In the end, half a dozen of the counselors and campers assembled there that July did make aliya.

DAVID GEFFEN

Jerusalem

Searching for Capt. Rabinovich

Sir, - I am writing to enlist some help in locating the family of Capt. Alec Rabinovich. I am researching and searching for information to determine the feasibility of making a documentary of this young man's life and death in Gross Rosen Concentration Camp in Lower Silesia in Poland in 1944.

Rabinovich was born in Moscow May 27, 1918. His family were Russian Jews. Shortly after his birth, the family moved to Egypt. He was brought up there and was, for a time, a boxer.

When war broke out in Europe in 1939, he joined the French Foreign Legion, then made his way to England. He was wounded and taken prisoner after parachuting into France in March 1944. In September, Rabinovich and 18 of his comrades were driven to Gross Rosen, where they were executed. He was 25 years old.

His parents, of course, are long gone. He must have had siblings, and those brothers and sisters likely had children. It is also possible that some members of the Rabinovich family took up residence in Israel, and I am hoping that if that is so, someone will read and recall his history, and get in touch.

ROSY FRIER-DRYDEN

Vancouver, Canada

Graphic

Photo

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Bangladesh: Democracy, hypocrisy

Right Vision News

December 17, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 1167 words **Dateline:** Pakistan

Body

Pakistan, Dec. 17 -- Muslims are being discriminated against in the West under the umbrella of democracy. Switzerland's recent referendum on a ban on minarets is just one small example. Architecturally, minarets enhance a landscape. Certainly, the Spanish thought so. Before the Moors left Seville to make way for the Christian conquistadores in 1248 they wanted to destroy their venerated La Giralda minaret to ensure their enemies could not enjoy its beauty.

But King Alfonso X warned them not to remove a single stone under pain of being put to the sword. But let's not be deliberately obtuse. Those Swiss voters who decided to reject new minarets didn't do so from a sense of personal aestheticism or a feeling of being culturally swamped, since there are only four existing minarets in the entire country. This wasn't a vote against ornate towers; it was one against a powerful symbol of Islam. Those who defend this decision say Swiss residents should have the right to exclude unusual structures from their land and praise the democratic fashion in which it was taken. Yet if the same constituency were to take offense at, say, the Stars of David adorning the country's many synagogues it is highly unlikely that such a referendum would be allowed. And even if it were, Switzerland would be taken to task by the court of world opinion. Others, who include Christian and Jewish leaders, are appalled at such an attack on religious freedom in a country that purports to be a bastion of democracy. And, indeed, Switzerland's stereotypical reputation as a benign chocolate-loving, clock-making, banking heartland that prides itself on its neutrality has forever been eroded. In 2005, the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten published disgusting anti-Islamic cartoons obviously meant to fuel bigotry but the Danish government refused to take a stand preferring to hang on to one of democracy's main pillars free expression. Yet, if those cartoons had, for example, been anti-Semitic, there is little doubt the government would have stepped in citing the country's legislation prohibiting acts or expressions of a blasphemous or discriminatory nature. Likewise, the French ban on head scarves in public schools couched under a law barring visible religious symbols was designed primarily to discourage Muslim schoolgirls from wearing what its proponents mistakenly declared "a symbol of female repression." However, the ban served only to keep some devout students at home and to fuel Muslim anger that widened the rift between the French government and the country's five-million-plus Muslim population. The above examples are well-known, but you may not realize that the country which gave birth to democracy Greece has consistently blocked or delayed the construction of new mosques. Its capital Athens has been devoid of a single operating mosque since it became independent of the Ottoman Empire in the early 19th century. In 2003, Saudi Arabia agreed to fund the building of a mosque near Athens Airport ahead of the 2004 Olympics, which was initially approved by the government but was later thwarted by local residents. Then in 2007, the government unveiled a bill sanctioning a mosque to be built on land owned by the Greek Navy along with a Muslim cemetery. But, since the authorities have been dragging their heels, losing documentation, and tying up the proposal in a barrage of red tape, which means 300,000 Muslims - mainly from Albania, Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Pakistan, and North Africa - are forced to pray together in disused factories, offices, basements or the upper floors

Bangladesh : Democracy, hypocrisy

of coffee shops. During May this year, a basement that was used by Muslims as a place of worship was drenched with gasoline and fired. That same month witnessed a protest march by Muslims, furious that a Greek policeman had entered a Syrian-owned coffee shop and allegedly desecrated a customer's Qur'an, Only in the northeastern province of Thrace, where there is a large Muslim minority of 120,000 and a wealth of historic Ottoman architecture, are mosques prevalent. Without wishing to let Greece off the hook, I should point out that people's antipathy toward mosques isn't so much religiously-oriented as resentful hangover from three-centuries of Ottoman occupation as well as Turkey's invasion of Cyprus in 1974, which caused the island to be split. Nevertheless, such Islamophobic attitudes are to be condemned unconditionally. There will always be uneducated, ignorant, bigots or xenophobes around and the fear of others because they are a different skin color or hold to unfamiliar beliefs is part of the human condition to some extent. But there is no excuse for governments, which fan the flames of those attitudes or concerns. Democracy is based on certain ideals, values and freedoms of which the freedom of all citizens to worship is integral. The authorities should have no right to impinge upon religious sensitivities by imposing architectural or dress codes that pander to base xenophobic instincts or to give bigots carte blanche to mock the religious beliefs of others. Whether Judeo-Christian Europe likes it or not, Muslims make up a guarter of the world's population while Islam is the planet's fastest-growing religion. Alienating 1.5 billion Muslims, who feel increasingly under siege, is the wrong way to go.Particularly nauseating from my perspective is the way that some democracies are out to export this system of governance in a one-size-fits-all fashion for their own ends. A classic example is the internationally monitored 2006 Palestinian elections that swept Hamas to victory. Then as soon as the US and Britain had congratulated the Palestinian people on their fair and free ballot, they proceeded to punish them for making the wrong choice. Conversely, the result of the recent elections in Afghanistan that were found to be deeply flawed has been accepted by Washington and London because they gave "their man" an opportunity to stay on.Lastly, Muslim commentators should not make excuses for bigots or feel that Muslims should go the extra mile in an effort to be understood. The responsibility for this mess can be laid at the feet of one individual George W. Bush, whose "war on terror" in response to the actions of 19 murderers cast suspicion on Muslims everywhere. Muslims have been victims for far too long. They've been profiled, locked up and tortured. Their religion has been denigrated and there are more foreign troops on Muslim lands today than there were during the Crusades. Instead of treating Muslims with suspicion Europeans should take the path of tolerance. The Swiss businessman Guillaume Morand, a non-Muslim, was so appalled at his compatriots' decision that he has built a minaret on his company's roof. Bravo! If only there were more good people like him I wouldn't be writing this column. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Right Vision News. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Load-Date: December 17, 2009



A topsy turvy year of living dangerously

Cape Argus (South Africa)

December 19, 2009 Saturday

E1 Edition

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Section: LIFE; Pg. 18 Length: 1199 words

Body

The year saw Weekend Argus report a range of events - from far away wars to the festive World Cup draw in Cape Town. Acclaimed anti-apartheid activist Helen Suzman died on New Year's day in her Johannesburg home, while recovering from a cataract operation. Then-president Kgalema Motlanthe ordered the South African flag be flown at half-mast.

Also early in January, Israeli soldiers clashed with <u>Hamas</u> fighters as they advanced into Gaza in the first ground action of an eight-day incursion into the Palestinian enclave.

Later that month, Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe's wife, Grace, evoked outrage when she drew \$92 000 in foreign exchange from the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe to bankroll her family holiday in the Far East, despite her country's crippling economic crisis.

In February, a fire raging out of control in Algeria in the Cederberg engulfed a church, a school and a house. Fires, fanned by gale-force winds, raged in the Winelands, Overberg, the West Coast and Cape Town. Ninety blazes were reported in a 24-hour period.

Later in the month, disgraced ANC spokesman, former jailed ANC activist and post-1994 MP Carl Niehaus - who confessed to committing fraud - tendered his resignation to the ANC.

In early March, Robert Mugabe used his 85th birthday party to tell his country's last white farmers to leave, vowing that land seizures would continue. Also in March, Susan Tsvangirai, the wife of Zimbabwe's new Prime Minister, Morgan Tsvangirai, died in a car crash.

In April, just a month after fraud and corruption charges had been dropped against Jacob Zuma, the ANC won the national elections with 65.9 percent of the votes, and Zuma became president of the country. However, the ANC lost the Western Cape to the DA.

In the same month, the first cases of swine flu - later named Novel Influenza A (H1N1) - emerged in Mexico, sparking fears of its spreading worldwide. By early May, South Africa had recorded its first suspected cases of the flu, among them Susan Kok of Mossel Bay.

Also in May, a bungle with the counting of votes in M-Net's reality show Idols led to Sasha-Lee Davids, of Atlantis, being crowned the winner instead of KwaZulu-Natal's Jason Hartman, who had received 200 000 more votes. They were later declared "co-winners".

A topsy turvy year of living dangerously

There was a heart-rending incident for animal lovers when authorities had to shoot more than 50 false killer whales that had beached on Long Beach, Kommetjie.

In June, the Confederations Cup in Gauteng was marred when the hotel rooms of the Egyptian soccer team were broken into and thousands of rands were stolen. Allegations, later denied, emerged that members of the team had been cavorting with sex workers at the time of the robbery.

The world bade a sad farewell to pop music idol Michael Jackson in June. Dominating headlines were the cocktail of medication that led to his death, whether Jackson's doctor, Conrad Robert Murray, was culpable, and who would get custody of the singer's children.

In July, Mcebisi Skwatsha's controversial ANC provincial executive was given the boot. Infighting in the province was largely blamed for the party losing the Western Cape to the DA. The ANC's national executive committee dissolved the provincial executive.

Later in July, the Weekend Argus broke the story about two-week-old baby Siphisihle Ncumani being snatched from Tygerberg Hospital while his mother, Zimkhita Ncumani, was in a coma.

A month later, Mitchells Plain police officer Charles Julius investigated information that led to the baby being found. Bulelwa Xeza was arrested and later sentenced to 10 years in prison for kidnapping.

On August 1, this paper reported on a dramatic attack on a pupil at an Elsies River School. Using exclusive shots from the school's CCTV camera, it told how an expelled teenager and his brother barged into the school, swung a pipe at 17-year-old Lloyd Mtshozeni and attempted to stab him.

Former Western Province captain Luke Watson married Elaine Lock at St George's Cathedral on August 1, making the front page. Watson wore a traditional Scottish tartan kilt, while his bride was radiant in a black gown.

In August, athlete Caster Semenya burst on to the scene, winning a gold medal at the 12th IAAF world Championship in Berlin. Questions arose about her gender, and the controversy that erupted saw politicians such as Julius Malema and Winnie Madikizela-Mandela enter the fray. Following sex tests, which Athletics SA originally denied had taken place, an Australian newspaper reported what it said were leaked results. The report said that the 18-year-old had *female* and male sexual characteristics. Semenya was not stripped of her medal.

Also in August, Brandon Huntley, a white South African living in Canada, was granted refugee status based on his claims that he had been persecuted because of his race. The Weekend Argus reported that Huntley was not alone and that 604 other South Africans were living as refugees in other parts of the world. The Canadian decision is being challenged and it is possible Huntley's status may be revoked.

In the same month, the Judicial Service Commission dropped the matter where Cape Judge-President John Hlophe was accused of gross misconduct. He had been accused of trying to influence the outcome of litigation involving Zuma. A few days later, he was interviewed to become a member of the highest court in the land, but was not chosen.

Early in October, Leon Hans told how three members of his hiking party died in a snowstorm in the Swartberg Mountains near Oudtshoorn. The three were Charmaine Appels, 46, Deborah Raubenheimer, 51, and Baronese Jongbloed, 50. Hans was one of three hikers who survived.

Also in October, while her mother and grandmother were browsing through a mall, an 18-year-old private school pupil allegedly sneaked off, on what was her birthday, to meet a hitman at a Mugg & Bean coffee shop with a view to killing the mother of her ex-boyfriend.

Later in the month, e.tv's 3rd Degree journalist Shadi Rapitso was held hostage, and stabbed to death.

Fraud accused J Arthur Brown was found living in a mansion in Hout Bay Valley - more than two years after the multimillion-rand Fidentia scandal broke. The former Fidentia boss was spotted driving a silver 4x4 Jeep.

A topsy turvy year of living dangerously

On the Cape flats and in the city, police and neighbourhood watch members waged war on drugs and crime - and criminals waged war back .

Long Street provided much news - from its parties and rich history to the unsavoury goings-on at the notorious Senator Park block of flats.

In November, taxpayers discovered they were coughing up R300 000 a month because Malema's life was said to be in danger. Reports emerged of his using a blue light on his private car to avoid roadblocks.

Later in November, this paper reported how pilot Dave Stock, who had flown with British tycoon Sir Richard Branson, died when his aircraft crashed at the biannual Overberg Air Show at Bredasdorp.

In Cape Town earlier this month, Bafana Bafana were handed a blow when they were grouped with France, Mexico and Uruguay for the World Cup. One of the eight seeds, the host nation had expected a favourable draw.

Meanwhile, the draw party was a roaring success and Cape Town's international prestige grew.

Load-Date: December 18, 2009



A real miracle or the doing of extraordinary people?

The Jerusalem Post
December 11, 2009 Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 8

Length: 949 words

Byline: DANIEL GORDIS

Highlight: Almost a year after St.-Sgt. Dvir Emanuelof became the first casualty of Operation Cast Lead, his mother happened across the little boy who was named after him. The writer is senior vice president of the Shalem Center in Jerusalem. He is the author, most recently, of Saving Israel: How the Jewish People Can Win a War That May Never End (Wiley, 2009). He blogs at http://danielgordis.org.

Body

It's been almost a year since St.-Sgt. Dvir Emanuelof became the first casualty of Operation Cast Lead, losing his life to <u>Hamas</u> mortar fire just as he entered Gaza early in the offensive. But sitting with his mother, Dalia, in her living room last week, I was struck not by loss, but by life. And not by grief, but by fervent belief. And by a more recent story about Dvir that simply needs to be told, especially now at Hanukka, our season of miracles.

This past summer, Dalia and some friends planned to go to Hutzot Hayotzer, the artists' colony constructed each summer outside Jerusalem's Old City walls. But Dalia's young daughter objected; she wanted to go a week later, so she could hear Meir Banai in concert.

Dalia consented. And so, a week later, she found herself in the bleachers, waiting with her daughter for the performance to begin. Suddenly, Dalia felt someone touch her shoulder. When she turned around, she saw a little boy, handsome, with blond hair and blue eyes. A kindergarten teacher by profession, Dalia was immediately drawn to the boy, and as they began to speak, she asked him if he'd like to sit next to her.

By now, though, the boy's father had seen what was unfolding, and called over to him, "Eshel, why don't you come back and sit next to me and Dvir?" Stunned, Dalia turned around and saw the father holding a baby. "What did you say his name is?" she asked the father.

"Dvir," responded Benny.

"How old is he?" Dalia asked.

"Six months," was the reply.

"Forgive my asking," she continued, "was he born after Cast Lead, or before?"

"After."

Whereupon Dalia continued, "Please forgive my pressing, but can I ask why you named him Dvir?"

A real miracle or the doing of extraordinary people?

"Because," Benny explained to her, "the first soldier killed in Cast Lead was named Dvir. His story touched us, and we decided to name our son after him."

Almost unable to speak, Dalia paused, and said, "I'm that Dvir's mother."

Shiri, the baby's mother, had overheard the conversation, and wasn't certain that she believed her ears. "That can't be."

"It's true."

"What's your last name?"

"Emanuelof."

"Where do you live?"

"Givat Ze'ev."

"It is you," Shiri said. "We meant to invite you to the brit, but we couldn't."

"It doesn't matter," Dalia assured her - "You see, I came anyway."

And then, Dalia told me, Shiri said something to her that she'll never forget - "Dvir is sending you a hug, through us."

At that point in our conversation, Shiri told me her story. She'd been pregnant, she said, in her 33rd or 34th week, and during an ultrasound test, a potentially serious problem with the baby was discovered. After consultations with medical experts, she was told that there was nothing to do. The baby would have to be born, and then the doctors would see what they could do. A day or two later, she was at home, alone, anxious and worried. She lit Hanukka candles, and turned on the news. The story was about Dvir Emanuelof, the first soldier killed in the operation. She saw, she said, the extraordinarily handsome young man, with his now famous smile, and she felt as though she were looking at an angel.

A short while later, Benny came home, and Shiri said to him, "Come sit next to me." When he'd seated himself down next to her, Shiri said to Benny, "A soldier was killed today."

"I heard," he said. "What do you say we name our baby after him?" Shiri asked.

"Okay," was Benny's reply.

They told no one about the name, and had planned to call Dalia once the baby was born, to invite her to the brit. But when Dvir was born, Shiri and Benny were busy with medical appointments, and it wasn't even clear when they would be able to have the brit. By the time the doctor gave them the okay to have the brit, it was no longer respectful to invite Dalia on such short notice, Shiri told me. So they didn't call her. Not then, and not the day after. Life took its course and they told no one about the origin of Dvir's name, for they hadn't yet asked Dalia's permission.

So no one knew, until that moment when a little blond- haired, blue-eyed boy - whom Dalia now calls "the messenger" - decided to tap Dalia on the shoulder. "Someone's looking out for us up there," Shiri said quietly, wiping a tear from her eye, "and this no doubt brings Him joy."

IT WAS now quiet in Dalia's living room, the three of us pondering this extraordinary sequence of events, wondering what to make of it. I was struck by the extraordinary bond between these two <u>women</u>, one religious and one traditional but not religious in the classic sense, one who's now lost a husband and a son and one who's busy raising two sons.

A real miracle or the doing of extraordinary people?

Unconnected in any way just a year ago, their lives are now inextricably interwoven. And I said to them both, almost whispering, "This is an Israeli story, par excellence."

As if they'd rehearsed the response, they responded in virtual unison, "No, it's a Jewish story."

They're right, of course. It is the quintessential Jewish story. It is a story of unspoken and inexplicable bonds. It is a story of shared destinies.

And as is true of this little country we call home, it's often impossible to know which part of the story is the real miracle, and which is the doing of extraordinary people. In the end, though, that doesn't really matter. When I light Hanukka candles this year, I'm going to be thinking of Dalia. Of Shiri. Of Dvir. And of Dvir.

I'm going to think of their sacrifice. Of their persistent belief. Of their extraordinary decency and goodness.

And as I move that shamash from one candle to the next, I will know that Shiri was right. These are not easy times. These are days when we really could use a miracle or two. So perhaps it really is no accident that now, when we need it most, Dvir is sending us all a hug from heaven above.

Graphic

Photo: DVIR EMANUELOF: 'When a pregnant Shiri first saw his picture, she felt as though she were looking at an angel.' (Credit: Courtesy of the Emanuelof family)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Jordan: 'Zeit ou laban, laban ou zeit'

Right Vision News November 19, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 1175 words **Dateline:** Pakistan

Body

Pakistan, Nov. 19 -- As a child in early 1940s Palestine, I grew up in a small village of 1,500 people with its roots in biblical times. I would like to tell a childhood anecdote that I recalled as I was reading the news the other day. Life was simple, tranquil and often hard, but despite the lack of modern amenities or even what was then available in the city, it was happy. There was no electricity or running water. We used kerosene lamps that gave poor lighting and kerosene stoves for cooking.

The best stoves for indoor cooking were the Swedish-made Primus or Radius brands. Weather permitting, we cooked outdoors, often using a pottery pot placed on three stones with a wood fire underneath. Food was tastier, simpler and healthier then, although we had no refrigerators. People dried fruits for the long, harsh winter, first by oiling them (to preserve tenderness) and then exposing them to the hot summer sun. Vegetables were sprayed with sea salt before drying. All our winter tomatoes were sun dried; nowadays that is a delicacy. Bread making was a well-honed process as well. You started with the grain, usually wheat, which was stone ground. I remember the mill was made of two round, heavy, coarse black stones on top of each other with a 3-inch diameter hole in the centre of the top stone. Women (men never did the milling) turned the heavy top stone around with a wood handle while slowly putting wheat in the middle hole. Flour emerged sparingly from between the two stone wheels. The process was repeated daily as wheat was easier to store as grains than flour. Rarely did people carry their wheat to big mills in the city to grind all at once. The dough made from this flour was left to ferment before being baked over hot round stones inside a thick clay dome called "taboun" - which many people still use today. The taboun had to be heated by covering it with slow-burning straw and dry manure without flames; it took many hours before it was ready to use. The stones on the ground absorbed the right amount of heat for the baking process to be perfect - producing delicious bread. Women had to carry water many times a day from the village spring. I often wondered how young women balanced the large pottery jars perfectly on their heads without using their hands as they carried water. During village celebrations, the women often danced with jars on their heads to demonstrate their skill, balance and prowess. Jars, often larger, were used for storing olive oil to supply families with their needs until the following season. People used the same jars year after year, and the porous pottery became saturated with oil. People believed that the jars never needed to be washed because the oil in them never spoiled. Now we know that oil should not be exposed to either heat or light to maintain its colour and taste. This wisdom was already built in to the thick-walled pottery storage jars. Jars were also used to store homemade jams made of grapes, apricots and quince. From grapes villagers also made heavy sweet molasses which were a great source of energy as well as a stable source of healthy diet in winter. All such winter supplies were naturally sterilised by prolonged cooking; they therefore kept well with no need for refrigeration. Villagers were mostly illiterate, but that did not mean they lacked wisdom (there was a boy's school established in 1888, and girls had formal education when UNRWA established a school in the early 1950s). Despite the distance of formal governmental authorities or police (which ventured out of the city only when there was a serious problem), people followed strict rules and traditions of conduct towards each Jordan: 'Zeit ou laban, laban ou zeit'

other. The hard life people led, and the necessity of putting all one's efforts into ensuring one had the means to survive meant people had little time for nonsense. So let me now come back to the anecdote. I remember that whenever my mother was upset, she would express her anger by uttering the Arabic expression "zeit ou laban." laban ou zeit". It meant nothing to me until I grew older and my mother explained this common expression of disagreement. She said that a man once asked his wife to prepare lunch. When the wife asked what he wanted, the husband answered "laban ou zeit", which means yoghurt with olive oil - something people ate then and now with fresh bread as a simple and delicious meal. You mean "zeit ou laban", the wife replied, reversing the order. No, the husband insisted, "laban ou zeit" not "zeit ou laban". The story goes that the disagreement between the two escalated into a furious quarrel with dire consequences. Neither the wife nor the husband wanted to admit that no matter how one would arrange the two simple ingredients it would made no difference. For the villagers, this story came to stand for any disagreement where the positions being put forward were essentially indistinguishable. So I found myself muttering this ancient expression last week as I read about a new "peace" plan offered by former Israeli deputy prime minister and former army chief Shaul Mofaz. Despite the hype, it turned out to be nothing more than recycling of familiar worn-out schemes, repeatedly put forward by Israel and then abandoned: a Palestinian state with "temporary borders" on 50 to 60 per cent of the West Bank with large Jewish-only settlement blocks annexed to Israel. Of course Mofaz's scheme was presented as a great departure - especially since he suggested that he would talk to *Hamas* in the course of implementing it. But just like in all previous schemes, Jerusalem and the rights of Palestinian refugees would be off the table. With the Palestinians offered no more than about 15 per cent of historic Palestine, broken up into isolated enclaves, it was simply a case of Mofaz offering "laban ou zeit" when all the other Israeli schemes offered "zeit ou laban". French President Nicolas Sarkozy's offer to host an international summit in Paris to break the deadlock in the Middle East peace process (Haaretz, November 15) sounds indeed like suggesting that putting the "zeit and laban" in a different container would change it into caviar. It is hard to understand how simple facts escape the notice of leaders of the caliber of the French president. The problem is not how, where, who would attend and at what level the conference should be held, it is rather what the conference will be able to discuss with zero options at hand. It is not the container, rather the content. And this was tried many times before too. The same can be said for all the other "peace process" schemes, from Madrid to Oslo, to the Clinton parameters, the "Geneva initiative," the roadmap, Annapolis, and finally the failed mission of US envoy George Mitchell. They can all be summed up in that village wisdom which despite decades of Israeli oppression still survives and provides needed clarity today. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Right Vision News. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit htsvndication@hindustantimes.com

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Load-Date: November 19, 2009



US-Israeli military ties

Pakistan Observer
October 29, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 1207 words

Byline: Dr Abdul Ruff - Email: , abdulruff_inu@yahoo.com, <mailto:abdulruff_inu@yahoo.com>

Body

In today's era of global state terrorisms by capitalist world, any joint military exercise should have a spotted common enemy and the US-Israeli joint drills must have cited some such common enemy. President Obama has to ascertain if the enemy is Islam and Mideast nations, or energy resources. Both USA and its terror ally Israel claim the exercise will focus on providing a joint defence against a simulated coordinated missile attack on Israel.

Up to 2,000 joint military personnel are believed to be taking part, along with at least 15 American ships. The exercise, which is entitled Juniper Cobra, is due to finish on 5 November. The Pentagon-CIA claim use the manoeuvres could also serve to make Israel feel more secure, and therefore encourage a return to Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. The recent Dec-Jan Zionist holocaust in Palestine was the outcome of the military collaboration between USA and Israel making the latter a fascist state in Mideast.

In the strength of deep-rooted terror cooperation for decades between them, Israel and the US are due to begin a two-week military defence exercise, thought to be the largest of its kind in Israel's history. Israel, Turkey and the US countries took part in a joint exercise in the Mediterranean Sea, off Haifa last year.

However, following Israeli holocaust in Palestine with support form western terror media support, last week, Turkey, one of the few Muslim countries with whom Israel has had some how managed good contacts, cancelled a joint air force exercise with Israel. It is thought that highly sophisticated new American radar, based in the Israeli desert, will be central to the exercise.

The simulation will involve elements such as barrage of missiles fired on Israel from all points south, east and north. Turkish-Israeli relations have become strained this year, since Turkey heavily criticized Israel's war in Gaza. But unhindered by the Turkish opposition, fascist Zionist regime has pursued the terror objective with USA and IST chief USA as the leader of global terror states, cannot betray its only ally in Mideast whom it has used to advance its interests in the energy rich Mideast.

Hawkish Jewish leader Benjamin Netanyahu, the chief state terrorist of Israel, is in search of a formula that interprets the two decades-old U.N. Security Council resolutions, 242 and 338 as falling short of a demand to withdraw from all of the West Bank, territory it captured in a 1967 war.

U.S. President Barack Obama's Middle East envoy George Mitchell claims, he is close to a deal with Israel (on Israeli terms?) for resuming peace talks with the Palestinians and the Zionist media talk about a "meeting of the minds" and claim the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue will be able to re-start in the near future, but how soon is still unclear.

Under U.S. pressure, Netanyahu has agreed to negotiate the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel. Many Palestinians felt humiliated when Obama last month called for Israeli restraint on settlements rather than repeat his call for a freeze. Jewish extremist Netanyahu had refused to halt construction in settlements, arguing he needed to accommodate the needs of growing settler families.

Israeli officials have said Netanyahu offered Mitchell a freeze on settlement expansion outside of areas around Jerusalem that Israel has annexed that would last nine months. Washington has not commented publicly beyond repeating a desire for an end to settlement activity, as called for under a 2004 interim deal. Palestinians fear that Israel's West Bank settlements, deemed illegal by the International Court of Justice, would block the formation of a viable and contiguous state.

Fanatic terrorist Netanyahu again urged Abbas to return to negotiations on Israeli terms that Palestinians suspended after Israel launched a military terror offensive in December in the Gaza Strip, territory ruled by his <u>Hamas</u> Islamist rivals, killing innocent Muslims inkling children, <u>women</u> and old people, apart from destroying properties worth trillions of US dollars. But he said such a state must be demilitarised and Palestinians have to recognise Israel as a Jewish state, a demand they fear could undermine claims to resettle or compensate Palestinian refugees of a 1948 war over Israel's founding. With joint terror exercises with the US superpower, Israel wants to quell any pressures from USA and Europe to drop the illegal settlement issue.

Fatah, the western favorite, still wants to retain its sway over the Palestinians without any legal or moral sanctions. Washington apparently hopes to persuade Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to return to peace talks based on the resolutions, enabling each side to cleave to its own interpretation and avoid conceding diplomatic ground on borders before negotiations resume.

And under pressure form Abbas friends in USA and Israel, PLO Fatah chief Abbas, involved in the mysterious death of Yassir Arafat, has given no public sign he has dropped a main Palestinian condition for a resumption of negotiations - an Israeli settlement freeze in the West Bank in accordance with a 2003 U.S.-backed peace "road map".

Possibly, the Nobel laureate Barack Obama is unaware of what the Pentagon rogues are trying to do focusing on Mideast by conducting these loud terror exercises when his demand to clear the Palestinian land of illegal settlements of roguish Jews remins unattended by Tel Aviv. Fascist Israel claims the exercise carries a two-fold significance.

This included sending a message of deterrence to any would-be attackers of Israel - whether they were in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria or Iran. It was also possibly an attempt to reassure Israel's people that the US took the country's security seriously - especially at a time when the US has falsely expressed increasing dubious concern about Iran's nuclear program, although Tehran insists it is purely peaceful.

Such nefarious manipulations by military establishments of USA, Israel and allies give a wrong impression to the world about Obama's real intentions and undermine peace efforts for Palestine state.

Israel is becoming more nervous and restless these days, as Obama does not let the Fascist lobbyists for Israel (and India) inside the White House as before during the Bushdom era, except to make the payments for weaponry. Arab nations are under Pressure form Pentagon-CIA to side with Israeli so as, possibly, to avoid IST terrorisms on their lands. US-Israeli joint military ties and terror exercises conducted for decades have given rise to joint, but hidden, state terrorisms across the world- focused on Islamic world and Arab resources.

World now worried about the future of humanity being under severe threat from these rogue states and their Axis allies is keen to find an early solution. President Obama has a prime duty to save the world from Pentagon-Mossad terror strategies to terrorize Muslims and avert another Sept 11 from these insiders - once again.

Obama is yet to bring the real, anti-Islamic Sept 11 terrorists to justice! In order to achieve this, all Pentagon-Israeli terror drills, first of all, have be abandoned for ever! USA and Israel cannot fool and terrorize the world at the same time forever!

Load-Date: November 16, 2011



Egypt and Saudi: change looms; Political shifts may be in the offing as ageing Mideast leaders give way to a new guard, writes Jeffrey Fleishman

The Sunday Independent (South Africa)

November 01, 2009

E1 Edition

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Body

THEY are a desert king and a military officer turned president. Drive through their capitals and their images glow from billboards and painted walls, old men with their eyes fixed everywhere, even as whispers grow about who will rise to replace them.

King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak are in their 80s, durable US allies whose governments have crushed political dissent at home while playing leading roles across the Middle East. But these days, talk of succession reverberates as Washington, as well as Riyadh and Cairo, plans how to navigate an era without two of the region's dominant personalities.

The men have given no indication that they will step down. Mubarak's term runs until 2011, and the king's reign lasts as long as he sees fit. But Mubarak and Abdullah are frail.

In Egypt, there is chatter that the president's younger son Gamal will follow his father, and in Saudi Arabia several leadership scenarios are unfolding within the ruling House of Saud.

A senior official at the US State Department said the relationship with the two countries is "deep enough and broad enough to withstand the strains of any kind of transition".

But the official, who spoke anonymously because of the sensitivity of the matter, added that the eventual absence of Mubarak, who has been in power since 1981, and Abdullah, who took the throne in 2005 but has run Saudi Arabia since 1996, when the since-deceased King Fahd suffered a stroke, raises concerns about the future of a jittery Middle East.

The ageing leaders have left indelible imprints. Mubarak has kept peace with Israel - at a stiff cost to his domestic credibility - while pushing for a Palestinian state. Abdullah has transformed his kingdom's oil wealth into diplomatic power.

The pair have brushed aside historical animosities between their nations to co-operate in confronting what they regard as major threats: the prospect of a nuclear-armed Shia Iran and the violence sparked by Islamic militancy extending from North Africa to Indonesia.

Their overall strategies, which complement US interests, are not expected to be significantly altered by their successors, especially since new leaders almost certainly will come from the ranks of the ruling regimes. What will

Egypt and Saudi : change looms Political shifts may be in the offing as ageing Mideast leaders give way to a new guard, writes Jeffrey Fleishman

vanish are decades of experience and the visages the world has grown accustomed to: Mubarak, 81, with his oversize sunglasses and Air Force salute, and Abdullah, 85, with his endless entourages and jet-black goatee.

It is likely that Iran, Syria and their Islamist allies Hezbollah in Lebanon and <u>Hamas</u> in the Gaza Strip will move quickly to provoke whoever follows the two leaders. At the same time, domestic reformers and opposition groups, especially the radical Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, are expected to push for broader political freedoms and to stem state security networks that have been criticised by international human-rights organisations and the US for torture, imprisonment and other violations.

"The US should be worried about the possibility of either of these two leaders leaving the scene. Iran and Syria will move to exploit the loss of Mubarak and King Abdullah," said Amr Hamzawy, a Middle East expert with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Topping the list of potential successors in Egypt are Mubarak's son Gamal, 45, and Omar Suleiman, who is in his early 70s, a long-time confidant and head of the country's intelligence network. Gamal, a leading voice within the ruling National Democratic Party, lacks government and foreign policy experience but supports economic reform and appears more attuned to human rights than his father. Suleiman has the institutional pedigree of Mubarak and previous Egyptian presidents and, as a chief mediator dealing with the Palestinians, has close ties with Washington. It is unclear, however, whether he wants to lead the country.

Egypt's bonds with Washington, fuelled by \$1.2 billion (R9.31bn) in annual US aid, have survived political transitions and tense relations.

"President Mubarak and George W Bush didn't have great personal ties, but that never affected the strategic, military and security relations between the countries," said Diaa Rashwan, an analyst at Al Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies in Cairo.

The successor scenario in Saudi Arabia is complicated by age, illness and a struggle within the royal family between moderates and hard- liners. Next in line for the throne is Crown Prince Sultan ibn Abdulaziz, but he is in his early 80s and has been ailing for years.

Following him could be Prince Nayef ibn Abdulaziz, 76, the Saudi interior minister, whom Abdullah elevated this year to second deputy prime minister. Nayef is close to fundamentalist Wahhabi clerics who have resisted the king's attempts at modest reforms to ease religion's grip on schools, courts and other institutions.

Riyadh's ties to the US remain vital, but over the years the kingdom's oil wealth has allowed it to widen its strategic interests, including to the emerging energy markets of India and China. Such shifts could alter the tenor of relations with Washington if personal connections fade.

"With the kingdom facing the prospect of enthroning a new king every two or three years, the US president faces the prospect of having to work with several Saudi monarchs during one term alone," noted a policy paper written by Simon Henderson, an expert on Saudi Arabia and a fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

Mubarak and Abdullah, and what awaits their successors, can be viewed best through the prism of domestic pressures. Mubarak rose to power after the assassination by Islamists of Anwar Sadat, who shortly before had made peace with Israel.

Mubarak has kept Egypt under emergency law for nearly 28 years, grinding down political opponents while proving unable to improve the lives of his 82 million countrymen, more than 40 percent of whom live on less than \$2 a day.

Hamzawy of the Carnegie Endowment said that if the Egyptian regime couldn't agree on a post-Mubarak candidate, and economic and social anxieties spread, the country could enter a "chaotic succession... that the Muslim Brotherhood could exploit by using the street to demonstrate their influence".

Egypt and Saudi : change looms Political shifts may be in the offing as ageing Mideast leaders give way to a new guard, writes Jeffrey Fleishman

Abdullah was named crown prince in 1982 and largely ran Saudi Arabia after Fahd, his half-brother, became incapacitated. His attempts at reform won him early praise, but he has been criticised for not pushing hard enough against religious conservatives and not providing freedoms for <u>women</u> or opportunities for Saudis younger than 25. The latter make up half the population and are poorly educated.

The oppressed of Egypt and the young of Saudi Arabia are angry and restless. Many listened to US President Barack Obama's June speech in Cairo and were disappointed by the lack of criticism of their nations' corrupt regimes, which often ignore American principles of democracy.

"Predicting what will happen in Saudi Arabia is very difficult," said Mohammad Fahad Qahtani, a reformer and assistant economics professor at the Institute of Diplomatic Studies. "You live in an oil bonanza. The country is flush with money, but you have unemployment and 30 percent of the people living in poverty. Only 22 percent of families own their own homes.

"It's a gloomy picture. The regime is losing its credibility." - Los Angeles Times

I Staff writer Paul Richter in Washington and Amro Hassan of the Times' Cairo bureau contributed to this report.

Load-Date: October 31, 2009



<u>Letters</u>

The Jerusalem Post

October 19, 2009 Monday

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Length: 1181 words

Byline: Haim M. Lerner, Hilda Schmerler, Sonia Goldsmith, Jerry Aviram, Herzel Katz, Efraim A. Cohen, Joyce

Kahn, Malcolm Mandel **Highlight:** Readers' Letters

Body

'Goldene medine'

Sir, - As a Korean war veteran, I'm once again shocked by Federal authorities putting the loyalty of American Jews to the test. In this case, David Tenenbaum is suspect merely because he has "ties" with Israel and speaks Hebrew.

How frightening. If this attitude continues to develop in America, all American Jews will eventually come under suspicion ("ADL comes to defense of US Army engineer targeted for ties to Israel," October 18).

Though the Jewish experience in America has been outstandingly good, perhaps it's time for many of us to realize that no matter how well-off American Jews are in the "goldene medine," it's still the Diaspora - and think about coming home to Israel.

HAIM M. LERNER

Ganei Tikva

Son of which nation?

Sir, - Thank you, Prof. Gil Troy, for a wonderful rebuttal of J Street's "pro-Israel" advice to Israel and the hypocrisy of which it reeks ("An open letter to Jeremy Ben-Ami," October 18).

Is it just politics, a desperate attempt to justify the choice of US president? Or hubris, leading the young guard of Jewish Americans to force Israel to accede to its positions no matter if they lead to our undoing?

The name may be Ben-Ami, but I question to which "am" or nation he thinks he belongs.

HILDA SCHMERLER

Petah Tikva

Sir, - Thank you, Gil Troy. Your open letter is equally applicable to "Peace Now" and B'Tselem, and to the professors of so many of our children at universities throughout the Western world.

SONIA GOLDSMITH

Netanya

Sir, - Here is my own open letter to Jeremy Ben-Ami and J Street:

"You claim to love Israel, care about its future, and believe that the 'peaceful and immediate resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can secure Israel's future as the democratic home of the Jewish people.' How can one argue with that?

"But how are you about to achieve it? By undermining and weakening AIPAC and splitting the voice of the American Jewish community to the US administration at such a crucial and sensitive juncture of Israel's relationship with the US and the world?

"Yes, you are entitled to your opinion, but it is naive to believe that meetings and speeches are going to resolve a conflict dating back more than 100 years, a conflict that has erupted in several wars and a multitude of smaller but no less vicious riots and terrorist attacks.

"Of greater concern is your presumptuous belief that you have been anointed for your role by a 'large number' of Jewish Americans. Whatever that number may be, most American Jews are probably unaware of your existence and are not likely to support you. Are you feeling some need to support the Obama administration, or perhaps pursuing your own political agenda unrelated to the fate of Israel and the Jewish people?

"Ultimately, the fate of Israel will be decided by its citizens, who defend Israel by serving in the army, whose children and grandchildren serve and die in defense of the one and only Jewish state, who are at risk of being incinerated by Iranian atom bombs.

"I beseech you, therefore, before embarking on reckless and potentially harmful political adventures, to listen to us, the people of Israel, who speak in many voices, but ultimately with one voice only.

JERRY AVIRAM

Tel Aviv

Goldstone's naivete...

Sir, - It may be hard to believe, but I now feel a little sorry for Judge Goldstone. He was naive and duped by the powers that be, and now whatever he says to water down the findings of his mission or try to be evenhanded, he will be ridiculed and maligned by the Arabs and portrayed as a turncoat Jew-boy who could not be trusted to withstand pressure from the US-Israel lobby.

Chances are he will forever rue the day he took on this assignment ("Answer this, Judge Goldstone," Haviv Rettig Gur, October 18).

HERTZEL KATZ

Ramat Hasharon

...or maybe not

Sir, - Haviv Rettig Gur assumes that Judge Goldstone is "an honest man with noble intentions" and suggests that Goldstone's initial failure to recognize the inherent bias of the UN's Human Rights Council may be the result of "shocking naivete."

But why is Goldstone entitled to this assumption? Why not apply to him the same standard that he applied to Israel in his damning report? Goldstone concluded that Israeli troops intentionally killed Gazan civilians even while he failed to find any confirming government policy. The basis for his conclusion was that "Israeli intelligence has very precise information" and Israeli weapons are extremely accurate. To Goldstone, there was no chance that Gazan deaths were accidental or incidental to permitted military activity.

The same line of reasoning should be applied to Goldstone himself. He is a world-renowned jurist with years of experience in investigations related to human rights and military operations. Ostensibly, he was chosen to head the commission precisely because of that expertise. It is therefore fair to conclude that he was fully aware of the purpose and likely outcome of the investigation.

Goldstone's "shock" at the unfairness of the UNHRC's resolution is not the result of naivete. It looks a lot more like a transparent attempt to limit his own responsibility for this ongoing farce. Unfortunately, his guilt cannot be erased so easily.

EFRAIM A. COHEN

Netanya

UNHRC's achievements

Sir, - The UN Human Rights Commission was founded just 60 years ago in the presence of Eleanor Roosevelt and other dignitaries, in the hope it would improve and protect human rights worldwide. What has it done? Nearly nothing.

It has ignored the plight of millions of <u>women</u> in Africa and other third world countries who are literally slaves in their societies, and the plight of millions of refugees and oppressed citizens in 190 countries worldwide. It has ignored the fact that only recently, 160 Palestinians were killed by their own people, three times the number Israel killed in the Gaza incursion.

It has done something - it has passed countless resolutions against Israel, ignoring <u>Hamas</u>, Hizbullah and other terror organizations that hide behind civilians in order to attack Israel ("Jewish MKs from across Israel's political spectrum condemn UNHRC endorsement of Goldstone Report," October 18).

JOYCE KAHN

Petah Tikva

BA's rightward swing

Sir, - I was intrigued by your World Bnei Akiva supplement (October 16). I grew up in a small town in England and was not that religious. Nevertheless, after I married and came to Israel, I slowly became more observant and we sent our children to Bnei Akiva. Many of our present friends came from the movement in England, and I must admit to a degree of envy when they reminisce about that period.

I could not help but notice that some of the older pictures in the supplement showed girls wearing pants and even shorts. Our own daughters wore pants only at summer camp, and only under a skirt. And now that our oldest grandson has just started Bnei Akiva, he is totally segregated from the girls.

I find it sad that the movement has moved so far right toward the ultra-Orthodox. Will the trend continue; or will the pendulum swing back again? My instinct tells me the former, but my heart hopes for the latter.

MALCOLM MANDEL

Ra'anana

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



The Jerusalem Post

October 22, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 1188 words

Byline: Edith Ognall, Zev Chamudot, Abe Krieger, A.I. Goldberg, David Herman, Ron Belzer, Julian Ungar-Sargon,

Ruth Rigbi, Dolly Dezsofi-Tiger **Highlight:** Readers' Letters

Body

It takes two

Sir, - In "US spying on Israel's nuke program, new state-sponsored book claims" (December 14, 2008) Barak Ben-Zur, a retired Shin Bet officer, described the effort "as largely benign, given the closeness of defense ties between Israel and Washington." Many of us fail to see that "closeness." If it exists, why is Jonathan Pollard serving a punitive, cruel and inhumane prison sentence in an American prison for giving Israel crucial information illegally withheld by America?

Fast forward to "No more Pollards," your editorial of October 20, 2009. The FBI's arrest of Stewart David Nozette in Washington this week on charges of trying to sell national security secrets to Israel is bad news, even though Israel's position since the 1984 Pollard affair has been that it does not spy on the US.

The Nozette case only reinforces the need to adhere strictly to this promise and, as the Post urges, "not to let anything undermine the special relationship between our two countries." That applies to America, as well: It takes two to make a "special relationship."

EDITH OGNALL

Netanya

It's perplexing

Sir, - Is it not perplexing, and disturbing, that an important West African country like Nigeria was one of the 25 that voted to adopt the Goldstone Report at the UN Human Rights Council? After Greer Fay Cashman's description of Nigerian Ambassador Dada Olisa's high personal regard and genuine warm feelings for Israel and the enhanced economic and cultural relations between our two countries (Grapevine, October 21), the perplexity increases enormously.

It must be borne in mind that the Goldstone Report not only accuses Israel of the grossest of crimes, but obscenely adds that Israel's intent was not based primarily on self-defense but on an interest in inflicting suffering on the Palestinian people. Can such a thing be endorsed by countries that enjoy amicable relations and a modicum of mutual respect with Israel?

Among the other countries that voted to adopt the Goldstone Report one can find Egypt, Jordan, Turkey and India!

ZEV CHAMUDOT

Petah Tikva

Smiles...

Sir, - Israeli Ambassador Michael Oren is right ("Oren turns down J Street conference invitation," October 21.) Why would any friend of Israel have anything to do with J Street?

J Street smiles at Israel while doing everything possible to stab her in the back. In more rational times, Jews everywhere, but especially in Israel, would shun members of J Street, but these days such people are treated with respect by the Obama administration because they represent a large number of a certain kind of Jew.

At least *Hamas* and Hizbullah are up front regarding their motivation.

ABE KRIEGER

Highland Park, New Jersey

...and stabs

Sir, - In referring to poet Josh Healey's invitation to the conference and the subsequent cancellation of the event featuring him because of his comparing Israel's actions to the Nazis', J Street's response was that the poet's appearance at the conference "might also be offensive to some conference participants."

It made me wonder to which participants - of this "pro-Israel" conference - such referencing might not be offensive.

A.I. GOLDBERG

Hatzor Haglilit

Year of the Knife

Sir, - I think we should call 2009 Year of the Knife - the year in which the blood of innocent victims watered the earth of the Holy Land; in which vicious murderers painted the cities of Israel red with blood. The latest horror - an entire family put to the knife ("Rishon firefighters receive counseling to cope with memories of Oshrenko tragedy," October 20).

When is this country going to get up off its backside, put an end to the rot and make the land livable and lovable again?

I say bring in the IDF to patrol our cities and make them safe, in close cooperation with the police. And deter would-be killers with the death penalty - a life for a life.

Our media mavens put home-made terror down to booze- drinking youth and an atmosphere of violence. I put it down to an increasingly godless, valueless society intoxicated with arrogance, hedonism and profit-lust.

It is crystal clear to me that if the people of Israel returned sincerely in repentance and contrition to the tenets of their Jewish faith; if they frequented synagogues on the Sabbath instead of nightclubs and practiced respect and caring for their fellow citizens, making it their job to help the elderly, weak and less fortunate, we might see the violence, bullying, godlessness and corruption giving way to the exemplary and proud society which I, like so many other Israeli citizens, aspire to live in.

DAVID HERMAN

Jerusalem

This isn't child's play

Sir, - Re the October 21 advertisement headlined "Jews do not deport children":

The basic question we should be asking concerning these children of foreign and illegal workers is where we draw the line. Right now, they number 1,200; in another year or two, it could be tens of thousands.

Yes, we have a conscience, but we also have our own problems with our own needy, and our resources are not unlimited.

If we retain these children now, will we be able to say no to future foreign workers and refugees from Africa and Asia, numbering potentially in the millions?

RON BELZER

Petah Tikva

Friday night at Freddy's

Sir, - Freddy Sopher, who died this week in London, was a legend for over 50 years to all those who traveled to, trekked or were stranded in Bombay. Businessmen and tourists all found a home away from home at Freddy's.

A confirmed bachelor and proud Sephardi Jew whose father came from Baghdad earlier in the century, he received a private British school education and joined the family business. But he will be remembered mostly for his Friday evening meals, served to all who showed up without regard to background or religious persuasion. He was tolerant of all and pure giving in character.

Long before Chabad, Freddy's effect on young people could be felt years later when they recalled his hospitality.

He lived across the street from Chabad House and witnessed last year's horrific events of barbarity and cruelty firsthand.

Owing to his failing health, Freddy's family brought him to London last year, where he finally succumbed.

This prince of a man will be sorely missed by all those who sat at his table over the years, and by all those travelers to exotic places. Freddy was Bombay, and vice versa.

JULIAN UNGAR-SARGON

Chicago

The past lives

Sir, - Many thanks to Alexander Zvielli for bringing the past to life in his From Our Archives compilation. It enables older readers to relive historic events, and younger readers to hear voices from the past.

RUTH RIGBI

Israel Association

of University Women

Jerusalem

What price pretty?

Sir, - Re Judy Montagu's "Ugly can be beautiful" (October 21) and Barbie dolls' "chocolate-box prettiness":

When I compare US and European movies, the American actresses all tend to look like Barbies - so similar, in fact, that it can actually lead to confusion about the plot - while the British and European actresses have character and individuality in their faces and bodies.

Some, like Judy Dench and Maggie Smith, to take just two examples, are a delight to watch even as they age.

DOLLY DEZSOFI-TIGER, Jerusalem

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



The time may be right for a new cold war

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Byline: By Andrew J. Bacevich

Body

It was on Oct. 7, 2001, when U.S. bombs and missiles started falling on Afghanistan. The war has become the longest in American history. The eighth anniversary of the conflict beckons, with no end in sight.

The counterinsurgency campaign proposed in Gen. Stanley McChrystal's strategic assessment will prolong the war for an additional five or 10 years. The war's most ardent proponents insist that President Barack Obama has no choice: It's either fight on or invite another 9/11.

Fortunately, there is an alternative to a global counterinsurgency campaign. Instead of fighting an endless hot war in a vain effort to eliminate the jihadist threat, the United States should wage a cold war to keep the threat at bay. Such a strategy worked before. It can work again.

At the dawn of what the George W. Bush administration came to call the Long War, then defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld told U.S. military personnel: "We have two choices. Either we change the way we live, or we must change the way they live. We choose the latter." In both Afghanistan and Iraq, the work of changing the way they live has turned out to be difficult, costly and problematic.

After years of exertions, \$1 trillion expended and more than 5,000 American troops lost on two fronts, U.S. forces have yet to win a decisive victory. The high-tech American way of war developed during the 1990s (once celebrated in phrases such as "shock and awe" and "speed kills") stands thoroughly discredited.

Changing the way they live - where "they" are the people of the Islamic world - qualifies as mission impossible. The Long War is a losing proposition; it will break the bank and break the force.

Devising a new course requires accurately identifying the problem, which is not "terrorism" and, despite Washington's current obsession with the place, is certainly not Afghanistan. The essential problem is a dispute about God's relationship to politics. The proposition that the two occupy separate spheres finds particular favour among the democracies of the liberal, developed West. The proposition that God permeates politics finds particular favour in the Islamic world.

This conviction, almost entirely ignored in McChrystal's report, defines the essence of the way they live in Iraq, Afghanistan and a host of other countries throughout the Middle East.

The time may be right for a new cold war

At its root, this is an argument about what it means to be modern. Power, no matter how imaginatively or ruthlessly wielded, cannot provide a solution. The opposing positions are irreconcilable.

In confronting this conflict, the goal of U.S. national security strategy ought to be limited but specific: to insulate Americans from the fallout. Rather than setting out to clear, hold and build thousands of tiny, primitive villages scattered across the Afghan countryside, such a strategy should emphasize three principles: decapitate, contain and compete. An approach based on these principles cannot guarantee perpetual peace. But it is likely to be more effective, affordable and sustainable than a strategy based on open-ended war.

Decapitation - targeting leaders for elimination - provides the means to suppress immediate threats to our safety. The violent jihadists who pose those threats are vicious but relatively few in number. They possess limited capabilities. Their aspirations of uniting the world's Muslims into a new caliphate are akin to Sarah Palin's or Dennis Kucinich's presidential ambitions - unworthy of serious attention. They are rank fantasies.

Without effective leadership, the jihadists are nothing. The aim of decapitation is twofold. At a minimum it will oblige jihadist chieftains to devote enormous attention to ensuring their own survival, giving them less time to plot against the West. Optimally, it will confront jihadist networks with never-ending succession crises, consuming organizational energies that might otherwise find external expression. Decapitation won't eliminate the threat - <u>Hamas</u> and Hezbollah have survived the Israeli government's targeted assassination campaign - but it can reduce it to manageable levels.

A crucial caveat is that assassinations must be precise and accurate. The incidental killing of noncombatants is immoral as well as politically counterproductive. The missiles launched from U.S. unmanned aerial vehicles in Pakistan have repeatedly demonstrated the wrong approach. The recent elimination of Saleh Ali Nabhan in Somalia - in a helicopter-borne raid by special operations forces - models the correct one.

Containment implies turning to the old Cold War playbook. When confronting the Soviet threat, the United States and its allies erected robust defences, such as NATO, and co-operated in denying the communist bloc anything that could make Soviet computers faster, Soviet submarines quieter, or Soviet missiles more accurate.

Containing the threat posed by jihad should follow a similar strategy. Robust defences are key - not mechanized units patrolling the Iron Curtain, but well-funded government agencies securing borders, controlling access to airports and seaports, and ensuring the integrity of electronic networks that have become essential to our way of life.

As during the Cold War, a strategy of containment should include comprehensive export controls and the monitoring of international financial transactions. Without money and access to weapons, the jihadist threat shrinks to insignificance: All that remains is hatred. Ideally, this approach should include strenuous efforts to reduce the West's dependence on Middle Eastern oil, which serves to funnel many billions of dollars into the hands of people who may not wish us well.

During the Cold War, containment did not preclude engagement, and it shouldn't today. To the extent that the United States can encourage liberalizing tendencies in the Islamic world, it should do so - albeit with modest expectations. Sending jazz musicians deep into the Eastern Bloc in the old days was commendable, but Louis Armstrong's trumpet didn't topple the Soviet empire.

Finally, there is the matter of competition. Again, the Cold War offers an instructive analogy. During the long twilight struggle with the Soviets, competition centred on demonstrating scientific superiority (putting a man on the moon) and material superiority (providing cars, refrigerators and TVs for the masses). The West won.

Competition today still includes a material element. Yet a conflict rooted in a dispute over God's place in human history necessarily extends beyond the material realm. Radical Islamists assert that all humanity must submit to their retrograde version of Islam. Western political leaders declare with equal insistence that all must live in freedom, that term imbued with specific Western connotations.

The time may be right for a new cold war

The competitive challenge facing the West is not to prove that Islamic fundamentalism won't satisfy the aspirations of humanity, but to demonstrate that democratic capitalism can, even for committed believers. In short, the key to winning the current competition is to live up to the ideals that we profess rather than compromising them in the name of national security.

The upshot is that by modifying the way we live - attending to pressing issues of poverty, injustice, exploitation of <u>women</u> and the global environmental crisis - we might through our example induce the people of the Islamic world to consider modifying the way they live. Here lies the best chance of easing the differences that divide us.

The war we're fighting can become plausible, sustainable and even morally defensible.

It just has to go from hot to cold.

Load-Date: September 29, 2009



YOUR VIEWS - LETTERS FROM OUR READERS OPINION

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)
October 7, 2009 Wednesday
THIRD EDITION

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Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. A12

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Body

Wait for facts before judging police officers

The story "Video contradicts city police; charges against driver dropped" (Oct. 2) was an account of an incident involving two St. Louis police pfficers and their arrest of a suspect in the 3100 block of Delmar Boulevard. A video clip was online.

The video does appear different from what was reported that the police report said. However, perception is the key. I have not read the police report.

Circuit Attorney Jennifer Joyce's point that the angle of view can make a difference was valid. I applaud her stance that she wanted her office to make a thorough review of the incident before making any decision.

What matters, though, is what the officer perceived, nothing else. Missouri State Statute dictates that an assault against an officer occurs if the suspect:

"... (p)urposely or recklessly places a law enforcement officer, emergency personnel, or probation and parole officer in apprehension of immediate serious physical injury...." If the victim perceives a threat of bodily harm, an assault has occurred.

If a thorough review of the incident revealed that the officer falsified the report, then let the chips fall where they may. I hope the police department made that thorough review prior to firing an officer.

Police work requires split-second decisions. Mistakes made in good faith should not be used against officers. If they are, police officers will hesitate in critical situations, which could give criminals the upper hand.

Police officers are held to a higher standard of conduct. We accept and welcome that. We are second-guessed more than any other profession. When we make split-second, life-changing decisions, we ask only that we be judged fairly and impartially, taking into consideration the totality of the circumstances.

Kevin Ahlbrand - Jefferson City

President, Fraternal Order of Police, Missouri State Lodge

Wash. U. should end

YOUR VIEWS - LETTERS FROM OUR READERS OPINION

its abortion program

We appreciate "WU apologizes to SLU for wrong abortion info" (Oct. 1) about the Family Planning Fellowship program at Washington University. This program, operated in partnership with Barnes-Jewish Hospital and Planned Parenthood, trains medical students to become "expert" in all methods of first- and second-trimester abortions. Students gain "expertise" by performing abortions at the Planned Parenthood abortion clinic and at Barnes-Jewish Hospital. The director of this fellowship is Jeffrey Peipert, the medical director for Planned Parenthood-St. Louis.

We find it abhorrent that Washington University is training future physicians to destroy the lives of unborn children. The purpose of any medical training program should be to educate students in healing and therapeutic disciplines. Instead, this program instructs students who are supposed to be practitioners of the healing arts to end life.

We also find it reprehensible that Barnes-Jewish Hospital is a clinical training site for this program. Abortion is not health care, and no self-respecting health care institution should engage in the odious practice of performing abortions on potentially viable or near-viable fetuses.

It is shameful for Washington University to attempt to dignify the dirty business of abortion by awarding academic fellowships to future abortionists. We call on Washington University and Barnes-Jewish Hospital to terminate their partnership with the abortion industry. It is a disgrace that these institutions are engaged in this vile attack on the human rights of our youngest citizens.

Joe Ortwerth - Chesterfield

Executive Director, Missouri Family Policy Council

Timid action

It was startling to learn that St. Louis University canceled David Horowitz's talk. If it objected to the term "Islamo-fascism" in the talk's title, it might ask itself what better way there is to describe the relatively small portion of Muslims who promise to eliminate Israel, destroy the United States and offer all infidels the choice of converting to Islam, becoming subservient to Islam or death.

The notion that Mr. Horowitz might be allowed on campus if the event included a balancing speaker representing the other side is absurd. <u>Hamas</u>, for example, can make its case for the above choices and for raining rockets on civilians in Israeli cities in a separate talk to the students of the university.

The university's timid action puts me in mind of the 1930s, when there was much fearful tiptoeing around whether Herr Hitler really meant what he said.

Phil Baker - Kirkwood

Roosting secularism

It is national outrage for the political powers of St. Louis University to cancel David Horowitz's address to SLU Students because of the speech's content. Is St. Louis University intimidated? This Jesuit Catholic University again has demonstrated its independence from the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Maybe the university needs another multi-million-dollar government grant to study social diseases and <u>female</u> prostitution. Secularist socialism is roosting at the university, apparently.

Jim Vondras - Florissant

Class acts

One of the classiest acts I've ever seen was Frank Bommarito's full-page ad in the Post-Dispatch praising Dave Sinclair, his competitor. (Mr. Sinclair also was a class act.) This action by Mr. Bommarito is unheard of in today's

YOUR VIEWS - LETTERS FROM OUR READERS OPINION

tough business climate. My question is where will we get the Sinclairs and Bommaritos of tomorrow? Mr. Bommarito has shown everyone what St. Louis class is all about.

Bob Evans - St. Charles

Put to better use

With the upcoming sold-out Cardinal playoff games here in St Louis, is there a reason why the Cardinals could not better use Ballpark Village? Instead of having some folks playing catch at the former Lake Dewitt, how about big inflatable screens such as the ones used to show movies at many local parks; food and drink carts; moon bounces for the kids; a tent selling "My favorite Holliday is Matt" T-shirts for the gals. All profits, including a small admission fee, could be applied to a "Let's Keep Matt" fund. The sounds and electricity from the game would be free.

Jonathan Kiesling - St Louis

A familiar ring

Recent letters have sought to give President Barack Obama advice on how to win the war in Afghanistan. The letters bemoan the fact that we're losing or mourn the loss of a loved one in that conflict. I hate to tell everybody, but we lost the war in Afghanistan the day then-President George W. Bush took his eye off that ball and decided it was more important to go find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

Since that moment, Afghanistan has been second place in money, men and strategy. Now we are facing a corrupt local government, an enemy that has sanctuary in a neighboring country, areas of Afghanistan that are supporting the Taliban against the government and a U.S. military that apparently only recently has realized that we are fighting an insurgency in which you can defeat the enemy only by convincing the Afghan people that there is a better alternative than the Taliban. Sounds an awful lot like a war that was going on when I was in the military in the 1960s. That one didn't end well either.

Miles T. Barnett - High Ridge

Load-Date: October 10, 2009



<u>The nowhere people; You might think Palestinian refugees would be</u> <u>welcomed by their Arab neighbours, yet they are denied basic rights and</u> <u>citizenship. A special report by Judith Miller and David Samuels</u>

Independent Extra
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First Edition

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Section: INDEPENDENT LIFE; Pg. 2

Length: 4155 words

Byline: Judith Miller and David Samuels

Body

It is a cynical but time-honoured practice in Middle Eastern politics: the statesmen who decry the political and humanitarian crisis of the approximately 3.9 million Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and in Gaza ignore the plight of an estimated 4.6 million Palestinians who live in Arab countries. For decades, Arab governments have justified their decision to maintain millions of stateless Palestinians as refugees in squalid camps as a means of applying pressure to Israel. The refugee problem will be solved, they say, when Israel agrees to let the Palestinians have their own state.

Yet in the two decades since the end of the Cold War, after two Gulf wars, and the rise and fall of the Oslo peace process, not a single Palestinian refugee has returned to Israel - and only a handful of ageing political functionaries have returned from neighbouring Arab countries to the West Bank and Gaza. Instead, failed peace plans and shifting political priorities have resulted in a second Palestinian "Nakba", or catastrophe - this one at hands of the Arab governments. "Marginalised, deprived of basic political and economic rights, trapped in the camps, bereft of realistic prospects, heavily armed and standing atop multiple fault lines," a report by the International Crisis Group (ICG) in Lebanon recently observed, "the refugee population constitutes a time bomb."

The fact that the divided Palestinian political leadership is silent about the mistreatment of the refugees by Arab states does not make such behaviour any less reprehensible - or less dangerous. Some 250,000 Palestinians were chased out of Kuwait and other Gulf States to punish the Palestinian political leadership for supporting Saddam Hussein. Tens of thousands of Palestinian residents of Iraq were similarly dispossessed after the second Gulf war.

In 2001, Palestinians in Lebanon were stripped of the right to own property, or to pass on the property that they already owned to their children - and banned from working as doctors, lawyers, pharmacists or in 20 other professions. Even the Palestinian refugee community in Jordan, historically the most welcoming Arab state, has reason to feel insecure in the face of official threats to revoke their citizenship. The systematic refusal of Arab governments to grant basic human rights to Palestinians who are born and die in their countries - combined with periodic mass expulsions of entire Palestinian communities - recalls the treatment of Jews in medieval Europe. Along with dispossession and marginalisation has come a new and frightening turn away from the traditional forms of nationalism that once dominated the refugee camps towards the radical pan-Islamic ideology of al-Qa'ida.

Daniel C Kurtzer, who has served as US ambassador to both Israel and Egypt and now advises the Obama administration, says that all American governments have resisted dealing with what he calls the most sensitive issue in the conflict - the normalisation of the status of the Palestinians - through a right of return to Palestine, or citizenship in other countries. "The refugees hold the key to this conflict's settlement," he says, "and nobody knows what to do with them."

In the unlikely event that President Obama's vision of a swift and final settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict materialises, millions of Palestinians would still live in decaying refugee camps whose inhabitants are forbidden from owning land or participating in normal economic life. The only governing authority that Palestinians living in the camps have ever known is UNRWA - the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. Established by the UN on 8 December 1949 to assist 650,000 impoverished Palestinian refugees from the 1948 war, UNRWA has been battling budget cuts and strikes among its employees as it struggles to provide subsidies and services to Palestinian refugees, who are defined as "persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine between June 1946 and May 1948".

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The inclusion of the descendants of Palestinian refugees as refugees in UNRWA's mandate has no parallel in international humanitarian law and is responsible for the growth of the official numbers of Palestinian refugees in foreign countries from 711,000 to 4.6 million during decades when the number of ageing refugees from the 1948 Israeli war of independence in was in fact declining. UNRWA's grant of refugee status to the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the original Palestinian refugees according to the principle of patrilineal descent, with no limit on the generations that can obtain refugee status, has made it easy for host countries to flout their obligations under international law. According to Article 34 of the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, "The Contracting States shall as far as possible facilitate the assimilation and naturalisation of refugees," and must "make every effort to expedite naturalisation proceedings" - the opposite of what happened to the Palestinians in every Arab country in which they settled, save Jordan. For all the easy criticism that can be levelled at UNRWA, it is hard to see how many Palestinian refugees would have survived without the agency's help.

The responsibility for the legal dimensions of their fate lies elsewhere, as UNRWA Commissioner-General Karen AbuZayd made clear at UNRWA's anniversary ceremony in New York on 24 September, before an audience that included Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Queen Rania of Jordan - herself a Palestinian. "The protracted exile of Palestine refugees and the dire conditions they endure, particularly in the occupied Palestinian territory, cannot be reconciled with state obligations under the UN Charter," AbuZayd said. The result for the refugees, AbuZayd said at a forum the previous afternoon at the Princeton Club, is a "suspended state of existence" for which no one seems willing to accept political responsibility. The rest of the discussion, moderated by Ambassador Kurtner, made clear that anticipated solutions to the Palestinian refugee problem had failed to emerge - leaving a community in crisis.

"You can't ignore an entire people because it's awkward or inconvenient," says Dr Karma Nabulsi, a lecturer at Oxford and a former Palestinian representative at the UN. In the period immediately after Oslo, she added, Palestinian refugees in Arab countries hoped to be repatriated to areas governed by the Palestinian Authority. Today, despair has replaced that initial optimism. "What young Palestinian would want to resettle in Gaza or in the West Bank?" she asks.

Sharing a panel with Dr Nabulsi, the doveish former Israeli foreign minister Shlomo Ben Ami, who negotiated directly with Yasser Arafat at the failed Camp David meetings in 2000, asserted that Israel has suppressed narratives that would make clear its responsibility for the Palestinian refugee crisis of 1948. Indifference to the refugees' plight, he added, was shared by Israel's negotiating partner in the Oslo years - Yasser Arafat. "He was not a refugee man," Ben Ami said flatly. "He was much more centred on the question of Jerusalem. I heard him say to [Mahmood Abbas] in my presence, 'leave me alone with your refugees'."

It is no secret that certain Arab regimes saw the Palestinians under Arafat's leadership as an unwelcome occupation that stripped Jordan bare and destroyed Lebanon. Similarly, Arafat often used the threat of destabilisation and assassination to get Arab regimes to fund the Palestinian cause. Still, the record of Arafat's Palestinian Authority in its territories during the 1990s attests to the truth of Ben Ami's observation, which applies both to Arafat's Fatah and to *Hamas*. Despite \$10bn in foreign aid, not one refugee camp in the West Bank or Gaza has been replaced by modern housing. On the West Bank, chances for normal Palestinian communal life have been shattered by Israeli settlements, arrests, checkpoints and roadblocks, and by 15 years of abuses by Fatah. Even under the best of circumstances, an influx of refugees would further destabilise a Palestinian economy that is kept afloat by the world's highest per capita receipts of foreign aid.

Daniel Kurtzer agrees no one is likely to make a deal that includes a substantial return of the Palestinian diaspora. "Most Palestinian refugees know it, as do the settlers," he says. So rather than wait for American mediators or Arab states to impose solutions on them, the Palestinians themselves should begin to tackle the diabolically difficult issues inherent in the resolution of their political and economic future. "What we need is a refugee summit," he says. "I'm looking for a real conversation that must start internally and soon."

After 60 years of failed wars, and failed peace, it is time to put politics aside and to insist that the basic rights of the Palestinian refugees in Arab countries be respected - whether or not their children's children return to Haifa anytime soon. While Saudi Arabia may not wish to host Israeli tourists, it can easily afford to integrate the estimated 240,000 Palestinian refugees who already live in the kingdom - just as Egypt, which has received close to \$60bn in US aid, and has a population of 81 million, can grant legal rights to an estimated 70,000 Palestinian refugees and their descendants. One can only imagine the outrage that the world community would rightly visit upon Israel if Israeli Arabs were subject to the vile discriminatory laws applied to Palestinians living in Arab countries. Surely, Palestinian Arabs can keep their own national dream alive in the countries where they were born, while also enjoying the freedom to work, vote and own property?

A practical solution to the crisis of the Palestinian refugees in Arab countries will focus on Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, which together play host to approximately 3 million of the estimated 4.6 million Palestinian refugees living outside the West Bank and Gaza. While each of these countries has chosen different legal and political approaches to the 1948 refugees and their descendants, they share a political desire to sublimate the rights of Palestinian residents, treating them as unwanted guests or as tools to be used in pursuing wider political interests - but rarely as fully-fledged members of society. Lebanon, where Palestinians led by Yasser Arafat are widely blamed for having sparked the 1975 civil war, is the worst offender against international norms. Yet even in Jordan, which is in many ways a model for the humane treatment of a large refugee population, Palestinians today feel markedly less secure than they did two decades ago, or even five years ago.

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Outside of Iraq, whose Palestinian population fled en masse after the fall of Saddam, nowhere has the situation of the Palestinian refugees worsened so dramatically as in Lebanon. Since the early Sixties, Palestinians there have been barred from working in medicine, dentistry and the law. In 2001, the Lebanese parliament adopted an amendment to the country's property laws that prohibited the acquisition of real estate by "any person not a citizen of a recognised state" - meaning the estimated 250,000 to 400,000 Palestinians living in Lebanon. Palestinians who had acquired real estate prior to 2001 were barred from bequeathing property to their children.

Right-wing Christians and Shi'ite radicals alike support discriminatory legislation that further impoverishes Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, with the stated goal of preventing them from beginning the process of naturalisation, known as tawtin. In his inaugural speech in May, 2008, Lebanese President Michel Suleiman, a Christian and former head of the country's armed forces, reaffirmed "Lebanon's categorical refusal of naturalisation", a statement echoed by the former Lebanese ambassador to the US, Nassib Lahoud, who told us recently in Beirut: "The confessional balance does not allow these things to happen ... at the moment the Palestinians are citizens of a state that does not exist." His sentiments were echoed by Hizbollah's spokesman on

the Palestinian question, Hassan Hodroj. "The threat of tawtin is genuine," Hodroj explained. "It is one of the ways in which Israel, backed by the US, is endangering the region."

The fact that the living standard of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon has been deemed "catastrophic" by both UNRWA and by the Lebanese government can therefore be understood as a deliberate result of official state policy that is supported by all parties across Lebanon's divided confessional spectrum. As a member of the Lebanese parliament, Ghassan Moukheiber, explained in an interview with the ICG, "our official policy is to maintain Palestinians in a vulnerable, precarious situation to diminish prospects for their naturalisation or permanent settlement".

Yet the results of this horrifying policy may not be confined to Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. In his book Everyday Jihad, about the experience of refugees in the Ain al-Hilweh camp, home to an estimated 70,000 Palestinians, the French scholar Bernard Rougier describes the results of decades of exclusion and marginalisation which have severed the refugees from any connection to a lost homeland - or the country in which they were born. As a result, he says, many Palestinians have abandoned a failed nationalism for the radical millenarian ideas associated with al-Qa'ida. "Palestinian salafist militants have devoted themselves to defending the imaginary borders of identity," Rougier writes, "declaring themselves the protectors and guardians of the cause of Sunni Islam worldwide."

Visitors to the Ain al-Hilweh camp are immediately made aware that they have entered another world. While Lebanese army checkpoints ring the camp, the Lebanese state has no presence inside. Food, water and other basic services are provided by UNRWA, while armed factions openly display weapons in muddy alleyways and recruit generations to serve under their banners. It is easy to see why the secular promise of Palestinian nationalism has faded and why the promise of a Muslim paradise without borders might take its place. One of the 9/11 hijackers dedicated a poem to Ain al-Hilweh's most prominent jihadist in his videotaped will, and dozens of Palestinian fighters from the camp joined al-Qa'ida in Iraq.

"The situation is the camp is deteriorating," Rougier told us, when we asked about whether things were getting better or worse for the Palestinians of Lebanon. Bound by their absolute opposition to tawtin, he says, Lebanese leaders are creating a radicalised Palestinian population that will eventually have to be absorbed into Lebanon, despite having little or no allegiance to the state.

Sahar Atrache, lead author of the ICG report on the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, agrees. "Palestinians refugees in Lebanon lack means of socio-economic advancement and are bereft of hope," he says. "They are vulnerable on all counts - politically, legally and above all physically. The status quo is good neither for the refugees nor for Lebanon itself."

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While Palestinian refugees and their descendants inside Syria are not allowed to vote or hold Syrian passports, they are free from the overt discrimination that has turned Lebanon into a recruiting ground for al-Qa'ida. The legal status of Palestinians inside Syria is defined by a 1956 law that states that grants them "the right to employment, commerce, and national service, while preserving their original nationality". More than 100,000 of the estimated 450,000 Palestinians in Syria live in or around the Yarmouk refugee camp, which long ago became a neighbourhood of Damascus.

While Palestinians are reasonably well integrated into the Syrian socio-economic structure, according to the scholar Laurie Brand they do not have the right to vote, nor can they stand for parliament or other political offices. Palestinians are barred from buying farmland and prohibited from owning more than one house. The *female* descendant of a Palestinian refugee can become a Syrian citizen by marrying a Syrian man. The male descendants of Palestinian men and their children are barred from acquiring Syrian citizenship, even if they marry Syrian *women*.

The major focus of Syrian interest in the Palestinian refugees has long been as an extension of the Assad regime's policy towards its neighbours - Israel and Lebanon. Damascus has long hosted a variety of Palestinian terror groups that rejected the Oslo process, including Ahmad Jibril's Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC). More significantly, Damascus is also the political and logistical centre for <u>Hamas</u>. "Syria's support for armed Palestinian groups is key to pressuring Damascus' neighbours, most notably Israel and Lebanon," says Andrew Tabler, author of the Syria-watching blog Eighth Gate.

Syria increases its leverage inside Israel by weakening Fatah and strengthening <u>Hamas</u>. In Lebanon, Syrian military and political interference has turned the refugee camps into "security-free islands" (juzur amniya) where bombers can be recruited, bombs manufactured, and plots can be directed beyond the reach of the Lebanese army and police. "Life for the Palestinians was deliberately frozen for political manipulation," concludes Lebanese analyst Tony Badran. "Syria has no interest in normalising that situation."

While Syria imposes a measure of security on its Palestinian neighbourhoods, it foments insecurity and violence in Lebanon and Gaza, splitting the Palestinian polity and fuelling the misery of Palestinians throughout the region.

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Jordan is the only Arab nation that has integrated large numbers of Palestinians as full-fledged citizens. This is due not only to the unification of the East Bank and West Bank of the Jordan River valley under Hashemite rule between the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 until Israel's occupation of West Bank in 1967, but also to the luck of having had an enlightened monarch committed to the compassionate treatment of the estimated 100,000 refugees who crossed the Jordan River during the nakba in 1948. Israel's occupation of the West Bank following the 1967 war triggered a second exodus of 140,000 refugees into Jordan.

Today, almost 2 million of Jordan's 6 million people are registered Palestinian refugees, the largest concentration of current and former refugees in the Palestinian diaspora - and increasingly, tensions have deepened between the Palestinians and the "East Bank" establishment. This summer in Amman, ambiguous declarations by the recently appointed minister of the interior, Nayef al-Kadi, who is widely perceived to be anti-Palestinian, led many Jordanians of Palestinian origin to fear they would be stripped of Jordanian identity numbers. Speaking to the London-based Arabic-language newspaper Al Hayat, al-Kadi confirmed that some Palestinians would be stripped of citizenship, ostensibly to counter Israeli plans to turn Jordan into Palestine. "We should be thanked for taking this measure," he said. "We are fulfilling our national duty because Israel wants to expel the Palestinians from their homeland." Panic about their status spread quickly among the Palestinian community.

In interviews this month, senior Jordanian officials sought to quell such fears, while also suggesting there was at least some substance to al-Kadi's explosive suggestion. Faisal Bakr Qadi, the director of the Interior Ministry's office of Inspections, said Palestinians in Jordan were not being systematically stripped of citizenship. Rather, he explained that the government's current review of Palestinian national status dated back to 1988, when King Hussein, in response to demands by Palestinian and Arab leaders, disengaged administratively from the West Bank. Palestinian refugees, he said, meaning those who came to Jordan in the 1948 exodus, were to remain "full Jordanian citizens". "Displaced" Palestinians, or those who had come in 1967 and afterwards, would be able to maintain their yellow identity cards and numbers and de facto citizenship, provided they returned to the West Bank to renew the Israeli passes that permit them to go back and forth between Jordan and the West Bank.

Since 1983, he said, Jordan had given the coveted yellow cards - which enable Palestinians to work without special permits, pay local tuition rates in school, and enjoy full government services - to 280,000 Palestinians, whereas it had "frozen" the cards - or downgraded their status - of only 15,856 people. So far this year, he said, 9,956 cards were upgraded, 291 downgraded.

While many diplomats doubt these numbers, Jordanians insist there is no plot or plan to expel or deny citizenship to Palestinians who have lived virtually their entire lives in Jordan. "We want to ensure that when and if the peace process succeeds in establishing an independent Palestinian state, Palestinians living in Jordan will be in a position

to choose their citizenship by having their status in order in both Jordan and Palestine," said an official close to King Abdullah.

Yet the distinctions that seem meaningful in Amman are not clear to some of the almost 94,000 Palestinian residents of Baqa'a, the largest of the 10 official refugee camps run by the UN. Some Palestinians in Baqa'a complain about the "new regulations" and the lack of identity cards that enable them to work without special permits and educate their children in public schools. Anxiety about the future pervades this ramshackle suburb at the northern edge of Amman, which began as an emergency relief centre after the 1967 war and is now a sprawling mini-city with its own basic shops, shawarma (sandwich) stands, and services. Many of the people we spoke to claimed that they knew someone, or had a relative, neighbour and friend whose identity card had been revoked, or whose status had inexplicably been changed.

For many of these refugees at the bottom of Jordan's social and economic pecking order, life without papers means hiding from the police who constantly patrol their camp's streets, being too poor to send any of your eight to 10 children to college, a lifetime of menial labour, and only a threadbare dream of returning to a homeland that most of them have never seen. There is strong suspicion of the state, but also of their neighbours, who are divided into "'48 people" and "'67 people". "Some of the newcomers would give away Al Aqsa for a Jordanian identity card," says Heba, a mother of eight, mentioning Islam's celebrated mosque in Jerusalem, one of its holiest shrines.

"We're Jordanians," says her son, Mustapha, a slender, 20-year-old in a bright orange T-shirt emblazoned with meaningless words in unknown languages. "This is the best place in the world," he says, pointing around the bare living room whose worn rugs and threadbare pillows cover the floor on which he and all his siblings sleep. "We would never leave here. But I'm loyal to my country, and I would like to visit it one day."

He seems perplexed when asked which is his country - Jordan or Palestine. "We have no security here, but we are Jordanians," replies Mustapha, who lounges on a mattress in a two-storey cement house down the road while one of his five daughters offers tiny glasses of steaming herbal tea and cardamom-scented coffee. "Everything I have is here. This house. My car. My job. What would I have in Nablus or Be'ersheba?" he declares. "My children know nothing but Jordan. And we will stay here."

That determination, echoed repeatedly through the dilapidated cement homes that line Baqa'a's gravelly streets and dust-filled shops, is precisely what terrifies Jordan's East Bank establishment. Jordanians have reason to fear their Palestinian guests. Many Jordanians have not forgotten "Black September", the civil war launched by Arafat's Fatah organisation in 1970 which nearly toppled King Hussein's kingdom.

Moreover, having grown accustomed to their near monopoly on jobs provided by the government, Jordan's largest employer, Jordanians fear demands for political equality from Palestinians, most of whom would probably choose to remain in Jordan, relinquishing their "right of return' in favour of compensation. An end to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict would surely threaten Jordan's informal division of power: East Bankers dominate the army, the security services and most civil-service posts, while Palestinians are disproportionately represented in business. Palestinians may advise the king in the royal court, but there has been only one Palestinian prime minister, who served for eight months. Palestinians now comprise only 23 of Jordan's 110 MPs.

"The closer we get to a solution," says Adnan Abu Odeh, a Palestinian who was one of King Hussein's royal court chiefs and also held other important government posts, "the more anxious society becomes. We are approaching a moment of truth."

Load-Date: October 24, 2009



Iran policy reveals split between U.S. Jewish and Israeli left

Heritage Florida Jewish News September 18, 2009

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Length: 1162 words **Byline:** Ron Kampeas

Body

WASHINGTON (JTA)--Israel's highest-ranking <u>female</u> soldier, Brig. Gen. Yisraela Oron, was sounding all the right notes for her J Street hosts.

At the tail end of a U.S. tour for the left-wing pro-Israel lobby, Oron was lending her considerable security credentials to its platform: a two-state solution, territorial concessions by Israel and a robust U.S. peacemaking role.

The conversation with a group of reporters then turned to Iran and its nuclear potential, and Oron was unequivocal: yes to engagement, but on a timetable that would be tied to punishing sanctions.

"The thing that worries me and that worries other Israelis is that it is not limited in time," Oron said as the faces of her J Street hosts turned anxious, adding that, "I'm not sure I'm expressing the J Street opinion."

She was not. J Street explicitly opposes a timetable and has reservations about proposed additional sanctions.

The awkward moment pointed to a potential split between left-wing pro-Israel groups and the Israeli constituents for whom they claim to speak. Unlike the Israeli-Palestinian issue, little dissent exists among Israeli politicians over how to deal with Iran.

That puts left-wing U.S. Jewish groups at odds with Israeli left-wingers.

"There is a more hawkish perception among virtually all circles in Israel" than there is in the United States, said Yossi Alpher, a consultant who has worked with Americans for Peace Now. "It's very natural. Iran doesn't say the U.S. has no right to exist and doesn't do the equivalent of denying the Holocaust. It doesn't deploy proxies like *Hamas* and Hezbollah against the United States and on its borders."

Iran policy reveals split between U.S. Jewish and Israeli left

Right now, the differences are not pronounced--the administrations of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Obama are virtually on the same page on the need to confront Iran, and soon. That could change, however, if Iran makes a serious counter offer to Obama's proposal to engage.

Lastweek, the Iranians said they had made such an offer. Its details are not known, but it will be part of the "reassessment" Obama has pledged to complete by the end of September, when the major world powers meet at the U.N. General Assembly.

"If Iran engages and the Obama administration argues that a deal has been made, the Israeli government will be very wary," Alpher said. "This could immediately create a whole world of suspicions."

Under those circumstances, the vast majority of American Jewish voters who backed Obama last year would be faced with the first either-or U.S. vs. Israel issue in decades, and groups that describe themselves as pro-Israel and pro-peace will find themselves for the first time speaking for virtually no one in Israel on a critical issue.

The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations lobbied in Washington on Sept. 10 and will rally outside the General Assembly on Sept. 24 for sanctions that would end the export of refined petroleum to Iran, which imports 40 percent of its refined oil.

On Israel's left, the Labor Party, currently part of Netanyahu's governing coalition, aggressively backs sanctions. Its leader and the current defense minister, Ehud Barak, makes Iran's isolation the centerpiece of his exchanges with his counterparts in the West.

The smaller Meretz Party, to Labor's left, also backs Iran's isolation. It routinely frames its arguments for robust peacemaking in terms of the need to contain Iran's ambitions.

Former Meretz leader Yossi Beilin tells audiences that Yitzhak Rabin, the late Israeli prime minister who launched the Oslo process in 1993, did so principally because of his fears of Iran. Beilin told a German audience last year that he "advocates increased sanctions towards Iran in order to stop centrifugal uranium programs."

Avshalom Vilan, a Meretz Knesset member until March, was a forceful advocate of reaching out to the nations most able to wound Iran's economy, including Germany and India.

Across the ocean, however, left-wing U.S. Jewish groups--not to mention non-Jewish left-wing groups--are against more sanctions.

Americans for Peace Now has the most pronounced opposition.

"We don't think crippling sanctions are right if the meaning of that is that the sanctions will not be targeted against Iran's governments and leaders but will target Iranian people," spokesman Ori Nir said. "We think that's not only morally wrong but is also strategically perilous."

Other left-wing groups also hedge on the prospect of sanctions.

The Israel Policy Forum, in a July 15 paper, encouraged engagement and said threats of enhanced sanctions were "not necessary" because Iran's leadership knew they were forthcoming.

The most recent statement from Brit Tzedek v'Shalom, dated July 2008, rejects "diplomatic isolation or veiled threats of military action" and advocates "utilizing diplomatic and economic incentives and sanctions together."

In a policy statement, J Street says it does not oppose further sanctions "in principle," but "under the current circumstances, it is our view that ever harsher sanctions at this time are unlikely to cause the Iranian regime to cease weapons development." Engagement should "not be conducted with a stopwatch," it said.

The Reform movement, which often aligns with the left-wing groups on Israel-Palestinian matters, is a bit closer to the Israeli position when it comes to Iran.

Iran policy reveals split between U.S. Jewish and Israeli left

Rabbi David Saperstein, who directs the Reform's Religious Action Center, disputes Americans for Peace Now's contention that the proposed enhanced sanctions are immoral.

"These were chosen as a much more targeted way to put the maximum pressure on the power structure in Iran," he said.

The other left-wing pro-Israel groups arrived at their Iran policies partly because of their alliance with an array of liberal Democrats wary of engaging Iran in the wake of the Iraq War and its resultant quagmire. Behind the scenes, these groups have sought sanctions that would not harm ordinary Iranians.

Supporters of tougher sanctions argue that sanctions targeting the regime have been in place for years and have had little effect.

Shai Franklin, a senior fellow for U.N. affairs at the Institute on Religion and Public Policy, said that gravitating away from deference to Israeli constituencies may be healthy for some U.S. Jewish groups.

"It makes the conversation more interesting, and once that happens you'll find more people getting involved, from the right and left," he said.

Steven Spiegel of the Israel Policy Forum said differences might emerge next month over the pacing and intensity of sanctions.

"The Iran difference is part of a differentiation that has got to be addressed," he said. "At some point there has to be a serious dialogue between American Jews and Israel and the Obama administration and Israel."

One tactic might be to remind Israel that Obama's policy of engagement with Iran appears to have rallied support in Europe in recent weeks for tougher sanctions.

"The doves," Spiegel said, "accomplished what the hawks could not."

Load-Date: December 5, 2009



300,002 reasons why I'm voting Yes to Lisbon

Sunday Independent (Ireland) September 20, 2009

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Sunday Independent

Section: ANALYSIS Length: 1104 words

Body

The Editor hinted it would be no harm to say why I am voting Yes. This produced a panic attack for two reasons. Firstly, I wanted to write the horror of Kerry's Tommy Walsh, 6ft 4ins, a hyena with the height of a giraffe, hovering at the edge of the Cork square in Croke Park today. Second, I never needed a reason to vote Yes to Lisbon before. But here goes.

* * * * *

Like marriage, the EU is not a product but a process and Lisbon is just another reality check in the relationship. In marriage, you commit yourself to stay the course. And even if you are finally forced to break up, you should praise the good times.

But if the marriage is going well -- and our EU relationship is sound -- why would you suddenly head for the hills on a whim? Or do an Othello and smother your European wife just because some Sinn Fein lago says she is a whore? Or take the advice of a fanatic with fiery eyes who sees abortion clinics around every corner'

Most people will not debate the pros and cons of Lisbon: they will listen to their hearts. My heart tells me that Europe has been a good spouse: supportive when we were poor, stoical when we were spendthrifts, and still willing to dig into her purse, aka European Central Bank.

But if you insist on reasons of the head, I can think of 300,002. The first 300,000 are the Irish jobs provided by American investors who value the EU link. The remaining two reasons are more complex. Call them hate and love.

I hate the politics of the extremists in the No camp. I hate the politics of Sinn Fein. I hate the reactionary religious politics of the right-wingers who cluster around Coir. I hate the repressed racism that runs like a dark thread through the Little Englanders linking up with Little Irelanders to say No to Lisbon.

I hate the strident isolationism of the Murdoch and Associated Press organs who bray that Lisbon is a conspiracy of unelected bureaucrats. Like the historian Timothy Garton Ash, I ask why would it be more democratic to have an EU whose shape is dictated by a conspiracy of unelected British newspaper proprietors'

Above all, I hate the smelly politics of the yellow poster. I refer to the weasel words on the lurid poster which the Friends of

Palestine Against Lisbon stuck up outside the Israeli Embassy: "Israel killed over 300 Palestinian children in January. Yet the EU will not impose sanctions. EU policy facilitates Israeli genocide. Vote No to Lisbon." Thank God it has been taken down.

Given the thousands of Irish jobs at stake, given the gutter politics of some of the No groups, you might think the ICTU would look for a Lisbon Yes vote and be careful of the company it keeps. Not so. In the past few weeks, the ICTU has been as interested in boycotting Israeli goods as in getting a Yes for Lisbon.

On August 27, as the Lisbon campaigns lifted into top gear, Sally Anne Kinahan, the assistant general secretary of ICTU, sent a letter to all affiliated unions headed: "Levy for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign". She was looking for "a levy in the form of a flat fee of 300 per union and a fee per member of 0.07".

Let me make three points to Sally Ann Kinahan. Firstly, none of the unions she asks to pay the boycott levy have consulted their members, by ballot or otherwise, or asked them to support a boycott. Secondly, the European Trade Union Confederation, to which the ICTU is affiliated, does not support a boycott. Thirdly, the Irish Government and opposition parties -- with the significant exception of Sinn Fein -- do not support a boycott.

Let me add two more. Ms Kinahan refers to an "official Congress delegation" which went on a "fact-finding" visit in 2007. Some, but not all, were members of either a Palestinian solidarity group or of Sinn Fein. They spent only a short time in Israel and their "findings" merely confirmed the positions some of them held on arrival. Finally, the ICTU has never called for a boycott -- or even condemned publicly -- the repressive policies of Islamist states such as Saudi Arabia, Sudan, or grim groups like <u>Hamas</u> in Gaza, all of whom imprison trade unionists and oppress <u>women</u> in all walks of life. These states and groups would lock up, torture and murder a woman trade unionist like Sally Ann Kinhan. Go figure.

So what do I love about Lisbon' I love it like an advance of affection in a good marriage. I love it as another step in the epic European project that has brought peace and prosperity to countries oppressed by conflict and poverty. Like Ireland. Emmet's epitaph has been etched in Europe even more extensively than the United

States of America. The idea of an evolving Europe of democratic nation states can still inspire. It is an idea that inches out inclusively to Turkey and the wider Muslim world beyond. It is a project that in time will help the workers and <u>women</u> of the Middle East. Like it helped Irish workers and Irish <u>women</u>.

Irish <u>women</u> are one of the main reasons I support Lisbon. Why' Because Irish <u>women</u> did better from the EU than almost any other group except farmers. So it was baffling that so many **women** voted No.

Lest we have to take another step like Lisbon, let me make a suggestion: Hold a national competition to find the face of Molly Bloom. To that face add Molly's immortal words to her Dublin Jewish lover, Leopold Bloom. Words that link the Europe of Moorish Spain to Africa and the Middle East. Words that cherish Christian, Muslim and Jew alike: ". . . yes when I put the rose in my hair like the Andalusian girls used to wear or shall I wear a red yes and how he kissed me under the Moorish wall and I thought well as well him as another and then I asked him with my eyes to ask again yes and then he asked me would I yes to say yes my mountain flower first I put my arms around him yes and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume yes and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will Yes."

* * * * *

A final worried word on the Cork-Kerry clash. Last Friday, on Lunchtime with Keane, I heard Cork legend Dinny Allen and Kerry icon Paidi O Se, like two honourable eighteenth-century officers, exchange civilities about which of them did the most damage when marking each other.

Dinny conceded that Paidi was so hard there were times he wished "he was in a concrete box". Paidi matched him in gallantry, remarking that while he liked his roast beef on Sunday, Dinny's close marking had left him without the wherewithal to grind his beef.

300,002 reasons why I'm voting Yes to Lisbon

Think a country which produces warriors like them will retreat before a recession and go down to dust' Think again. Tune into Croke Park today. Say yes, I will Yes.

Load-Date: September 20, 2009



Aiding the destroyers among us

The Jerusalem Post September 4, 2009 Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 6

Length: 1276 words

Byline: Jonathan Rosenblum

Highlight: THINK AGAIN. Sadly, many Jews who care deeply about Israel's existence help fund its delegitimization

Body

The Swedish government refused to condemn a totally unsupported article in the country's largest circulation newspaper alleging that Israel routinely kidnaps and murders Palestinians to harvest their organs. To comment, said Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt, would be a violation of the country's principles of free speech.

Those who called for donors to withhold giving to Ben- Gurion University after BGU Professor Neve Gordon penned an op-ed in the Los Angeles Times, in which he advocated an international boycott of Israel, were accused of violating academic freedom.

Those responses share a fundamental misunderstanding of the meaning of freedom of speech and academic freedom. Just because the content of speech is legal does not make it proper or immunize it from criticism. I have the right to express my thoughts. But I do not have a right to have The Jerusalem Post publish them, or to demand that it not publish letters ridiculing its "haredi apologist."

Freedom of the press and speech protect Aftonbladet from sanctions by the Swedish government. But the Swedish government has its own interests - or so one would have hoped - in disassociating Sweden from ancient anti-Semitic stereotypes, as the Swedish ambassador to Israel rightly recognized. Had a major Swedish paper printed anything offensive to Muslims of a violent bent, the government would have fallen over itself to express its regrets. And while an academic has the right to his opinions, private donors who find his views or research repugnant are equally entitled not to support that research. Given the fungibility of money that might mean withholding support from the university that employs them.

Nor do professors' statements become immune to criticism because they are uttered in a classroom. Professors, like everyone else, should expect to have their work evaluated. Just as parents and students have an interest in knowing which professors have a tendency to get too friendly with <u>female</u> students, so do they have a right to form judgments about which professors are using their classrooms for political indoctrination, not education.

GROUPS LIKE Campus Watch and Israel Campus foster such informed judgments by publicizing both the published utterances and classroom statements of university lecturers.

In general, it would be foolish to refrain from contributing to a university based on the views of one faculty member one finds repugnant. Doing so would eliminate every potential recipient.

Aiding the destroyers among us

But Neve Gordon is not a solitary rogue professor on the BGU campus. The BGU Department of Politics and Government, which he chairs, fits the description of former Minister of Education Amnon Rubinstein of academic departments in Israel in which no traditional Zionist could be appointed. Before he published his Los Angeles Times piece, Gordon shared his message with his department colleagues. According to Professor Fred Lazin, there was a "unanimous decision not to let him step down [as chairman]."

BGU President Rikva Carmi professed to be "shocked" by Gordon's boycott call. But she has in the past defended him as a "serious and distinguished researcher into human rights," and lashed out at academic monitors of his output, which appears regularly on anti-Semitic and Holocaust denial sites and Aljazeera.com, as "Kahanists."

Nor did Gordon's boycott call come out of the blue. For years he has described Israel as an "apartheid state." He once joined 250 International Solidarity Movement members serving as a human shield in Yasser Arafat's Ramallah compound, where he was photographed holding hands aloft with Arafat and quoted expressing doubts about the latter's involvement in terrorism.

Gordon is the last person entitled to hide behind the cover of free speech and academic freedom. He once labeled his former army commander Aviv Kochavi a "war criminal," forcing Kochavi to forgo graduate studies in England for fear of prosecution. Gordon filed a libel suit against Haifa University Professor Steven Plaut, over the latter's sharp criticism of his ISM escapades and of Ha'aretz's choice of Gordon to write an effusive review of Norman Finkelstein's The Holocaust Industry, which alleges, inter alia, that the number of those murdered in the Holocaust is greatly exaggerated. Before filing, Gordon then went forum- shopping to Nazareth, where neither he nor Plaut live, in search of a suitably sympathetic Arab judge.

ISRAELI AND Jewish Israel-bashers constitute a major, perhaps insuperable, obstacle to any attempt to defend Israel in the court of world opinion. Anyone attempting to defend Israel abroad will inevitably be confronted with some statement characterizing Israel as a racist, apartheid state, perpetrating war crimes against the Palestinians, from the mouth of an Israeli academic or journalist. The fact that the source is Jewish or Israeli is assumed to provide credibility.

Sadly, many Jews who care deeply about Israel's existence help fund its delegitimization. The New Israel Fund raises millions of dollars annually from American Jews. Donors are told that New Israel Fund supports Israel as a Jewish state and opposes the "right of return" for Palestinian refugees, and that the NIF does not fund organizations that engage in propaganda or support boycotts of Israel.

None of these claims are true, as two recent studies of NIF grantees prepared by the Center for Near East Policy Research demonstrate. The Coalition of <u>Women</u> for Peace recently sponsored a speech by Naomi Klein in support of the movement for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BSD) against Israel. Six NIF grant recipients - including CPW, Mossawa, and Machsom Watch - petitioned the Norwegian government for sanctions against Israel.

Ittijah, an umbrella group of Israel Arab NGO's, issued a statement prior to its attendance at Durban II in Geneva in which it charged that "the Jewish character of the state of Israel contradicts international law" and referred to the "racist character" of the State. The draft constitution prepared for Israel by Adalah, the Legal Center for Minority Arab Rights in Israel, another NIF grantee, calls for Israel to recognize responsibility for the Nakba of its creation and to recognize "the right of return." Adalah participated actively in the preparations for the UN sponsored Israel-bashing fest in Durban and in the drafting of the conference resolutions.

The director until recently of I'lam - the Media Center for Arab Palestinians in Israel, Balad MK Hanin Zoabi was one of the signatories of the Haifa Declaration calling for the negation of Israel's Jewish character. She supports Iran's quest for nuclear weapons and has participated in Israel Apartheid week activities in the United States. The organization's Empowerment Coordinator calls for the return of the Palestinian refugees to their homes and its director of International Relations describes <u>Hamas</u> as "a genuinely emancipatory liberation and resistance movement."

Perhaps the best indicator of the NIF's real agenda was unwittingly supplied by a 2001 letter to The Jerusalem Post. Evalyn Segal recounted how she was a "devout Zionist" until she made the "haj" to Israel on a 1989 NIF study

Aiding the destroyers among us

tour and had her eyes opened to the "racist contempt of the Israel government . . . towards the Palestinians [and] how the founders of Zionism schemed from the start to take over, by any means necessary, the whole of Palestine and to cleanse it of Palestinians."

The prophet Isaiah (49:17) long ago foresaw that "your ruiners and destroyers will come from amongst you." But generous American Jews, committed to Israel's existence, should not be supporting the destroyers' efforts.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



SO MR MILIBAND THINKS TERRORISM IS 'JUSTIFIABLE'. THAT MAKES HIM EVEN MORE OF A GRADE-A CHUMP THAN I ALREADY THOUGHT

DAILY MAIL (London)

August 17, 2009 Monday

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Byline: BY STEPHEN GLOVER

Body

MANY will remember the photograph taken of David Miliband at last autumn's Labour Party Conference. The Foreign Secretary was pictured clutching a banana, grinning like a deranged chimpanzee.

This was at a time when Mr Miliband appeared to be positioning himself to replace Gordon Brown as leader of the Labour Party and Prime Minister. Along with other gaffes he made around the same time, the banana incident seemed to establish that the Foreign Secretary was a grade-A chump who shouldn't be allowed anywhere near No 10.

Now Mr Miliband has confirmed that reputation -- only this time it is much more serious. In an interview on BBC Radio 4's Great Lives programme, he declared that there are certain circumstances in which terrorism is 'justifiable' as well as 'effective'. He spoke in favour of the use of terrorism against the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Mr Miliband made these remarks while praising Joe Slovo, a white Marxist who was one of the leaders of Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), the military wing of the African National Congress, during the struggle against apartheid. The ANC was responsible for a number of terrorist acts in South Africa during the Seventies and Eighties, the worst of which involved the deaths of 19 people when a bomb was let off in the capital, Pretoria, in 1983.

This must be the first time in history that a Foreign Secretary, or indeed any senior government minister, has publicly endorsed the use of terror. For Mr Miliband to have done so is a very grave political misjudgment. It also calls into question his moral sense. How can it ever be 'justifiable' to kill innocent <u>women</u> and children in a terrorist act?

Even as he speaks, British soldiers are dying almost daily in Afghanistan, usually as a result of roadside bombs planted by the Taliban. At the weekend, the number of fatalities passed 200. By any definition, the use of these explosive devices constitutes terrorism. I imagine Mr Miliband would agree. What, then, are British soldiers who are risking their lives in Afghanistan, and their desperately worried families back at home, to make of his partial defence of terrorism?

I suppose the Taliban might argue that they are targeting British servicemen, and not <u>women</u> and children. No such caveat could be entered in the case of the 2005 London bombings when 52 innocent people were murdered. Those random attacks represented terrorism at its most pitiless. I am sure that Mr Miliband condemned them at the time, and that he would do so if -- God forbid -- bombers were to strike again in a British city.

SO MR MILIBAND THINKS TERRORISM IS 'JUSTIFIABLE'. THAT MAKES HIM EVEN MORE OF A GRADE-A CHUMP THAN I ALREADY THOUGHT

WHY give terrorists any comfort or feeling of self-justification by declaring that terror is sometimes 'justifiable'? He did not specify when it is and when it isn't, and thus left the door open for every killer. What the Foreign Secretary should have said, if he had to speak at all, is that terrorism is always wrong.

It was wrong in South Africa, despite what he says. No one doubts that the apartheid regime was unjust and sometimes cruel, though by no means on the scale of what happened in Stalinist Russia or Nazi Germany. But there were vocal opponents of the regime, such as Helen Suzman and Archbishop Desmond Tutu and many others. In short, there were effective ways of criticising and even undermining the apartheid regime apart from murdering innocent people.

Mr Miliband is not even right to suggest that terrorist acts by the ANC were 'effective'. There were relatively few of them, and normal life in South Africa was never seriously disrupted. Apartheid was ended not because of the activities of the terrorists but as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union. The South African government felt that it could do a deal with the ANC once it had been deprived of its communist paymasters.

Terrorism cannot be justified by the ANC in South Africa, or by the IRA in Northern Ireland, or by the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, or by extreme Zionists at the birth of Israel, or by <u>Hamas</u> in Israel today. If terrorists have a genuine grievance -- and they often don't, and seldom represent the majority -- that grievance should be pursued by peaceful means.

One of my heroines is Aung San Suu Kyi, the Burmese pro-democracy leader sentenced last week to a new period of house arrest, who opposes the authoritarian and sometimes murderous Burmese generals, not by inciting her many followers to violence, but through calm and reasoned and dignified resistance. The generals are rightly terrified that she will ultimately prevail.

There may, I grant, be one case in a hundred in which activities which might be thought akin to terrorism can be justified. One such example would be that of the French Resistance in the last war.

THE defence of their actions is that they were defending their country against an invading force after their own army had left the field. No other course of action was open to them -- not even passive resistance. And they generally targeted enemy servicemen rather than innocent civilians.

If he had to open his mouth at all, Mr Miliband could have invoked this example rather than the South African one. It transpires that the 18-year-old David Miliband once opened the front door of his parents' house to find Joe Slovo standing there. He had turned up unannounced to chew the cud with David's father, Ralph, a well-known Marxist academic who doubtless approved of the armed struggle. The Foreign Secretary may seem an ineffectual, rather silly sort of fellow, but one catches a glimpse of dubious affiliations and disturbing values that may not have been entirely disowned.

It is not, after all, a very wide step from defending terrorism to approving of torture. Despite mounting evidence, the British government and Mr Miliband have repeatedly denied any involvement in the torture of foreign detainees. I would have thought that the mind that can countenance terrorism as a legitimate activity is unlikely to baulk at torture. The end justifies the means.

It so happens that Mr Miliband's hero, and thoroughly nice chap, Joe Slovo was a leading light in the armed wing of the ANC at a time when (by the organisation's own subsequent admission) it regularly used torture, usually against its own members, in its terrorist camps in Angola, Uganda and Tanzania.

Even now, to be Foreign Secretary of Great Britain is a great honour and a heavy responsibility. The world may not realise that the successor of Canning, Palmerston, Curzon and Eden is constructed from a very thin and unsatisfactory clay. When the person who occupies this great office opens his mouth, many people still listen.

SO MR MILIBAND THINKS TERRORISM IS 'JUSTIFIABLE'. THAT MAKES HIM EVEN MORE OF A GRADE-A CHUMP THAN I ALREADY THOUGHT

And what do they hear? That terrorism is sometimes 'justifiable'. How mystifying this message must be to potential victims at home and abroad; and how encouraging to the terrorists making their bombs, grateful for any excuse and justification to go on with their killing.

Load-Date: August 16, 2009



Oratorio and Dubawi lead Europe's first season sires

Sportsman (Australia)
August 14, 2009 Friday
1 - Sydney Edition Edition

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Byline: By ROSS PROWD, Progold Thoroughbreds

Body

THE northern hemisphere season is in full swing and their first season sires table certainly has some significant interest for us here.

Leading the way with nine winners from 27 starters is Oratorio, by Danehill.

Second is Dubawi, by Dubai Millenium, who has 12 winners from 35 runners to date, and trails Oratorio by only \$12A,000.

What is important is that both stallions shuttle to Australia and have their first runners hitting the track here this season.

Just what might the future hold here?

Oratorio is by Danehill, who needs little introduction, out of a Vaguely Noble mare called Mahrah.

Mahrah was the winner of one race over a mile, but was a three-quarter-sister to a multiple stakeswinner in Talakeno.

She was also a half-sister to another stakeswinner Andros Bay, and two stakes-placed horses in Juniper and Saint Lyphard.

Interestingly, of these, only Juniper, by Danzig, won as a two-year-old and managed to win at a distance less than a mile.

Mahrah has also produced the stakeswinners Fahim, by Green Desert, and Mowaadah, by Alzao.

Again, neither of these horses has won as a two-yearold, nor at any distance under a mile.

Oratorio, however, started seven times as a two-year-old for four wins, including the Group One Longchamp Prix Jean-Luc Lagardere and two seconds in the Group One Newmarket Dewhurst and Curragh Phoenix Stakes.

As a three-year-old, Oratorio also won the Group One Sandown Eclipse Stakes and Irish Champion Stakes, both over 1 miles, while he also ran second in the Irish 2000 Guineas.

Oratorio and Dubawi lead Europe's first season sires

In all, he started 15 times for six wins, including five Group wins and the equivalent of almost \$2A.5 million in stakes.

Delving into the pedigree of Oratorio, there are numerous good runners.

It is hard to imagine any having the impact of a stallion called Alydar, who hails from the same *female* family.

Interestingly, if we look at the pedigree of Oratorio's second dam Montage, we see that she was bred by mating her dam back to Alydar.

Alydar was a Hall Of Fame racehorse in the US as well as a champion sire, however his influence within Australia has been limited.

Alydar is the only horse to have run second in every leg of the US Triple Crown, but he still won six Group One races and almost \$1US million in stakes during the 1970s.

He was an excellent sire in the US, producing quality gallopers like Easy Goer, Alysheba and Strike The Gold.

In Australia, the stallion is perhaps best known as the sire of Alshandegha, the dam of the great Mahogany, and also of Lassie's Lady, the dam of good stallion Bite The Bullet.

I Continued on page 61

One stallion from the family of Oratorio to have made it to Australia was Raise A Cup, by Raise A Native.

The triple group-winning US horse did not make it to Australia until he had been at stud for many years in the US, and he stood here for only four full seasons before dying.

In that time, he managed to produce eight stakeswinners, including the Blue Diamond winner Riva Diva, which could be of importance to the future of Oratorio.

Second on the UK list is Dubawi, another shuttle stallion whose first Australian crop will also hit the tracks later this year.

Dubawi was an exceptional racehorse, starting only eight times for five wins and two placings.

His only unplaced start came in his first run as a three-yearold in the 1000 Guineas, when he was beaten only three lengths by Footstepsinthesand.

He had been unbeaten as a twoyearold, with the highlight being his win in the Group One Curragh National over seven furlongs (1400m).

After his unplaced start to his three-year-old season, he came back to win the Irish 1000 Guineas and then ran a good third in the English Derby.

Dubawi then went to France where he won the Group One Deauville Prix Jacques le Marois over a mile.

At his final start, he was second to Australasian champion Starcraft in the Queen Elizabeth II Stakes.

In all, his eight starts netted him over \$1.6 million.

Dubawi is by the ill-fated super stallion Dubai Millenium.

As a racehorse, Dubai Millenium won the 2000 Dubai World Cup and tasted defeat only once in a 10 start career, and that was in the English Derby when he failed to run the journey.

At stud, Dubai Millenium had only one crop of 34 runners, of which 25 went on to win races, with five winning stakes races.

Oratorio and Dubawi lead Europe's first season sires

Dubai Millenium was by US sire Seeking The Gold, out of a Shareef Dancer mare Colorado Dancer.

His second dam was Fall Aspen, making Colorado Dancer a halfsister to five stakeswinners in Timber Country, *Hamas*, Fort Wood, Bianconi and Mazzacano.

Dubawi is out of the Group Onewinning Deploy mare Zomaradah.

Deploy is by Shirley Heights out of a stakeswinning mare called Slightly Dangerous, who was a half-sister to the stallions Warning, Commander In Chief and Dushyantor.

This is the same *female* family as the good local stallion Scenic and Rainbow Quest, the sire of Quest For Fame.

Zomaradah hails from the same family as the Epsom Derby winner High-Rise and another good stallion In The Wings, by Sadler's Wells, who sired another very good stallion in Singspiel.

In comparison, Oratorio and Dubawi are a little hard to compare as to their future in Australia.

Oratorio is by Danehill, who has been proven here, but his <u>female</u> line, and a family propensity towards more ground, would seem to count against him.

Dubawi, on the other hand, is by a sire that could have been anything, but we will never know if his progeny were suited here.

In turn, his grandsire, Seeking The Gold, has had limited opportunities here, although his imported son Secret Savings performed well in Australia on both the track and in the breeding barn.

Dubawi's <u>female</u> line seems to have performed better over shorter distances around a mile, while his pedigree is littered with influences that have made an impact in Australia.

His family would also seem to have more two-year-old runners, which is obviously the basis for first season success.

The two stallions covered similar numbers in their first season in Australia, but I would favour Dubawi to perform the better of the two under local conditions, if only because his pedigree would seem suited to a wider range of Australian mares.

Enthusiasm over the likely success of these two European first season leaders has to be tempered when we look a little closer at some other stallions on the list.

Footstepsinthesand, Antonius Pius and Shamardal are all performing well with their first northern hemisphere crop.

In Australia, these three stallions had their first runners in the recently completed season.

Shamardal finished a creditable fifth on this table, but Antonius Pius (17th) and Footstepsinthesand (45th) were disappointing.

In the northern hemisphere, Shamardal is being outperformed by the other two.

This clearly shows the differing types that succeed in each hemisphere, and the difficulties that stallions have, not only in shuttling, but also in having progeny that can adapt to the different conditions of each hemisphere.

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Fighting fit

The Jerusalem Post August 20, 2009 Thursday

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Byline: YAAKOV KATZ

Highlight: 'We found soldiers who couldn't carry their necessary equipment into Lebanon. What we realized is that

the soldiers didn't have problems walking the distance; it was the loads' - senior officer in the Ground Forces

Command

Body

The turning point, as Col. Avi Moyal calls it, was on August 14, 2006, the day the cease-fire went into effect, ending the month-long Second Lebanon War with Hizbullah.

The IDF began to pull out of Lebanon and officers from Ground Forces Command were ready, deployed along the border with questionnaires for soldiers and commanders to assess their level of fitness during their operations against Hizbullah.

That is when the stories began to emerge. First came reports of small squads that had difficulty climbing the steep Lebanese hills, then a story of a company commander who had to return to Israel after his troops got muscle cramps trying to climb a crucial mountain to gain access to the Hizbullah-stronghold of Bint Jbail.

After hundreds of interviews and questionnaires, the conclusion was clear: IDF combat troops were in bad shape to the point that they had difficulty fighting against an enemy like Hizbullah.

The immediate lesson in the IDF was to appoint an officer in charge of combat fitness. Until then, the officer in charge of combat fitness also served as commander of a brigade. Combat fitness was always the second priority. The man chosen for the job was Col. Avi Moyal, who in the past three years has revolutionized the IDF in terms of fitness. Moyal - who served for 20 years as the fitness instructor for the elite General Staff Reconnaissance Unit (Sayeret Matkal) - has carried out this revolution from a small office inside the Wingate Institute near Netanya, together with a tiny staff.

His energy seems to be endless and over the past two years he has established spinning classes for the General Staff on the roof of the Kirya Military Headquarters in Tel Aviv, jogging groups for senior officers on the Tel Aviv beachfront and lectures at faraway bases. He has also increased the IDF's participation in local marathons and also in some races around the world.

IN THE IDF he is called "Israel's Fitness Trainer." The name is not an exaggeration. When Ehud Olmert was prime minister, Moyal used to work out with him twice a week at Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency) headquarters in Jerusalem. Now, he spends two mornings a week training Chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi. He was also the fitness trainer for the national soccer team and was rumored at one point to be a candidate to become its next head coach.

Fighting fit

The first step after the Lebanon war was to create an official fitness scale for all combat units - basically a list of what commanders are allowed to do with their soldiers and at what stage of their training.

All training regimens need to be approved by Moyal and his team of fitness trainers.

"Soldiers are built in a long and slow process," a senior Ground Forces Command officer explains. "We can't draft a soldier today and tomorrow expect him to run 80 kilometers. This takes time."

Under this new scale, GFC completely changed the concept of long hikes. Until the 2006 war, infantry units used to take 80- and 90-kilometer treks during basic training. Now the length has been cut almost in half and instead the soldiers are carrying heavier loads - sometimes up to half their body weight - on their backs.

"We found soldiers who couldn't carry their necessary equipment into Lebanon," the officer says. "What we realized is that the soldiers didn't have problems walking the distance; it was the loads."

At the same time, Moyal took soldiers from almost every IDF unit and trained them to be fitness instructors. Last week, the largest course ever - of 82 instructors - graduated, bringing the total up to close to 500.

"These are regular combat soldiers who in addition to being fighters are also fitness trainers," the senior officer says. "Just like there are medics who are fighters, now there are trainers who are fighters."

DURING OPERATION Cast Lead in the Gaza Strip earlier this year, Moyal heard from commanders about intelligence that <u>Hamas</u> was planning to kidnap soldiers. He immediately drove to the border with a team of combat instructors and trained commanders and soldiers how to fend off a kidnapper.

One of the skills taught was how to fight off kidnappers not just with an assault rifle, but also when the soldier's ammunition runs out or when he is attacked from behind and by surprise.

Another course he is hoping to soon establish is a mandatory self-defense course for all female soldiers.

Moyal has already discussed the idea with Brig.-Gen. Gila Klifi-Amir, the General Staff's adviser on <u>women</u>'s affairs, and the two are hoping to secure a budget for the program. Under the plan, all <u>female</u> recruits will participate in a week-long self-defense course to provide them with the skills to fend off potential attackers, rapists and kidnappers.

"This course will be aimed at providing the <u>female</u> soldiers with self-confidence to travel around the country in the framework of their military service as many of them need to," explains the senior officer.

After all the above, though, what Moyal really takes pride in is his flagship program called "Healthy Lifestyle in the IDF" under which soldiers in 25 units across the country were chosen to be tested for fat levels in their blood. The units found to be "overweight" received visits from civilian chefs who taught their cooks how to make healthy food, met weekly with dieticians, received detailed workout regimes and personal trainers and one-on-one talks with Moyal.

The results, the senior officer says, were astounding, and within the first six months, the weight levels in the units dropped by more than 30 percent. Despite the success, the program lost its budget. Moyal, however, did not give up and went straight to the General Staff before which he presented the results. The decision was to expand the program to 25 more units and to allocate a budget for the next three years.

MOYAL ALSO established several running groups. The first is made up of close to 400 career junior officers who meet every Friday on the Tel Aviv beachfront. The second group meets on Saturday and consists of officers with the rank of colonel and higher. The condition to join this group was that the officer had to bring his or her spouse.

"The purpose here is to change the culture," the officer says. "To do this we need to reach as many people as possible."

Fighting fit

The culture change can be seen by the number of solders signing up for marathons over the past two years. In 2006, for example, 6,430 soldiers ran in marathons. In 2008, the number skyrocketed to close to 20,000. In 2007, nine soldiers ran in the Tiberias Marathon. This year, there were more than 150.

Moyal is also much more than just talk and he actually puts his feet where his mouth is, running with all of the groups he has set up. In addition, he runs almost daily with a different IDF unit. One day Givati, the next day Naval Commandos and a day later the elite Yahalom Engineering Corps unit.

What about you? Are you ready to run?

Graphic

2 photos: COL. AVI Moyal exercises with Chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi. MOYAL, WHO served for 20 years as the fitness instructor for the elite General Staff Reconnaissance Unit (Sayeret Matkal), runs along the beach. (Credit: IDF)

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THE JORDAN TIMES

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Body

Following is the official translation of the third part of His Majesty King Abdullah's interview with Al Hayat's Editor-in-Chief Ghassan Charbel published on Wednesday:

Al Hayat: Your reign has witnessed seven prime ministers. Are these constant changes considered to be a way to absorb crises?

King Abdullah: No, not so much to absorb crises but more as a response to the requirements and priorities of a certain period. There are objectives and programmes for each government to implement in a way that positively reflects on citizens and achieves the country's progress and development goals. Change occurs in order to meet these requirements. Sometimes there's idleness or laxity or an inability to execute policies and programmes, and sometimes the objective of change is to pump in new blood or introduce a new mechanism to deal with the requirements of a particular stage. Change is a way to help rectify errors and achieve the goals we want for Jordan's interest. It is not a goal in itself.

Al Hayat: Is it possible to say that regional and international relations are foundational to the stability of Jordan and for preventing any solutions at its expense?

King Abdullah: Jordan enjoys strong relations with other Arab and Islamic states, and we also have solid and advanced international relations. These relations reflect the international community's respect for Jordan, its policies and its role. We use these relations to Jordan's advantage and to open horizons for our economy and youth. We also use them to serve Arab and Islamic issues, specifically the Palestinian cause, which is a priority for us. The international community has a big role in achieving justice for the Palestinian people and their aspirations, and we always seek to mobilise the required support for Arab issues in all our international relations.

Jordan enjoys a great deal of credibility in the international community. This is my father's legacy, and we are proud that we were able to preserve this legacy and build on it for the interest of our nation and our causes.

Al Hayat: Is it possible to distinguish between your relationship with <u>Hamas</u> and the tests it has undergone and your relationship with Islamists inside Jordan?

King Abdullah: Yes, because <u>Hamas</u> is not a Jordanian party and our policy is not to allow any non-Jordanian movement or party to operate in Jordan. As for the Islamic movement, it is part of the national fabric and political landscape, and we encourage all political currents and parties in Jordan to join the path to progress and serve national interests in accordance with the law. What we want in general is to develop political life in Jordan so that

everyone can contribute to our journey. Our criterion in dealing with everyone is commitment to the law and serving the national interest.

Al Hayat: Does the King always play the role of police officer in the struggle between reformists and conservatives? Is it true that the political role of the security establishment has receded in recent times?

King Abdullah: I prefer to avoid these terms, because I welcome diverse viewpoints, as long as differences are about how best to serve our country. If differences are over personal goals and agendas serving narrow interests, then we oppose this, because in the end it obstructs Jordan's course.

My priority is Jordan and achieving my people's interests. I am open to all points of view and opinions that set the national interest as the top priority. I have long called for the development of parties and mechanisms to facilitate the formation of groups on the basis of platforms that can agree and disagree within the law. I look forward to the day when competition in legislative elections is between parties with clear political platforms and ideas. This enriches the process and provides the pluralism that is necessary for any society and leads to the development of all work mechanisms in Parliament and government. Unfortunately, we have not reached this stage yet, and my hope is that in the coming years we will witness progress in this direction.

As for the security services, they fulfil their role very well and according to the tasks assigned. The establishment's role is not diminishing. On the contrary, there is continuous development, and I believe that all Jordanians appreciate the important role of this institution in protecting Jordan, its security and stability.

Al Hayat: On February 7, 2009, the late King Hussein was pronounced dead, and hours later you were sworn in as King of Jordan. What was your feeling as you assumed a responsibility of this size and succeeded such an exceptional personality?

King Abdullah: Indescribable sadness, a heavy sense of loss... no matter what I say, I will not be able to describe my feelings of sorrow and pain on that day. I had lost my father, and I had lost my King. And by right of my upbringing and values, I who had spent long years in the army, the impact of losing the King of Jordan was no less than losing a father. Like all Jordanians, I lost my King and an iconic leader. It was a difficult day, and as you know there was an overwhelming sense of sadness among all Jordanians. There was also a sense of fear in the country. My main concern was to live up to the huge responsibility that he lay on me, to be able to fill the large void he left behind, to face the challenges and to continue the work he started... I was determined not to disappoint him and not to let down my people.

Al Hayat: Did King Hussein leave you a written or verbal will?

King Abdullah: No, he did not leave a written will... his legacy is my testament. He left me a verbal will. We often sat together before, and in the final difficult days of his life we sat and talked about his vision and his goals for Jordan's future.

Al Hayat: When were you told you would become the next king?

King Abdullah: I was never told I would be the next King. My father, God rest his soul, invited me for a talk and he told me he would name me crown prince two days before I assumed that responsibility. He told me: "You know, I am very sick, and I have to return to Mayo [Clinic] within 24 to 48 hours and the chances of surviving the surgery I will have are very limited." And during this very emotional conversation, I realised that the issue is not only about the responsibility of a crown prince, because he was basically telling me: "I am naming you crown prince, and I may not have long to live." It was a shock to face the truth that I would soon lose my father, our King and the greatest of men.

Al Hayat: Your father considered the profession of King of Jordan as difficult. Have you reached the same conclusion after 10 years as King; and what is the most difficult part about it?

King Abdullah: Yes, it is difficult, because it is a tremendous responsibility. As I said on day one, I had a family of four and suddenly I had a family of four million. It's a great responsibility as it includes everyone: **women**, children and all members of my big Jordanian family.

I have a vision for Jordan and its future, and I will not accept anything less than the best for my country. I am not convinced and not satisfied with performance that is not the best. I know my people, and I know the great things they are capable of achieving.

The greatest challenge is related to the character and culture of many Jordanians, and Jordanians know what I mean. There is this negativity when working to change things or to achieve large goals. You hear them say: "No, it won't happen, this is not going to work." The challenge is to look at the glass as half-full, not half-empty, and continue to fight this negativism. We are always so hard on ourselves, and there is always a lot of scepticism, a lot of negativity, and this is harmful. The challenge is to keep morale high because it is easy for some power centres and circles to affect and weaken morale. So, when I visit the military and the people, and I see the extent of their pride and the smiles on their faces, I tell them that I didn't come to lift their spirits but I came so they would lift mine.

All Hayat: In what way is your style of governance similar to that of your father, and how is it different?

King Abdullah: Each historical era has its own circumstances. During the reign of my father, God rest his soul, political issues were the priority and what occupied the public, and there were various external and internal challenges. I also give political issues priority and the attention they deserve, but circumstances now are different. The economic conditions in our time impose themselves strongly. The future is linked with economics and economic prosperity; this is what makes or breaks countries.

Therefore, it is possible for the outlook to be slightly different. His late Majesty also led a country with a smaller population, and so the relationship was more paternal, which is more difficult with a population of almost six million. Maybe I have more of a hands-on approach due to the different nature of the challenges. Another difference may be my method of moving from A to B, with time frames and benchmarking. This is perhaps due to my military background. It is the way I was raised.

Al Hayat: How do you view the role played by Her Majesty Queen Rania?

King Abdullah: It's a team effort. Rania has a large role to play, especially concerning Jordan's image abroad and changing stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims, and pursuing important issues in Jordan such as education, children's rights and other concerns.

I encourage every effort that gives a real and positive image of Jordan and contributes to national development. We need the efforts of all Jordanians to serve our nation and relay a favourable image of it.

Concerning the role of <u>women</u> in general, I personally believe that as a small state we cannot ignore half of the working force; even large countries cannot afford to do that, and Jordan especially cannot do that.

Therefore, the role of <u>women</u> in Jordan is of utmost importance, and there are ample examples of <u>women</u> pioneers in all sectors. I personally support <u>women</u> because they make a huge contribution to society. For example I can say - because I sponsor a number of university students - that the highest Tawjihi averages are scored by girls. So it is unacceptable to invest in girls' school education and then completely ignore them in society.

Al Hayat: To whom does the King confide when he is sad or angry?

King Abdullah: Most of the time I don't confide in anyone. It is my duty to protect my people and my family from worry, challenges and difficulties. So I mostly keep things inside; I deal with difficult, disturbing and sometimes worrying issues. A lot of the issues concern security and individuals who want to harm Jordan. My duty and work involve solitude, because you keep matters to yourself to protect your people and family from worry.

When it comes to personal affairs and some other issues I confide in my family. But invariably, a lot of the subject matter is sensitive, so I have to keep it inside. In other words, my job is not to complain... I speak my mind to my people; I talk to them about my vision, programmes and plans, and I discuss challenges with them and listen to their views. I always seek to increase their participation in decision making. But I insulate them from concern or frustration.

Al Hayat: Do the concerns of governance leave you time to take care of your family - for the King is father and husband as well?

King Abdullah: I try as much as possible to create family time; it's always a challenge to be there for your children and family. I try as much as I can to put my children to bed every night together with my wife, and to have dinner with my family. I try my best to spend enough time with the family but as you know, the responsibilities are great.

Al Hayat: Does the King of Jordan ever have time for his hobbies and what are they?

King Abdullah: Sometimes. I try to do my hobbies on the weekends and I try to keep active in sports. Sometimes I go out on my motorbike and I practise shooting. I also make model vehicles and study weapon systems to introduce them to the army. I spend a lot of time studying ideas on this subject. It is a hobby that has developed into an institution in the form of the King Abdullah II Design and Development Bureau (KADDB), which has grown into a leading industrial defence institution that contributes to strengthening the national economy and meeting the needs of the Arab Army.

Al Hayat: Do you miss your military uniform? How would you describe your relationship with the army?

King Abdullah: Of course. Life was much simpler when I was in the army. I miss the camaraderie of being with my soldiers, because people in the army are much more straight and honest. Unfortunately, this is not the case in politics. I also miss the dangerous aspect of being a paratrooper, something which only those who served in the armed forces can understand. And I am envious sitting behind my desk of that lifestyle. You asked how I would describe my relationship with the army. The army is my family with whom I spent 20 years of my life, and I'm still in contact; they are the essence of my pride.

Al Hayat: How do you spend your day?

King Abdullah: Working. There are a lot of complex and diverse responsibilities that require different programmes. Each day is different from the next in terms of circumstances and priorities. Perhaps the only thing that's fixed is that there aren't enough hours in the day to finish the work. There are meetings with officials visiting Jordan, following up on different programmes - economic, social and political-talks and discussions with officials to develop programmes and get the work done as well as steady contact with citizens and constant thinking about ways to enable them to live the best life they possibly can.

Al Hayat: Your Majesty, I met you ten years ago. Since then the world has changed? Have you changed?

King Abdullah: Hopefully, no. Of course there have been a lot of changes and experiences I have learned from. I can say that the challenges in some aspects today are harder than they were ten years ago.

Al Hayat: You mean when you ascended to the Throne?

King Abdullah: It was calm then.

Al Hayat: And Saddam Hussein was the President of Iraq?

King Abdullah: But, there was calmness.

Al Hayat: Your Majesty, what is your favourite colour?

King Abdullah: Red.

Al Hayat: Red. Is there a specific reason?

King Abdullah: Red is the colour of the Hashemite family flag. It is the colour of the heart, and Jordanians' sense of dignity comes from their hearts. It is the colour of the Jordanian kouffiyeh. It also means a red line, a warning. And we Jordanians can withstand pressure, we work as a team and confront the challenges when things reach a red line.

Al Hayat: When does the King feel sad?

King Abdullah: With everything that is happening around us, I feel sad every day, but I tend to keep that feeling inside me. I have learned, ever since I saw my father descend from the plane after his return from the Mayo Clinic and people were watching me, that any show of despair will affect their spirit. If a leader fears any problem, he should keep that fear within him.

Al Hayat: There were reports of an attempted attack on you a few years ago while you were outside Jordan.

King Abdullah: We were on vacation in a European country, and we were on a friend's yacht. On the second day, we received information that Al Qaeda was planning an ambush on one of the islands, so we returned to Jordan.

Al Hayat: What books interest you?

King Abdullah: I usually read history books as well as works of fiction and non-fiction.

Load-Date: December 8, 2009



The all-new, same old Taliban?

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Length: 1271 words

Body

ABSTRACT

Nushin Arbabzadah: The Taliban's new manifesto looks like an attempt to engage Afghan hearts and minds, but is it worth the paper it's written on?

FULL TEXT

They were expected to blow themselves up at polling stations. Instead the Taliban issued its fighters with a <u>manual of conduct</u>, cautioning them to be careful and courteous in the quest for Afghan hearts and minds. The manual is in Pashto, has over 60 pages and a copy of it was recently presented to al-Jazeera. The Arab TV station has a large international audience, and the Taliban have been successfully using the station to spread their ideas beyond <u>Afghanistan</u>.

Reports of the manual also coincided with news that London and Washington were ready for talks with the Taliban after the Afghan elections. The Taliban showed indifference to democracy or the upcoming election, but the timing of their manual told a different story. They were undergoing an image makeover just in time for the elections and wanted the world to know about it. The new, more presentable image was interpreted in the local media as a concession to London and Washington, allowing them to feel less embarrassed for wanting to hold talks with the "terrorist" enemy. After all, holding negotiations with the Taliban would mean that the latter had come out of this conflict as the winning side. From the point of view of many Afghans, this would mean that terrorising the nation had once again paid off, and this time, the UK and the US would become party to the process.

Afghan analysts agreed that the code of conduct signalled the Taliban leadership's intention to change their tactics and focus on winning over sceptics by displaying a more humanitarian attitude towards civilians. For example, in contrast to the Taliban's past unforgiving attitude, the manual offers people who work for the Kabul government protection in return for giving up their jobs. The manual also registers a change of attitude towards suicide attacks, permitting only those that involve important targets. Any other suicide attack is considered a waste of Muslim lives. More importantly, the manual advises Taliban fighters not to discriminate against other, non-Pashtun, ethnic groups. The <u>Buddhas of Bamian</u> might smile at this, were their faces still intact, but Afghan commentators singled out this point as marking a significant shift in policy. Had the manual included equality for <u>women</u> and followers of non-Sunni strands of Islam, the image makeover would have been complete. Afghan commentators noted that the manual resembled a constitution and its focus on fair and lawful conduct, its ban on ethnic discrimination and its

condemnation of brutality certainly required the ordinary Taliban fighter to dance more in tune with global norms of political discourse. A new Taliban manifesto, then?

Not everyone is buying into the image makeover. Although the manual's core message is winning over the civilian population, its rules unwittingly reveal the Taliban's own troubles. The manual explicitly bans factionalism and the setting up of new armed groups, underlining that *Mullah Omar* is the movement's only legitimate leader. Similar rules also show that Taliban fighters have been taking decisions that are outside the scope of their authority, deciding over life and death, and issuing punishment without consulting religious authorities with the required expertise in Islamic law. If Kabul has trouble controlling its officials, so, it seems, do the Taliban. Brutality and corruption on both sides have alienated the civilian population whose support is now being courted by both Karzai's administration and the Taliban in time for the elections on 20 August.

Be that as it may, the question remains whether the change, like many others in Afghanistan, has taken place on paper only. The Taliban's initial reaction appeared to be in tune with their new manifesto. A <u>recent peace accord</u> in Badghis Province between Kabul and the Taliban allowed for voter registration to run smoothly. Elsewhere in southern and eastern Afghanistan, in a reverse of their previous policy the Taliban allowed people to register for voting cards and according to local reports, even the fighters themselves registered to vote. Sceptics saw this as a ploy, allowing the Taliban to pass themselves off as ordinary civilians with voting cards in case they were stopped and searched. But just when Afghan observers started to describe the Taliban's attitude towards the elections as something between indifference and compliant, the fighters issued a message on their website, asking Afghans not to take part in the elections. The message said that participation in the elections amounted to supporting US policies in Afghanistan and Afghans should join the Taliban's jihad instead of voting for a new president. The message marked a radical departure from the Taliban's early indifference and was followed by a bomb set off in the relatively calm city of Herat and eight rocket attacks, some of which reached the diplomatic neighbourhood in the heart of the capital.

In theory, the upcoming election is irrelevant from a Taliban point of view for three reasons. First, as Afghan analyst Wahid Mojdah pointed out in a recent article in Dari, the Taliban believe that only practicing and pious Muslims should be given the right to vote. Hence a leader chosen by a majority regardless of their religious credentials is lacking legitimacy. Second, the Taliban believe that Washington pays only lip service to democracy, failing to accept democratically elected groups such as <u>Hamas</u> or the Iranian government, for ideological reasons. Third, an election campaign held in a country under occupation is by definition meaningless, as the nation is not sovereign.

But still, the Taliban's early indifference is in stark contrast to this week's high-profile attacks. What triggered the change? There are a number of possibilities. The attacks might not have been carried out by the Taliban, even though they were attributed to them. To quote an Afghan jihadi figure, <u>Sediq Chakari</u>, "This is Afghanistan. Someone fires a rocket; it falls on something, kills some people. Who fired it or why? No one knows." The Taliban rarely deny involvement in attacks attributed to them because the attribution serves as free publicity, making them appear more powerful than they are.

But since the attacks immediately followed the Taliban's boycott message, chances are that it was their fighters who fired the rockets and planted the <u>bomb in Herat</u>. In that case, the Taliban might be reacting to something that has gone wrong in the <u>ongoing negotiations</u> with the Kabul administration. Since the negotiations are kept secret, and are being carried out without consultation with the people, it's impossible to figure out what might have gone wrong. But the fact remains that the Taliban would be economically better off if they continued their self-styled jihad.

After all, in its present conditions the Taliban has exclusive access to three lucrative sources of income - zikat or charity from international sympathisers in Gulf states and the west; drugs money, and income from kidnapping and extortion. If they join the government side and become coopted into the Kabul administration, they would lose their international supporters' donations and would have to share zikat from the US with their former enemies in the Kabul administration. The incentive for the Taliban to fight on is powerful and the additional sense of moral superiority that comes with it is a welcome bonus. With so much at stake, the Taliban is not likely to lay down its weapons.

Load-Date: August 6, 2009



<u>Letters</u>

The Jerusalem Post July 7, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 14

Length: 1166 words

Byline: Ben Reuven, Moshe Lichtenstein, Judy Prager, Cyril Atkins, Kenneth Besig, Uri Hirsch, Trevor Davis,

Thelma Blumberg, Jerusalem Post staff

Highlight: Readers' Letters

Body

A real star

Sir, - I was very pleased to read Judy Siegel- Itzkovich's insightful "The two worlds of Elchai Refoua" (June 5) about the very promising young religiously observant singer who is one of the stars of this year's Kochav Nolad (A Star Is Born).

Last year I had the pleasure of getting to know Elchai as a fellow-participant on the show, and one could not hope to meet a more humble and modest young man, with an amazing voice and charismatic personality. Strangely enough, we later appeared together on one of the promotional interviews for the show - he as the youngest participant and I as the white-bearded oldest (my venerable age probably sealed my doom in the contest.)

I was also impressed by the fact that Elchai was always chaperoned to auditions by his mother, who obviously takes great pride in his success.

Finally, it is good to see gifted young religious performers like Elchai vying with the rest for the dazzling lights of stardom. Hope you get to the final, Elchai!

BEN REUVEN

Jerusalem

We're speaking up

Sir, - As Torah Jews, we are deeply distressed by the desecration of Shabbos in our holy land - all the more so when it is government-sanctioned.

However, nothing can ever excuse the type of violence and wanton destruction of public property that has been reported in recent days such as the throwing of rocks at police officers and the burning of garbage dumpsters - all of which is diametrically opposed to the teachings of our Holy Torah.

Lest our silence be misconstrued as passive acceptance of the violence, we condemn it in the strongest terms, as do the vast, overwhelming majority of Torah Jews worldwide ("Unquiet weekend," Editorial, July 6).

Letters

MOSHE LICHTENSTEIN

Ramat Bet Shemesh

and 50 other signatories

Doctors at the fence

Sir, - I was amazed and disgusted at "Israeli doctors to train Bil'in protesters in first aid at site of disputed security fence" (July 6).

Have the doctors gone mad? These radical rioters are made up of all kinds of anti-Israel rent-a-mobs who delight in making life miserable and dangerous for our forces trying to uphold the rule of law. What next - we offer <u>Hamas</u> and the PA special ambulances to ferry their injured terrorists to hospital?

These do-gooder physicians would do better to tell the rioters to stay home, then they would not be injured in the first place.

JUDY PRAGER

Petah Tikva

Sir, - The famous Wise men of Chelm built a bridge over the river. It kept falling down and injuring people. So the wise men, instead of building a stronger bridge, built a hospital near the bridge to treat the injured.

Perhaps someone should "wise up."

CYRIL ATKINS

Beit Shemesh

Just not in my shul

Sir, - As a religious Jew I was delighted to read "2 Orthodox <u>women</u>'s conferences present decidedly different takes on feminism" (July 1).

I was not surprised at the religiously conservative viewpoint of the Chabad <u>women</u>, but a little disappointed by the claim of the Kolech organization that biological differences account for the sexual discrepancies in Judaism.

Torah was written for and by a patriarchal society and thus normative - or Orthodox - Judaism has kept its largely patriarchal approach. In the meantime, Jewish society has become more gender-equal, with many Jewish <u>women</u> logically expecting our religion to reflect that change.

In Europe and America, Jewish <u>women</u> have been successfully integrated into the organizational and leadership aspects of the Jewish community. But in areas like Torah or Haftorah reading, leading the congregation in prayer and spiritual leadership they have had far less success, at least in the Orthodox community. And this is unlikely to change.

This is because of people like me. I would not attend religious services in a synagogue with mixed seating, where <u>women</u> lead the services, or where <u>women</u> read the Torah because I simply would not feel comfortable; most of my friends feel the same.

At the same time, I have no problem with mixed seating, <u>women</u> leading the services, etc., just as long as they do it somewhere else.

KENNETH BESIG

Kiryat Arba

Letters

Sir, - While Chabad is to be greatly respected for all it does, the Kolech organization will do much more for bringing non-observant Jews closer to an Orthodox lifestyle.

<u>Women</u> should be allowed to participate in and accomplish everything possible in our traditions that is allowed halachically.

That leaves a lot of room for progress. We need to "modernize" Orthodoxy, not keep it in the dark ages.

URI HIRSCH

Netanya

Oy, those Israeli

sportscasters!

Sir, - I hope all tennis fans enjoyed watching the Wimbledon Tourney as much as I did ("Federer beats Roddick for record 15th slam," July 6).

It would have been perfect, except for one thing: The sportscasters on the Israeli Sports Channel. They did not describe the games, they "kvetched" them.

"Oy! What a terrible mistake!" "Oy! He's in trouble now!" "Oy! How could he have made such an awful shot?" "Oy! How could he have given him such an easy opportunity?"

Our Israeli crew sounded like they had never stood on a baseline, racket in hand, and tried to return a ball coming at them at over 150 kph, with about half a second to react. Had they shut up and watched METV, they would have heard expert commentators of the likes of John McEnroe, Tim Heneman and Tracy Austin discuss the difficult court conditions that caused bad bounces and made even Roger Federer sometimes look like a duffer.

Finally - alas, too late - they brought in former Israeli champ Shlomo Glickstein to add a few knowledgeable comments. They would have more honorably earned their salaries had they just clammed up and allowed those who know more than diddley about the game to watch the matches in peace.

TREVOR DAVIS

Asseret

'Allo? 'Allo?

Sir, - Herb Keinon was correct in boasting about Israel's improved services ("Israeli progress," June 29).

I well remember the difficulties of 20 years ago with the telephone service. Compared with America's perfected phone service, Israel's was ludicrous. Today the situation seems to be reversed: There are now many excellent options in Israel, as opposed to a complete breakdown in America.

These telephone vagaries were forced into my life just recently, when I closed up my apartment in Baltimore. I found the second line I needed for my computer was not in service. The company informed me that it would be two whole weeks until it could be restored - and then charged me service for the entire period.

Another time, I discontinued my service while away in Israel. Upon my return they reconnected me with a neighbor in an old-fashioned party line.

Keinon's "Why can't the Americans do a simple thing like this the way they do in Israel?" was right on target.

THELMA BLUMBERG

Kiryat Arba

Letters

CORRECTION

"Aharon Barak laments human rights reality in the 'occupied territories'" (June 26) misquoted former Supreme Court president. In describing Israeli Jewish attitudes toward Israeli Arabs he did not use the words "in favor of throwing the [Arabs] into the sea," but rather "in favor of throwing the [Arabs] out...."

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



It's a new world, Bibi

The Jerusalem Post July 3, 2009 Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 8

Length: 1092 words

Byline: DANIEL GORDIS

Highlight: In Perspective. There's no point railing against a double standard that no one is even inclined to deny. The writer is senior vice president of the Shalem Center in Jerusalem. His latest book is Saving Israel: How the Jewish State Can Win a War That May Never End. He blogs at *www.danielgordis.org*.

Body

I wouldn't be surprised if Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu were thinking of Tevye these days. Tevye was, after all, a quasi-pathetic character simply trying to make sense of a world changing far more quickly than he might have ever imagined possible. Having granted his daughter, Hodel, permission to marry Perchik the pauper, he wonders, "What am I going to tell your mother?" He didn't choose Perchik, and he doesn't really approve. But he is powerless. And when his wife expresses her dismay, the best explanation he can offer is "It's a new world, Golde."

"It's a new world, Golde" is not a claim that Perchik is the right man for Hodel. Or that he'll ever make a real living. It's simply a claim that the rules have changed. And in a world with new rules, people must learn to act and respond differently. Tevye never says that, of course. But he is simple, not stupid; and he intuitively understands that he is going to have to learn to navigate his world in an entirely different way.

Tevye is a not entirely inapt metaphor for Israel. We're living in world operating according to rules that we're just beginning to understand. Convinced of the legitimacy of at least much of our position, for years we ignored the warning signs that the world was turning on us, that it has grown tired of the conflict in the Middle East and that it believes we are the reason the conflict will not subside. The world didn't change overnight. We simply weren't watching.

NOW THERE is no more denying the new ground rules. Barack Obama is not really changing them. Perhaps he is shifting America's position, perhaps not. But more than anything, he is simply articulating infinitely more clearly than anyone else has what it is that the world has come to believe. And we are going to have to learn to operate not in the world we wish existed, but in the world that does exist. And in this new world, Israel is going to be held to standards that are infinitely less tolerant than the standards to which the rest of the world is accountable.

Consider, after all, events of just the past few weeks. In the aftermath of the Iranian election, much of the world watched with admiration and hope as Iranians took to the streets to insist on their (supposed) democratic rights. When the Iranian government resorted to intimidation, silencing of the press, force and then murder, the world was horrified - but it was also quiet. Where were the mass rallies across Europe and on those North American campuses where students were still to be found calling for Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to back down? Where were the heads of state clamoring to get in front of television cameras calling for a new election? To be sure, the world was unhappy, but this was hardly an outpouring of support or of condemnation.

Compare that to the world's reaction to the Gaza operation half a year ago. To be sure, the circumstances were entirely different. Iran's election is an internal matter, while the Gaza op was not. And other differences abound. But Israel was responding to eight years of shelling of its citizens in what is undisputedly its territory (unless one disputes the notion that any territory is legitimately ours, which, in fact, is exactly *Hamas*' position); nonetheless, even before the urban warfare began, the world was unanimous and vocal that the operation had to end.

An almost deadening silence in one instance. And deafening outcries of excessive force in the other. Welcome to the new world.

OR SUPPOSE that some number of Israeli Arab <u>women</u> decided that they were going to wear the burka as a means of intensifying their personal religious odyssey. And that in response to their decision, Netanyahu said, "In our country, we cannot accept that <u>women</u> be prisoners behind a screen, cut off from all social life, deprived of all identity," or that "the burka is not a religious sign, it's a sign of subservience, a sign of debasement - I want to say it solemnly, it will not be welcome on the territory of the State of Israel." One can just imagine the world's outcry, the accusations of religious oppression, comparisons with apartheid South Africa or, yes, Nazi Germany. But substitute "the Republic of France" for State of Israel, and you have precisely French President Nicolas Sarkozy's words this week - again, to a relatively silent international community of listeners.

Or finally, recall Obama's twisting in the wind as he came to realize that his outstretched hand to Iran was not going to be shaken as warmly as he'd allowed himself to imagine. Eventually, he gave in to enormous pressure to criticize the Iranian regime's repressive measures. But his criticism was tepid - he couldn't get over his fundamental sense that the world ought not meddle in Iran's internal affairs. A few days later, however, the press reported that Sarkozy had told Netanyahu that it was time to dump Avigdor Lieberman and to restore Tzipi Livni. Sarkozy's advice, apparently, is considered moving peace forward. Obama's suggesting that Iran recount the vote would be meddling.

THERE'S NO point railing against a double standard that no one is even inclined to deny. Right or wrong, for better or for worse, we need to adapt. Israel is going to have to learn to get ahead of the curve. Had Netanyahu's speech at Bar-llan University, by most accounts a very good speech, preceded Obama's Cairo speech, Israel would have been throwing down the gauntlet, challenging the Palestinians to recognize the Jewish state and to live in peace beside it. But coming when they did, Netanyahu's remarks were essentially seen as caving in to Obama - too little, too late. That's what has to change.

In this new world, the spotlight will almost always be on Israel. Settlement building. Roadblocks. Lieberman. We're going to have to learn to alter that. Make some accommodations, but demand - clearly and unequivocally - that the Palestinians do the same. Netanyahu, or whoever follows him, is going to have to learn to keep the ball, and the world's attention, squarely in and on their court. Like it or not, Israel needs to take the initiative, time and time again - because nothing else will work.

"It's a new world, Bibi," Tevye would have said. We don't have to like it. And it may not be fair, or just. But as we are wont to say, "zeh mah yesh" - it is what it is. As Tevye understood, we can either adapt, exerting at least some control over our fates, or we can wistfully long for days when other rules prevailed, even as we get swept away by currents we've barely begun to comprehend.

Graphic

Photo: People of Iranian origin protesting in Zurich. Where was everybody else? (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



<u>brÜno; 18 ceRt, 81 min; cloud 9; 15 ceRt, 100 min; Review; Offensive, puerile</u>
<u>-and very funny; There is unlikely to be a more screamadelically hilarious</u>
<u>film this year than Sacha Baron Cohen's foray into the world of fashion</u>

The Daily Telegraph (London)
July 10, 2009 Friday

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The Daily Telegraph

Section: FEATURES; FILM ON FRIDAY; Pg. 29

Length: 1083 words

Byline: Sukhdev Sandhu

Body

Auschwitz, Christianity, radical Islam - Sacha Baron Cohen cracks jokes about all of them in Brüno, his eagerly-awaited follow-up to Borat (2006). But not, it turns out, Michael Jackson. The film originally showed the gay Austrian fashionista flouncing across America in search of fame, interviewing a confused LaToya Jackson as she ate off the body of an overweight Mexican labourer, and later trying to steal the singer's number from her mobile phone.

Now, "out of respect", the scene has been cut, Jackson's death making him untouchable, holier than religion. It's also dented Brüno's claims to be seen as a no-holds-barred, celebrity-baiting piece of uber-iconoclasm.

I'm disappointed, and reminded of Private Eye's satiric "apology", after the death of Princess Diana, for having conveyed the impression she was "neurotic, irresponsible and manipulative" when, in fact, she was "the most saintly woman who has ever lived".

The disappointment's relative. Brüno may not be as gasp-inducing as Borat (the shock factor of Cohen's part-Candid Camera, part-bull-in-a-china-shop tactics were always likely to be blunted second time around), and its targets may be soft: many Americans are obsessed by fame and a bit uncomfortable in the presence of an exotically-costumed queen? Never! But this is still a ridiculously funny and at times demented romp.

Brüno, like Borat, is a pilgrimage epic. It's a journey through and across America in search, not of Pamela Anderson, but of that modern holy grail: celebrity. Sacked from his Austrian television show Funkyzeit, Brüno heads to Los Angeles, in the company of his adoring assistant Lutz (Gustaf Hammarsten).

There he makes a pilot, A-List Celebrity Max-Out Mit Brüno, that features him writhing around in slow motion, a talking penis, and a segment in which famous pregnant <u>women</u>, their foetuses having been scanned, are advised whether to "Keep it or abort it". Strange as it may seem, the show doesn't go down well with test audiences. Brüno decides to go all Bono, asking PR consultants, "Darfur is so over. What's Dar-five?" and "Africa. Is that still cool?" Soon, he's standing at an airport carousel waiting to pick up all the swag he bought on his holiday in Africa.

brÜno 18 ceRt, 81 min cloud 9 15 ceRt, 100 min Review Offensive, puerile -and very funny There is unlikely to be a more screamadelically hilarious film this yea....

It includes, to the shock of eyewitnesses, a little boy. OJ's his name, Brüno later tells a studio full of black Americans on a Jerry Springer-style show, before explaining that he paid off the birth parents of his "gayby" with an iPod.

After social services take OJ away, the hapless Austrian decides to turn his back on homosexuality and go straight. He seeks advice from a Christian counseller with a track record of "converting" gays. He consults a martial arts instructor, who warns him that gays are harder to distinguish from heterosexuals than they used to be and shows him how to attack them if they come on to him. He even goes to a swingers' party, but is distressed to find himself turned on by one of the guys busy servicing a *female* attendee.

Stunt after stunt after stunt. It's hard to know which ones are real and which ones are fake. They're shot in less scuzzily gonzo fashion than those in Borat, and are so well-executed that it doesn't matter if we rather than the Americans are the true hoaxes.

As a character, Brüno isn't as endearing as Borat. The moustachioed Kazakhstani represented the universal migrant. He appealed to our love of the underdog. Brüno, though he's not without charm, and he certainly does grow on us, is too worldly and too in love with himself to be adorable.

His mission, cooked up by a team of writers that includes Cohen, Dan Mazer and Anthony Hines, doesn't quite ring true. A detour to the Middle East - where Brüno gets chased by Orthodox Jews, confuses <u>Hamas</u> with houmous, and tells a terrorist, "Your King Osama looks kind of like a dirty wizard or a homeless Santa" - provokes belly laughs but would be better suited to a sketch show than to this story.

Cohen himself is tremendous. His commitment to his character never wavers, even when, as in the scene when he walks naked into the tent of a gun-touting hunter, we fear for his safety. His accented English is consistent and consistently delightful.

Is Brüno great satire? American comedies such as I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry (2007), You Don't Mess With The Zohan (2008) and even this year's I Love You Man have been playing with the heterosexual norms that govern American entertainment. And while it may be shocking to hear a mother, desperate for her child to be a film star, say she'll consider liposuction for the infant, it's not especially news.

It's certainly arguable that Cohen and director Larry Charles should be doing more than taking wild potshots at Americans in the service of making audiences feel smugly superior.

So, yes, Cohen's schtick isn't quite what it was. And he's definitely going to have to come up with some new tricks next time round. But, oh my, puerile and ragged as it is, and to some extent because it's so ragged and puerile, I doubt if a more screamadelically hilarious film will be released in 2009.

Cloud 9, directed by Andreas Dresen, is a quiet, insinuating film of rare emotional power and dramatic force that I haven't been able to get out of my mind since it first screened at Cannes 2008. Set in modern-day Germany, it's the story of happily retired woman Inge (Ursula Weiner) whose 30-year marriage to Werner (Horst Rehberg) is jeopardised when she meets and falls in love with an older man, 76-year-old Karl (Horst Westphal).

The plot is the only simple thing about this intelligent and rewarding film. Inge, a part-time seamstress, is shown trapped between rapture and shame. She's a respectable lady, a member of a local <u>women</u>'s choir, someone by no means on the look-out for an illicit affair. Her daughter, to whom she confides, even encourages her to have some secret fun.

The sex scenes between Inge and Horst aren't gratuitous, but they are frank. How rare it is to see older people on screen shown as physical beings capable of desire and pleasure (Richard Eyre's 1985 Past Caring, starring the late, great Denholm Elliott, is one of the few that come to mind).

brÜno 18 ceRt, 81 min cloud 9 15 ceRt, 100 min Review Offensive, puerile -and very funny There is unlikely to be a more screamadelically hilarious film this yea....

Those moments in which the new couple find themselves just staring at each other - disbelieving, shy, captivated - are deeply moving. The performances, particularly from Weiner, are wholly convincing. The journeys all three characters take are difficult, sometimes uncomfortable to watch, but always compelling.

T RATING þþþþ Brüno

T RATING pppp Cloud 9

Load-Date: July 10, 2009



<u>Tariq Ramadan Gets a Hero's Welcome, and Cold Shoulders, at Religion</u> Scholars Confab; LETTER FROM MONTREAL

The Forward November 20, 2009

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Section: News; Pg. 1 **Length:** 1460 words

Body

Swiss-born Muslim scholar and public intellectual Tariq Ramadan has for decades been a lightning rod for controversy. He was barred from entry to America by the Patriot Act's ideological exclusion provision, and then on account of his financial contributions to two *Hamas* charities. Even so, he took center stage at the American Academy of Religion's annual conference, this year held in Montreal allowing him to attend.

The grandson of Muslim Brotherhood founder Hassan al-Banna, Ramadan has long been suspected by progressive Muslims and secularists in Europe of radical Islamist tendencies despite his avowed agenda to reform Islam. The Canadian Jewish community's wise silence about his numerous high-profile appearances notwithstanding, Ramadan has repeatedly singled out Jewish intellectuals as among his most damaging detractors. Most recently, in his new book, What I Believe, he unmistakably implied that Jews and the pro-Israel lobby were behind the revocation of his visa.

To mark Ramadan's visit, the National Post, Canada's conservative national daily, ran a column by liberal Muslim writer Tarek Fatah called, Montreal Welcomes an Islamist Extremist in Sheep's Clothing. Fatah's article ended with a powerfully personal pledge: Brother Tariq, your

father Said Ramadan came to my birthplace Pakistan in 1948 as a Muslim Brotherhood emissary and was instrumental in turning a secular Muslim country into a hotbed of Islamic extremism. I will not let the son of Said Ramadan come to my adopted home Canada and do the same, without a fight. Your Islamist father ruined my birthplace; I will not let you ruin the place where I will die.

On Montreal's leading morning radio talk show, veteran journalist Denise Bombardier observed to host Denys Arcand that while Israeli scholars are increasingly boycotted from college campuses, an Islamofascist like Ramadan is welcomed like a rock star. And two progressive Canadian Muslim groups ran an ad in a Montreal daily, Le Devoir, denouncing Ramadan for his covert Islamist agenda and ties to antisemitic clerics.

The main and far warmer welcome was reserved for Ramadan's address to four separate panels, including two packed plenary sessions at the private Annual Meeting of the AAR, the world's largest learned society of scholars of religion. The American ban was denounced each time Ramadan was introduced, unsurprising since the AAR, with the support of the American Civil Liberties Union, the New York Civil Liberties Union and the American Association of University Professors, has been the most prominent petitioner for its reversal since 2004.

His battle for entry has been a matter of particular sensitivity to the academic community, since the initial revocation of his visa came after Ramadan accepted a prestigious chair in Religion, Conflict and Peacebuilding at

Tariq Ramadan Gets a Hero's Welcome, and Cold Shoulders, at Religion Scholars Confab LETTER FROM MONTREAL

the University of Notre Dame. While this advocacy for Ramadan is ostensibly rooted in concern for academic freedom, his appearance at the Montreal conference, and the hero's welcome accorded him at his plenary appearance and keynote address, suggested either a more than trivial political partisanship with Ramadan's views or a naiveté about what he really represents.

In his talks, Ramadan repeated the need for what he calls transformative and radical reform of Islam, while in fact articulating a fundamentalist acceptance of the divinity of the Quran and the Hadiths (narratives about the prophet), as well as the exclusive authority of the Ulema (scholarly religious establishment), to offer normative Quranic interpretations. Such double-talk, combined with ultraconservative theological views, would be laughed out of

the room were they offered by any of his liberal Christian colleagues.

Nevertheless, Ramadan repeatedly rejected the application of universally accepted tools of modern biblical scholarship to Islam's sacred texts. And, with no serious critical challenge, he dubbed the democratization of the study of those texts dangerous and unfair. The passive, indeed mute, reception by critical modern scholars of religion to Ramadan's repeated fundamentalist proclamations was nothing short of astonishing.

Participating on a star-studded panel chaired by CNN's Reza Aslan and including award-winning journalist Robin Wright, Ramadan made remarks on the theme of Islam and Modernity that showed why the debate about his true beliefs is so intractable. Following Wright's fine overview of the history of Islamic radicalism and the contemporary changes toward a softer and less violent Islamism in the numerous Islamic countries from which she has reported for decades, Ramadan bristled at the notion that violence should serve as any criterion in assessing Islam's engagement with modernity. Rather, he insisted that violence is not an issue for the vast majority in the Muslim world, and that the proper way to understand reform in countries with Muslim majorities must be limited to analyzing those countries' various interpretations of the Quran, Hadiths and Sharia (Islamic law).

A defining moment in Ramadan's career was his famous televised debate, in November 2003, with French President Nicolas Sarkozy, then French minister of the interior during a period of antisemitic attacks in France. Sarkozy attacked Ramadan for having accused the Jews of serving the interests of Israel over those of their countries of residence: Your article was not just a blunder; it was a moral failure.

Ramadan responded first by asserting that he had always opposed antisemitism, adding: They call me a Muslim intellectual; I wrote about Jewish intellectuals. I don't see any harm in that. But Ramadan's shocking response to Sarkozy's next volley stole headlines throughout Europe. Asked to denounce his brother, Muslim Brotherhood leader Hani Ramadan (with whom Ramadan privately remains very close) for having written a piece justifying the stoning of adulterous <u>women</u>, Ramadan proposed a moratorium on such practices. An outraged Sarkozy declared: A moratorium? What does that mean? We're in 2003!

The Sarkozy debacle was earily repeated in Montreal, suggesting that little has changed for Ramadan. Asked by a self-described feminist scholar of Islam to suggest concrete ways of advancing the status of <u>women</u> in the Muslim world, he responded, without a hint of irony, The best way to transform the position of <u>women</u> in Islam is to go back and look to the life of the prophet and how he treated his wives. Sarkozy's indignation echoed: Wives? Polygamy? What does this mean? We're in 2009!

I asked Ramadan, in the final audience question after his keynote address, to rise above accusations of doublespeak and condemn unambiguously the rise in religiously sanctioned and state-supported antisemitism throughout the Muslim world. As always when the question of his ties to antisemitic organizations and clerics is raised, Ramadan became both indignant and personally belligerent. Responding to the term doublespeak, which has haunted Ramadan for two decades, he accused me of double-hearing, evoking hearty laughter from the majority of the crowd, who clearly had not read this response dozens of times in his writings. He continued by asserting that he has always condemned antisemitism as anti-Islamic. What this qualified rejection implies remains unclear beyond a chilling reminder that for Ramadan, moral and ethical judgments can be made only through the prism of Islamic values.

Tariq Ramadan Gets a Hero's Welcome, and Cold Shoulders, at Religion Scholars Confab LETTER FROM MONTREAL

Ramadan's Islamic reform has nothing in common with the 16th-century Christian Reformation's challenging of fundamental religious doctrines and ecclesiastical institutions, and it certainly shares absolutely nothing with Reform Judaism, which left all of traditional Judaism open to radical revision.

Even his harshest critics such as Denis MacShane in his introduction to the 2008 English translation of French secularist Caroline Fourest's devastating 2008 book, Brother Tariq: The Doublespeak of Tariq Ramadan at least offer the hope that Ramadan may be evolving and distancing himself from Islamist politics and religious fundamentalism. Sadly, his performances in Montreal suggest that he has not progressed an iota from his fundamentalist views about such issues as the divinity of the Quran, the nature of religious authority, antisemitism and the status of **women**.

The only evolution evident in Ramadan's slick performances is his finely tuned taqiyya the medieval Islamic tactic of strategic dissimulation. After all, it is no small matter to dupe so many thousands of scholars of religion. Or is it?

Graphic

IMAGE: Ramadan:The controversialscholar, barred from America,traveled to speak in Canada.; getty images

Load-Date: December 11, 2009



ISRAEL DESERVES RESPECT IN GLOBAL FORUMS

Weekend Australian

November 21, 2009 Saturday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 14

Length: 1326 words

Byline: BARRY COHEN

Body

The Middle East is one reason democratic UN states should form a core organisation

Western journalists covering the Gaza conflict should hang their heads in shame

HOW ironic that the report by former South African judge Richard Goldstone and others, accusing Israel of war crimes in Gaza, was presented to the UN at the same session that President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad again denied the Holocaust while proclaiming that Israel should be wiped off the face of the map.

While Iran is building a nuclear bomb to use against Israel, the UN does nothing, thus guaranteeing Israel must act to ensure its survival. When it does the world will rush to condemn.

It is more than 60 years since Israel's founding and we are no closer to peace in the Middle East.

Take the recent Gaza conflict. Israel, it was said, would never surrender Gaza while Ariel Sharon was prime minister. When he did, he was attacked for doing it unilaterally. *Hamas*'s response was to slaughter its fellow Arabs in Fatah and pour thousands of rockets into Israel. There was a strange silence from the Western media.

After 10,000 rockets, Israel decided enough was enough. In the resulting war, about 1300 Palestinians and 13 Israelis died. The media's response: the rockets weren't accurate, they didn't kill many Israelis and Israel's response was disproportionate.

When asked by an interviewer whether that was the case, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu replied, "Would you prefer more Israelis had died?" None raised the proportionality of the Allies during the London Blitz, when 76,000 British civilians died.

Arthur ``Bomber" Harris, commander-in -chief of bomber command, ``proportionately" flattened German cities, killing more than 600,000 Germans. In the Pacific War, 1700 US civilians were killed, mostly at Pearl Harbor, while Australia lost 700 in Darwin. The response was to ``proportionately" bomb Tokyo, Hiroshima and Nagasaki: 580,000 Japanese perished.

The approach of Israel in the Gaza conflict was highlighted in a speech to the UN on October 16. "Mr President, based on my knowledge and experience I can say this: during Operation Cast Lead the Israeli forces did more to safeguard the rights of civilians in a combat zone than any other army in the history of warfare. Israel did so while

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facing an army that deliberately positioned its military capability behind the human shield of the civilian population. The IDF took extraordinary measures to give Gaza civilians notice of targeted areas, dropping over two million leaflets and making over 100,000 phone calls. War is chaos and full of mistakes. But mistakes are not war crimes."

The speaker? The Israeli ambassador? An Israeli general? An Israeli politician or a rabid Zionist? No, it was Richard Kemp, the former commander of British forces in Afghanistan. What a different picture from that which appeared in the international media. Many Western journalists covering the Gaza conflict should hang their heads in shame.

The greatest myth about the Arab-Israeli conflict is that Israel is the root cause of all the problems in the Middle East. An examination of the numbers killed in other conflicts in the region since Israel was founded in 1948 shows a different picture. They include Algeria: war of independence 600,000; civil war, 100,000. Sudan: first civil war (1955-72), 500,000; second civil war (1983-), 1.9 million; Darfur, 600,000. Iraq: Iraq-Iran war, 1.5 million; Saddam Hussein purges, one million. Lebanon: civil war (1975-90), 130,000. Afghanistan: Soviet invasion (1979-90), 1.5 million; civil war, 100,000. Somalia: civil war (1977-), 500,000. Jordan: 25,000. Chad: 30,000. Syria: 20,000. Turkey: 20,000. Yemen: 130,000. Total: 8.525 million. This compares with the Arab-Israeli conflict since 1948: about 85,000.

Individual anti-Semitism is one thing but the anti-Semitism of international organisations such as the UN is quite another. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, which once had a reputation for integrity, have lost credibility due to anti-Israel bias.

The founder of Human Rights Watch and its chairman from 1978-98 has just resigned because he can no longer tolerate its bias against Israel.

One organisation, Freedom House, has maintained its reputation for objectivity. Formed in 1941 with the support of the Roosevelts to fight Nazism, it has maintained its integrity, monitoring political rights and civil liberties throughout the world.

Since 1973 its annual assessment of freedom has ranked every country according to whether it has free and fair elections, cultural and religious freedom, freedom from corruption, freedom of association and the press, the rule of law and all the freedoms enjoyed in modern democracies.

Among the 89 countries ranked by Freedom House as free are Australia, Britain, theUS, New Zealand, France, Germany and Israel. Not one Arab country is in the free category.

Has there been any campaign to have any Arab countries boycotted or delegitimised?

The worst of them are thuggish nations that massacre and oppress millions of their own people and are never called to account.

Why? Because they are a large voting bloc in international forums and they have resources the West badly needs.

Too often the democracies either abstain or vote with African, Asian and Middle Eastern blocs that constitute almost half the numbers in the UN because of trade or reciprocity. It's easy to vote with the bullies because Israel has only one vote.

What can be done?

First, Israel and its supporters must stop defending Israel for Israel has nothing to apologise for.

It is the criminal countries that should be on trial. Those where apostasy is a crime punishable by death and where slavery, *female* circumcision, honour killing, stoning to death of *women* for adultery and other abuses are common.

They are the ones that should be called to account.

ISRAEL DESERVES RESPECT IN GLOBAL FORUMS

The democracies should demand that those in the media, academic circles and trade unions now calling for boycotts of Israel be asked what they are doing about human rights abuses in such totalitarian regimes.

Israel is starting to fight back, verbally.

After a rant by Ahmadinejad at the UN on September 24, Israel's Netanyahu responded: ``Yesterday the man who calls the Holocaust a lie spoke from this podium.

"To those who refused to come here and to those who left this room in protest, I commend you. You stood up for moral clarity and you brought honour to your countries. But to those who gave this Holocaust-denier a hearing, I say on behalf of my people, the Jewish people, and decent people everywhere: Have you no shame? Have you no decency?

"A mere six decades after the Holocaust, you give legitimacy to a man who denies the murder of six million Jews took place and pledges to wipe out the Jewish state. What a disgrace. What a mockery of the charter of the United Nations."

The UN is a disgrace and is only tolerated because there is no alternative. The Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association established to promote parliamentary democracy are useless. Few know they exist and fewer care.

In recent years attempts have been made to set up an international organisation for genuine democracies.

To belong to an organisation of this nature would be a badge of honour because it would exclude all those countries that are one-party states, military and theocratic dictatorships or feudal monarchies.

Eligibility for membership should be restricted to those members of the UN that are genuinely free. Using Freedom House's rankings of the 193 UN members, only 89 would qualify.

The time has come for the world's democracies to demand that every country has the same high standards of human rights they demand of Israel.

Only then will there be a genuine chance of peace in the Middle East.

>> This is an edited version of a speech to the Jewish National Fund in Adelaide on November 5. Barry Cohen was a minister in the Hawke Labor government.

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The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

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Body

Aren't we forgetting something still?

ONE thing missing from the apology was recognition that many of the Forgotten Australians have risen above their treatment and gone on, as parents, carers and community volunteers, to treat others far better than they were treated.

Just as we view with compassion those who became trapped in despair or a cycle of abuse, we should also recognise that most didn't, and look at them with respect and humility.

David Hunt, Brunswick East

More to come #1 . . .

THE Government has done the right thing by apologising to the Forgotten Australians. One day, when we move on from our ill-informed, inhumane attitudes towards boat-arriving refugees, a future prime minister will apologise to refugee Australians and their children for the trauma caused by locking them up in detention camps, banishing them to remote islands for years and to poorer neighbours that can ill-afford to support them.

He or she will apologise about mistreating them because of their means of transport and their colour, for lying about them and causing them to live on the charity of good people. One injustice and cruelty is recognised but a new one appears, until later generations see it for what it is.

Janice Florence, Preston

... and #2

TRANSCRIPT of the address at the apology to all Australians for the avoidance of action on climate change by previous parliaments: "We come together to deal with an ugly chapter in our nation's history, to offer our nation's apology. To say to you, the Australian people, and those who have suffered for earlier years of inaction over climate change, that we are sorry.

Sorry that our weak response in earlier decades has created the dire circumstances of today. Sorry that you endure physical suffering and starvation, and for our cold absence of forethought and sensible planning. Sorry for the failure to heed the warnings of advisers, and listening instead to the sugared words of the vested interests.

We look back with shame that many of you were left hot, hungry and thirsty. We look back with shame at how those with power were allowed to abuse by neglect those who had none."

Jim Spithill, Chadstone

One place for blame on climate inaction

TIM Colebatch (Comment, 17/11) summarises Australia's climate change responsibilities in their complex global context, but avoids discussing our moral responsibility to take climatically effective, as opposed to politically expedient, action. He locates possible emissions reduction strategies on a scale from expensive and effective to inexpensive and ineffective.

Rudd's carbon pollution reduction scheme has been revealed to be expensive and ineffective. With compensation and concessions to big polluters totalling upwards of \$16.5 billion and a cost to the nation of \$2.5 billion, it is certainly expensive. If Treasury's predictions that it will not achieve reductions in domestic emissions before about 2035 are correct, it is certainly ineffective.

This Government promised to take effective action on climate change. Attempting to conceal the fact that it has been outmanoeuvred by industry lobbyists, it tries to scapegoat the Opposition for its own failure. Passing this scheme will lock in a failure that is entirely that of the Rudd Government.

Doug Evans, Clifton Hill

Cheap food isn't

CATE Burns' piece (Comment, 17/11) is a clarion call to put food security at the centre of urban planning. Sacrificing rich agricultural soils for McMansions reflects an outdated view of food production that insists that we can continue to rely on cheap, plentiful oil to provide the transport infrastructure and artificial fertilisers and pesticides that such a mindset mandates.

The global warming impacts are obvious, not to mention the decline in the nutrients in our food. Put together with a fragile water future, it's clear that a new conversation about urban planning and food is required.

Encouragingly, it seems that communities are leading the charge. We're seeing an explosion in farmers' markets and an inexorable rise in demand for clean, green locally grown organic foods. In urban planning, our governments could do well to recognise food production's first law: cheap food isn't.

Greg Revell, North Warrandyte

Top marks, Susan

I RESPECT Susan Alberti for having the courage to take legal action against Channel Nine for comments made about her by Sam Newman on The Footy Show. Some of the messages the show has been peddling are: that it's OK to grope <u>women</u> and that <u>women</u> can be mere sexual objects for men, that indigenous Aussies are unreliable, that people with intellectual impairments are there to make fun of and that gays are, well, the bottom of the barrel.

My nine-year-old daughter loves footy, she is a mad Collingwood fan and can take an overhead mark at full tilt. When she walks into a footy club, be it as a spectator, friend, player, umpire, board member, sister, mum, I hope she is met with respect by the boys and men of that club. Thanks to the Susans of this world, this is more likely.

James Morrissey, Glenhuntly

By the books

YOUR item about the decision on book imports (Insight, 14/11), suggested that Professor Allan Fels was an associate commissioner on the Productivity Commission's books inquiry.

While Professor Fels is a part-time associate commissioner, that appointment is specific to the inquiry into executive remuneration. He has played no official role in relation to the books inquiry and his remarks were made on his own behalf.

Gary Banks, chairman, Productivity Commission, Melbourne

Wrong on building

THE claim in your editorial (16/11) that building in Israeli settlements must be stopped before Israeli-Palestinian peace talks can commence is ahistorical and ill-informed. From 1993 to 2008, Israeli-Palestinian talks proceeded, and produced generous offers from Israel, without building in the settlements being frozen. Moreover, settlement growth is today more restricted than at any time in recent history.

Most building â€" of kindergartens, medical clinics and some additional housing â€" is occurring in larger settlement blocs that will stay within Israel under all existing, serious peace proposals. The reality is that the limited building is largely an irrelevance to peace prospects. The well-meaning but inexperienced Obama Administration initially so mishandled its efforts to restart talks that Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, weak and under threat from *Hamas* and other rejectionists, is now using the settlement issue as a pretext to avoid negotiations on a two-state resolution.

Dr Colin Rubenstein, executive director, Australia/Israel and Jewish Affairs Council, South Melbourne

Freeze is essential

THE Australian Jewish Democratic Society concurs with your editorial's conclusion that "the only way that Israel can avoid having to choose between its Jewish identity and democracy is to keep the two-state solution alive". A settlement freeze is the essential precondition to any credible negotiations.

How is it possible for Israel to credibly claim it supports the establishment of a Palestinian state, while at the same time continuing to expand and integrate its settler population into the West Bank? Israel's supporters must stop pretending that the relative calm in the conflict is a stable endpoint. If Israel doesn't grasp the opportunity it is being given to restart negotiations now, when will be the right time?

If this is clear to everyone other than the hardline settlers and their supporters, then the broadest possible coalition of Israel's supporters needs to convey to Israel, openly, publicly and vocally, that it needs to declare its bona fides by stopping the settlement project completely and immediately.

Les Rosenblatt, Elwood, Steve Brook, Elwood, and Harold Zwier, Caulfield, executive members, Australian Jewish Democratic Society

Compassion needed

IT IS disheartening to hear of the numerous drug overdoses at Dame Phyllis Frost prison (The Age, 17/11). Departmental sources apparently admit that heroin and ice are readily available within the prison.

Sadly, sterile injecting equipment is not, putting the **women** at high risk of contracting hepatitis C. Needle and syringe programs have been a responsible and humane step towards reducing some of the harm associated with drug use. Our inability to extend this same honesty, responsibility and compassion to some of the most vulnerable members of our community is, quite simply, the real scandal.

Needle and syringe programs are a delicate and controversial issue but, at the end of the day, our whole community will benefit if we reduce the number of hepatitis C infections in prisons.

Helen McNeill, chief executive, Hepatitis Victoria, Brunswick

Graphic

CARTOON BY LEUNIG

Load-Date: November 17, 2009



The Jerusalem Post

November 12, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 1238 words

Byline: Batya Berlinger, Jacob Himmelfarb, Yaacov Peterseil, Dan Vogel, M. Miller, Olga P. Wind, Aryeh Newman,

Raphael Rosenbaum, Mattias Rotenberg, Jacob Chinitz

Highlight: Readers' Letters

Body

Three years for a gas mask?

Sir, - Gas mask distribution will take three years (November 11)?! If your area is deemed relatively safe, you have to wait longer?! If Iran, Hizbullah and/or <u>Hamas</u> note where the masks are not being given out, they'll know which areas to aim for!

To add insult to injury, we'll now have to pay a "nominal" fee? What if a family can't afford that? What if they prefer to buy bread and milk or even some vegetables with that 30 shekels? Does that mean they won't get their masks?

BATYA BERLINGER

Jerusalem

Here's why, Mr. Kouchner

Sir, - The French foreign minister should take a look at why the peace movement has all but disappeared ("Kouchner: Israelis no longer aspire to peace," November 11). If only Israelis are willing to give up territory, while Palestinians continue to deny Israel's existence, and if only Israelis agree to a two-state solution, while Palestinians ingrain in their children and their children's children "Kill the Jews for Allah," then the Israeli peace movement has been all but pre-empted by the Palestinian hate movement.

JACOB HIMMELFARB

Jerusalem

Sir, - In a few more years, when the Moslems of his country finish their takeover bid, Kouchner will even understand why there are so few Frenchmen in their peace movement.

YAACOV PETERSEIL

Jerusalem

New task for

Goldstone

Sir, - In "Fears of proxy war loom as Saudi navy blockades north Yemen coast" (November 11), you reported that "The rebels also confirmed that Saudi air strikes were continuing Tuesday, saying new villages had been hit deep inside Yemen, killing two <u>women</u>." We expect the UN Human Rights Council to assign Richard Goldstone to investigate this brazen attack on a civilian target.

DAN VOGEL

Jerusalem

Call his bluff

Sir, - Mahmoud Abbas is presenting the inhabitants of the Land of Israel with a real opportunity, in his calls for resignation and for dismantling the PA (November 8), for a permanent and lasting solution. Let's call his bluff.

Let the PA dismantle itself. Palestine is Gaza - let Israel be the first country in the world to recognize it. The two million other Palestinians are invited to become Israeli citizens, if they pledge allegiance to the state and undertake national military or civilian service - the identical conditions we must impose on all Jews, including the ultra-Orthodox.

Let us not pass up this chance for an integrated solution, assuring rights, security and economic advancement to all in the country.

M. MILLER

Jerusalem

Healthy hospitals

Sir, - Having had a family member hospitalized for 10 days at Wolfson Hospital in Holon, I slept in his room for the first four nights and the room was spotless, the linen fresh and abundant. Yes, food was simple, but it was fresh. And the nurses, well, were angels. It is we who don't respect public property anymore. Family members sit on patients' beds with their shoes on, or bring in outside food and have a party till 1 a.m. in the patients' rooms. Nurses are sometimes afraid to enforce regulations because of threats; I saw a large man almost attack a nurse.

It is time that we stop blaming the authorities for all that is wrong. We also should be responsible for improving what is not adequate.

And by the way, the choice of the word "horror" was a little too much ("Hospital horrors," Letters, November 10).

OLGA P. WIND

Holon

Wrong volume

Sir, - If only the rabbis who devoted so much of their halachic knowhow to publishing a "book advocating killing gentiles who endanger Jews" (November 11) had, instead, in light of the violence of our Jewish society, published one on the sanctity of all human life. There, they could have detailed when killing is permitted as, for example, in self-defense.

The very idea that the halacha makes any distinction between Jew and non-Jew, besides being abhorrent, was outlawed by one of our most prominent rabbinic authorities, the Meiri (1249-1316). In commenting on Talmudic discrimination against non-Jews, he stated: "All who share the same universal moral code ("the seven Noahide laws") are bound by one and the same law, and there can be no question of favoring ourselves..." If this was recognized in 14th century Provence, where the Meiri flourished, how much more so in our day and age.

ARYEH NEWMAN

Jerusalem

Prescient Jakobovits

Sir, - The article on Lord Jakobovits ("A modern prophet," November 6) was a beautifully written description of a towering rabbi, brilliant scholar and community leader. He was also prescient. In his article "Rabbis and Deans, which appeared in Tradition, the journal of the Rabbinical Council of America in the early '70s, Lord Jakobovits foresaw the dangers awaiting Jewish life if the rabbinic leaders of the yeshivot, the Deans as he called them, abrogated the influence and authority of community rabbis. He felt that community rabbis were in closer touch with their congregants and more sympathetic to their needs and the pressures of their everyday lives. The Deans, enclosed in their yeshivot, were isolated from the people and therefore tended to be much more demanding and extreme. How sad it is that he was so accurate and that even he and other leading community rabbis have been overshadowed by the extremism so rampant today.

RAPHAEL ROSENBAUM

Kiron

Why Labor has lost it

Sir, - In his oped of November 6, "The Labor Party - of blessed memory," David Forman writes why he thinks Labor has become a threatened species after so many years of being in power. He places great emphasis on the lack of movement by Labor to demand the dismantling of settlements. The picture is far more complicated than that.

Forman has forgotten that it was Labor that put most of the settlements where they are today while being the largest party in the Knesset. While it is true that Labor has abandoned its base and its ideals, it has also been forced to privatize many of its successful institutions - Kupat Holim, Bank Hapoalim, Shikun Ovdim, Sifriyat Hapoalim, the kibbutzim... It was these institutions that gave it so much power.

Forman also neglects to mention that the leaders of Labor, while being socialist on the domestic agenda, were also very hawkish in matters of security and foreign affairs. It was Ben Gurion who forced Moshe Sharett out because of his dovish views, and Golda Meir was very hawkish on defense.

Labor has shifted excessively to the left and the country has not followed. This is especially true after the failure of the disengagement from Gaza, the eight-year shelling in the south, the loss of 1,500 civilians in the last intifada, the Second Lebanon War, Operation Cast Lead, etc.

MATTIAS ROTENBERG

Petah Tikva

The wall and the fig-leaf

Sir, - I am glad to find ideological support from Anetta Kahane's article on the Berlin Wall ("In Germany, the East-West divide is still alive and kicking," November 11)

When the wall fell, I preached from the pulpit that it should have stood forever, as a symbol of what happens when countries follow a Hitler. I was told that I was wrong. Germany must be rebuilt, accepted, turned into a democracy, and the wall must come down to advance this cause. Now we are informed that although west Germany is democratic, and is even a friend of Israel, east Germany is germinating neo-Nazis, enemies of Israel, anti-Semites. If that wall was still standing, this would be obvious to the democratic world. Without it, the virtues of west Germany serve as a fig-leaf covering the evils of east Germany.

JACOB CHINITZ, Jerusalem

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The Practice

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Byline: By ALAN M. DERSHOWITZ

Alan M. Dershowitz's most recent book is "The Case for Moral Clarity: Israel, *Hamas* and Gaza."

Body

LOUIS D. BRANDEIS

A Life

By Melvin I. Urofsky

Illustrated. 953 pp. Pantheon Books. \$40

The popular parlor game of ranking our presidents hasn't caught on for Supreme Court justices, perhaps because there are too many of them (Sonia Sotomayor is the 111th justice) or because Americans have so little knowledge of what they actually do. But if justices were to be ranked, three names would appear on the top of most lists: Chief Justice John Marshall, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes and Justice Louis D. Brandeis. Similarly, if practicing lawyers were to be ranked, nearly every list would include John Adams, Daniel Webster, Abraham Lincoln, Clarence Darrow and Brandeis.

Notably, the only person on both lists is Brandeis. He would also be included on a list of America's most important social reformers and innovators, having developed savings bank life insurance and new ways of practicing law. He was the co-author of what may well be the single most influential law review article in history -- on the right to privacy. And he was the most significant American in helping to establish the state of Israel. All in all, this son of Czech-Jewish immigrants, who grew up in Louisville, Ky., may well qualify as the greatest legal personage in American history.

Melvin I. Urofsky -- the author of this monumental, authoritative and appreciative biography of the man Franklin D. Roosevelt called "Isaiah" -- would surely agree. A professor of law and public policy at Virginia Commonwealth University, Urofsky has devoted much of his career to documenting the personal and professional life of the great lawyer and justice. In "Louis D. Brandeis: A Life," he demonstrates, deploying a Brandeisian array of factual material, why Brandeis still matters, nearly 70 years after his death. The First Amendment's right of free expression, the Fourth Amendment's right to privacy and the due process clause's focus on personal liberty (rather than property) all owe their current vitality to the creative genius of Justice Brandeis, whose dissenting opinions have become the law of the land.

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Today, Brandeis is seen by liberals as their patron saint because of his views on speech, privacy, liberty and social welfare, yet conservatives claim him as well, because of his commitment to judicial restraint. In many ways he defies labeling. He demonstrated through his judicial decisions that a living constitution, responsive to changing needs, is not incompatible with a modest view of the role of judges. He rejected judicial activism in favor of allowing legislatures -- the voice of the people -- to expand rights and extend protections to the most vulnerable. He said of the Supreme Court that "the most important thing we do is not doing."

This was, of course, easier to say in his day, when legislatures, for the most part, were more progressive than courts. He led the Supreme Court in upholding progressive (some called it radical) legislative innovations in the areas of labor law, protection of <u>women</u> and fairness to the poor. But unlike many of today's justices, who employ artificial jurisprudential constructs to further (and disguise) their political or religious ideologies, Brandeis was a judge who placed principle over politics, and who often voted to uphold legislation he personally despised, like the "big government" aspects of the New Deal. For the most part, however, the laws he upheld were of the sort he, as "the people's attorney," helped to design and defend.

Indeed, he developed the legal technique -- called "the Brandeis brief" -- that was used by progressive lawyers to support legislation in the face of constitutional challenges, especially those based on the property rights of corporations. The Brandeis brief, which has become commonplace today, not only presents the court with an analysis of legal precedents but also marshals current factual material -- statistics, scientific experiments, governmental records -- to demonstrate that the legislature had a reasonable basis for its actions. It is difficult to overstate the revolutionary consequences of this tactic. Before the introduction of the Brandeis brief, the law was seen by conservatives as a formal series of rules representing eternal verities, unchangeable by new circumstances. Brandeis presented a direct challenge to the old regime by demanding that the law be responsive to new realities, based on new facts.

Urofsky acknowledges that Brandeis did not invent out of whole cloth his fact-based approach to the law. Oliver Wendell Holmes, in particular, had argued that the life of the law was "experience" rather than "logic." And experience is, of course, fact based.

Brandeis was also the heir of Jefferson and Madison, who saw freedom of expression as the foundation of democracy. But unlike Holmes, Jefferson and Madison, Brandeis was a great legal practitioner who knew how to turn theory into practice. He created enduring structures that lawyers could use to implement the ideas propounded by Jefferson, Madison and Holmes.

The impact he had on the practice of law when he himself practiced it, lucratively and effectively for over 35 years, was probably as great as the impact he had as a justice of the Supreme Court. He is one of the handful of justices - along with Thurgood Marshall, Benjamin Cardozo, William Howard Taft, Earl Warren and Arthur Goldberg -- who would have been remembered by history even if he had never been elevated to the high court. (Today's court has no one with Brandeis's experience as a practicing lawyer -- and it shows.) Remarkably, it was his innovative work as an attorney that, along with his religion, almost kept him from being confirmed by the Senate when President Woodrow Wilson nominated him to the court in 1916. Urofsky believes that his religion played less of a role than his radical approach to the law, but it is impossible to separate the two, because the bigotry of the day associated his alleged radicalism with his Jewish heritage.

One of Urofsky's most fascinating revelations deals with Brandeis's conversion from a Christmas-celebrating secular American of Jewish heritage to a committed Zionist and Jew. According to Urofsky, there was no single "aha" moment of revelation. Rather, Brandeis was convinced that Zionism was an outgrowth of his progressive values. The idea of Jews' having a homeland, based on social justice and Jewish prophetic principles, seemed entirely natural to him. He poured his heart, soul, fortune and considerable energies into persuading American Jews, who were generally unsympathetic to European Zionism, that one could be a patriotic American while at the same time advocating a Jewish homeland for the oppressed Jews of Europe. His most important contribution to Israel's establishment was in turning Zionism from a theory alien to many American Jews into a pragmatic program to rid the Holy Land of disease, to increase its agricultural production and to make it feasible for European Jews to

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live in peace with their Arab neighbors. There are many who believe that without Brandeis's advocacy, the United States would not have supported the establishment of Israel.

Although this is an admiring biography, it is far from hagiographic. Urofsky presents the warts, few as there were. Brandeis's approach to the practice of law in which he sometimes served as "counsel to the situation" -- representing both parties to a dispute in an effort to achieve a just result -- raised legitimate questions, as did his payments to his acolyte Felix Frankfurter when Brandeis was a justice and Frankfurter a Harvard Law professor who was promoting causes dear to both of them. But on balance, Urofsky's Brandeis brief in support of "Isaiah's" important place in the annals of the law and history is convincing.

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES)

Load-Date: September 27, 2009



<u>Yearning for the Golan Heights: why Syria wants it back; The disputed territory is key to the broader US goal of Arab-Israeli peace. On Monday, Washington hosted the first high-ranking Syrian official in five years.</u>

The Christian Science Monitor September 28, 2009 Monday

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Byline: Julien Barnes-Dacey Correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor

Body

The US demonstrated its commitment to reengage Syria as a partner for Middle East peace Monday, advancing a process that some Arab countries had declared dead in recent weeks. At Washington's invitation - the first one extended to a high-ranking Syrian official in five years - Deputy Foreign Minister Fayssal Mekdad came to town to meet US officials. Syria's cooperation is crucial to the chief goal of President Obama's Middle East policy: Arab-Israeli peace. With ties to three Israeli enemies - Iran, and the militant groups Hezbollah and *Hamas* - Syria says it can moderate the threats against the Jewish state and thus pave the way for reciprocal Israeli concessions to the Palestinians and their Arab allies. In return, Syria wants one thing: the Golan Heights.

Occupied by Israel since the 1967 war, the fertile territory on the Sea of Galilee's western shores is prized by both countries for its agriculture, high ground that serves as a military lookout, and abundant water; about one-third of Israel's fresh water supply currently comes from the Golan. Syria insists on the return of the full territory in exchange for peace. "We do want to get the Golan back on a silver platter," said Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Muallem this summer. "Let's face it - it's our land and our right to have it back is the most normal thing in the world." Yet even as the Obama administration pushes for a renewal of peace talks between Syria and Israel, the Golan's original Syrian inhabitants worry that their situation is being neglected and are striving to instill in their children the same longing they feel for their ancestral land. While intermittent peace talks between Syria and Israel as well as international attention have long focused on the status of final-border boundaries, control over water, and security issues, little attention is given to the displaced Golanese population. In 1967 approximately 150,000 Syrians fled the Golan into mainland Syria as Israel began its occupation of the territory. Now, taking descendants into account, that number could be as high as half a million. If a peace deal is eventually reached, the Syrian government says that many of the Golanese refugees will return to the territory - a prospect that Omar Ali has been yearning for since he fled as a 9-year-old in 1967. 'Our children will not forget' Surrounded by Arab enemies that it believed were readying for war against the Jewish state, Israel had launched a preemptive strike against its neighbors. Amid the scrum of Syrians rushing to escape oncoming Israeli forces, young Omar lost his family. "When we left we didn't think we were fleeing. We thought it was just for a few days and so we only took a few simple things with us," recalls Mr. Ali, who was reunited with his parents after three days. "We should never have left." Forty-two years later, Ali has never returned to his home in the village of Rawiye. Instead he lives in a Damascus suburb known as Black Stone, one of the main concentrations of Golanese refugees. Today, most Golanese refugees live in the Syrian capital, in fact, spread throughout various suburbs. While fully integrated into Syrian society, they congregate together keeping alive old Golanese traditions and instilling in their young a longing to return. "My house in my village calls me back, the dream obsesses me," says Ali, adding that he purchased a second house on the Syrian border town of Quneitra just so he could gaze over at the Golan whenever he wanted. "Homelessness is for all Yearning for the Golan Heights: why Syria wants it back The disputed territory is key to the broader US goal of Arab- Israeli peace. On Monday, Washington hoste....

generations. Our children will not forget." Like many of those who fled, Ali's family was ripped apart by the occupation. His uncles remained in the territory, and he and his parents never saw them again. With no direct phone lines existing between Israel and Syria, families would in the past meet on the border and use megaphones to communicate. Today, they talk using Skype, an Internet phone service. 328 feet short of a peace deal in 2000 Meanwhile, thousands of Israelis have moved in. Israel has constructed 32 settlements on the territory it annexed in 1981 - in violation of United Nations Resolution 242, which considers the Golan part of Israel's occupied territories. The Golan now has a population of 38,000, comprising about 21,000 Arabs loyal to Syria and 17,000 Jews. The territory has become a popular Israeli tourist destination and home to a thriving agricultural sector as well as military bases. Peace negotiations between the two sides have been sporadic over the past decades. In 2000, a USbrokered peace agreement was nearly reached but talks collapsed after Syria insisted on a return to the entire pre-1967 war border, which included 328 feet Israel would not give up. Turkish-mediated indirect peace talks broke up last December in protest over Israel's military offensive on Gaza. While Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has expressed a willingness to restart talks, he is opposed to a complete withdrawal from the Golan. In July Uzi Arad, a close aide to Mr. Netanyahu, told Israel's Haaretz newspaper that "if there is a territorial compromise, it is one that still leaves Israel on the Golan Heights and deep into the Golan Heights." But Syria has never given up its claim on the territory and says its full return is the only basis for peace with Israel. Mr. Mekdad was expected to press this argument while meeting with US officials Monday. If a peace deal is eventually concluded, Israel has indicated it would accept the return of Golan refugees so long as they do not drain water supplies from the Jewish state. Few can cross into the Golan Meanwhile, Syria says it's doing everything it can to maintain ties with the Arabs still in the Golan Heights, most of whom have rejected Israeli citizenship and pledge allegiance to Damascus, says Methat Saleh, director of the Syrian government's Bureau of Golan Affairs. Mr. Saleh, who named his son Golan and spent 12 years in an Israeli prison for resistance activities, explained in a recent interview that Syria provides financial support to some living in the Golan, while trying to help the population maintain their Syrian cultural identity. The country's domestic television channel maintains a bureau in the territory and inhabitants can access Syrian TV. Yet with the border firmly closed, direct contact is almost impossible. Among the few who can cross are a group of students whom the two governments allow to study at Damascus University. The program was initiated in 1991 and there are currently about 250 students from the Golan studying in Syria. According to one who didn't want to reveal his name, the program strengthens the students to continue "daily mental resistance." "As long as we don't forget that we're Syrian and as long as we're speaking Arabic in our homes, [the Israelis] won't destroy our Arab identity," says the student, who also speaks fluent Hebrew and has spent past summers employed as a construction worker in Tel Aviv. The only others allowed across this border are Druze religious figures who make an annual pilgrimage to Syria, as well as a limited number of Syrian women who are permitted to marry men in the Golan but are then barred from returning. Despite these hardships, displaced Syrians from the Golan say they will ensure that their Golanese identity remains alive and that when the moment arrives they will be ready to go back. "When we return to the Golan we'll even take our dead back with us," says Ali.

Load-Date: February 19, 2010



The stranger who dwells among us

The Jerusalem Post September 25, 2009 Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 10

Length: 1268 words

Byline: DAVID BREAKSTONE

Highlight: On the transgression of rejecting responsibility That we are not the root cause of the conflict in which we are embroiled does not absolve us of accountability for those transgressions of which we are guilty. The writer is a member of the Executive of the Jewish Agency and World Zionist Organization where he heads the Department for Zionist Activity.

Body

'Do you mind if I break my fast while I drive?" asked the cabbie in a heavily accented English as he pulled away from London's Hampstead Hotel in the direction of Heathrow. Having just pulled myself away from the last session of a three-day conference of the Zionist Federation of Great Britain, it took me a moment to refocus and process the question.

Oh, right, Ramadan, I said to myself, feeling just the slightest bit uncomfortable and wondering if in the encroaching darkness my interlocutor had noticed the kippa I was wearing when I'd gotten into his taxi.

"No problem," I answered out loud, doing my best to offer an appeasing smile that he could catch in his rearview mirror.

I needn't have felt uneasy at all. During the hour it took us to reach the airport, not only had Yousef and I resolved the entire Middle East conflict, but I'd also learned more about Muslim tradition than I had during the entire 35 years I've lived in the Jewish state - and I use that nomenclature pointedly.

"There's too little opportunity for Arabs and Jews in Israel to talk like this," I mused at one point in our conversation.

"Really," he responded, seemingly surprised. "Why is that?"

GOOD QUESTION, I thought to myself, delving more than three decades deep into my personal history for an answer. I lived at Neveh Ilan at the time and was committed to making friends with my Arab neighbors in Abu Ghosh, but somehow that's something that never happened. I thought of my good friends in East Talpiot who two decades ago had succeeded in making friends with their Arab neighbors in Jebl Mukaber, only to have the relationships shattered by stones the size of grapefruits that were hurled through their living room windows.

I thought of an Arab-Jewish encounter I had violated Shabbat to participate in more than a decade ago, convinced that by putting a human face on the political process we would ultimately be saving lives. I had returned disappointed by the obstinacy of those who refused to accept the hand I had extended them in a supplication for acceptance.

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I thought of my wife's office at Hebrew University that had been painted by an east Jerusalem Arab worker with whom she had shared friendly chatter who was later arrested for planting the bomb at the student cafeteria that took the lives of nine students. He might just as easily have left it in her desk drawer

"I don't know," I answered, taking the easy way out. "The terrorism certainly doesn't help things."

Yousef couldn't have agreed more, and launched into a diatribe against the evils of al-Qaida and <u>Hamas</u> that even our foreign minister might hesitate to voice publicly. I didn't interrupt, but knew fully well that I had unfairly fed him a mixture of apples and oranges, which in his hunger he eagerly swallowed undiscerningly. There is, or should be, a world of difference between those Arabs within our borders who are Israeli citizens and to whom our Declaration of Independence guarantees full equality and those who live beyond them, some of whom are committed to our annihilation.

Why have I not communicated with the former all these years? Why did I have no one to ask if the fast of Ramadan was obligatory for <u>women</u> as well as for men, from what age children were required to participate, if its observance involves other rituals and what the significance of the month is altogether.

"When does the fast end?" I asked. "Seven forty-eight," he answered, munching on a carrot. Like Shabbat, I thought, smiling to myself. "No, when does Ramadan end this year?" He told me.

"Oh, Rosh Hashana," I said. "You'll be ending your fast more or less at the time we begin preparing for ours."

AND IN the context of the conversation I immediately thought of the Torah portion we'd be reading that day. Not the binding of Isaac but the banishment of Ishmael. As I pondered the reasons for the lack of acquaintance between me and my neighbors, I wondered how they might explain it. Where would their narrative of the missed opportunity begin and what would it include? Was Genesis the genesis of the divide between us?

I recalled my army service manning roadblocks in 1978, long before any intifada, when I was chastised by my superiors for apologizing to the occupants of the cars I was searching for inconveniencing them, then thanking them for their cooperation. I thought of the findings of the Or Commission into the Arab riots in October 2000, which blamed the outbreak of violence in part on years of "government handling of the Arab sector [that] has been primarily neglectful and discriminatory" and, castigating the security forces for their overly brutal response, cautioned that "The police must learn to realize that the Arab sector in Israel is not the enemy and must not be treated as such."

Two sons. One father. And a God we both believed in who had twice tested this lonely man of faith by commanding him to part eternally from each of his children. As we approached the turnoff to the A4 I wondered if the relationship between Israel's Muslim and Jewish citizens today is better explained by the standard sociology of minority-majority relationships exacerbated by an external conflict, or by different readings of the Bible and Koran - the latter of which I plead guilty to being completely ignorant.

Was Ishmael mocking Isaac or merely playing with him? Was Sarah appropriately zealous in protecting her son's birthright, or shamefully jealous of the woman she had urged her husband to have a child with in the first place? In heeding God's word though it blatantly contradicted his own sense of morality, had Abraham passed his tests or failed them?

This was not the first time that our common progenitor had entered my thoughts today.

The conference I had been a part of featured Muhammad Darawshe, a 27th-generation Palestinian and coexecutive director of the Abraham Fund, which "works to advance coexistence, equality and cooperation among Israel's Jewish and Arab citizens."

Listening to him speak, I was as discomfited in discovering how little I knew of Ishmael's descendants who carry Israeli passports and ID cards today as I was to learn of the mistreatment to which they have been subjected over the decades. Darawshe, however, was neither bitter nor belligerent. To the contrary, he was understanding and

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conciliatory, emphasizing that there was no need to change Israel's laws to resolve the problems (as had been necessary in South Africa to do away with apartheid), but only to uphold them.

"El Al?" Yousef asked with a smile. "Yes," I answered absently as he pulled up to the curb. I thanked him for the ride, wished him an easy month of fasting, tipped him more than is my custom, and wondered if I would have to come back to London to continue getting to know my neighbors, or if this year I might begin taking more seriously the commandments concerning the treatment of the stranger who dwells among us.

Rosh Hashana was still two weeks away, but it was already time to check in. As I took my place in the long line waiting for security clearance, I was reminded that it was not we who were responsible for the untold millions of hours wasted daily in airports around the world. But I resisted ingesting the same salad of apples and oranges I had fed Yousef. That we are not the root cause of the conflict in which we are embroiled does not absolve us of accountability for those transgressions of which we are guilty.

"For the sin we have sinned against You by rejecting responsibility...." The liturgy of the approaching Day of Atonement played on in my head as I waited to be asked if everything in my baggage belonged to me.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



<u>Letters</u>

The Jerusalem Post

August 12, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 14

Length: 1296 words

Byline: Gerald Jospe, Jacob Chinitz, Hannah Sondhelm, Maurice Ostroff, Maish Rubin, Sidney Handel, Leah

Gross, Morris Kerlin, Michael Netzer responds

Highlight: Readers' Letters

Body

Selectively severe

Sir, - The police adopt harsh measures against illegals' children and hound Filipino workers. But they fail to deport foreign nationals who come here with the purpose of fomenting violence ("Hundreds attend protest of Sheikh Jarrah evictions," August 11).

In most cases the police know their names and addresses. It's time the minister of the interior took decisive action and the Knesset showed it was prepared to defend our national interest as would any other sovereign government.

GERALD JOSPE

Jerusalem

Dominant male

Sir, - Your item about a sex-crazed husband who was finally compelled to divorce his wife after eight years reminds us of the gross inequality in Torah marriage law ("Sex-crazed husband, jailed by rabbinate, gives 'get' after 8 years," August 11).

The commentator Rashi says about the verse in Genesis, chapter one, which refers to the husband "conquering" his wife, that from this we learn that the male dominates the <u>female</u> so she should not be promiscuous. In this case, the husband was uncontrollably randy, but the wife has no equal rights here.

Those who want a state run according to Jewish law (Halacha) should think about this. Either the law of marriage and divorce has to be amended, or the idea of a halachic state has to be given up.

JACOB CHINITZ

Jerusalem

Sir, - Do we really have to read - on page 1 - how many times a day this man demanded sex with his wife, how many days a year, on which holidays, when she was menstruating, etc.? Young children read the paper, and a small article without all this information inside the newspaper would have done.

HANNAH SONDHELM

Jerusalem

Fully trousered

in the PR war

Sir, - There is a dire need to revise our entire approach to PR, in the realization that the information war is as vital as the military war.

The Foreign Ministry's intention to create a team that will go over the Goldstone report when it is received with a "fine-tooth comb" to respond to its charges is sadly typical of the reactive approach that has failed us so badly over the years ("Israel prepares for Goldstone report," July 27).

By the time we react, the report will have been widely read and ingrained into perceptions as factual. Nobody will show any interest in our explanations offered weeks or months later. It was Winston Churchill who said: "A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on."

We should act proactively. The team should already be closely studying the testimonies given to the mission in Gaza and Geneva (available on the Internet), preparing our counter-arguments and publicizing them widely so that credible, positive factors about Israel's actions are absorbed into public consciousness in advance of the official report.

We need to follow up on Judge Goldstone's statement that several potential witnesses withdrew for fear of retribution and emphasize that witnesses were evidently too afraid to testify to the storage of weapons in mosques and schools, and the boobytrapping of houses. Use should be made of testimony that supports Israel's position: For example, Prof. Newton made it absolutely clear that white phosphorous is a legal weapon even in urban areas. He contradicted claims that it is a chemical or incendiary weapon, and emphasized an equally binding legal obligation on non-state actors like *Hamas* to avoid firing on civilians and mingling civilians with combatants.

We must express disappointment that the mission paid no attention to the incitement that led to the rocket firing, and that continues to this day. Had there been no incitement, there would have been no rockets and no Cast Lead operation.

MAURICE OSTROFF

Herzliya

10 to one

Sir, - Re Leonard Zurakov's "...or wake up" (Letter, August 10): As important as it is for Israel to have good relations with the US, so is it important for the US to have good relations with Israel. Forty years ago, in an address to the American Jewish Congress by an American senior naval intelligence officer, we were told that the information in many matters that the US receives from Israel is worth 10 aircraft carriers.

MAISH RUBIN

Beersheba

Fact and fantasy

Sir, - Re the evictions in Sheikh Jarrah, Jeff Barak claims it is difficult to think of Justice Minister Yaakov Ne'eman being evicted from his formerly Arab-owned home in Talbiyeh in favor of the original owner's descendants ("The decline of east Jerusalem's stature," August 10).

This statement staggers the imagination. Israel has de-facto sovereignty in east Jerusalem. Were the Palestinians to enjoy the same in Talbiyeh, Mr. Neeman's very survival would be the thing difficult to imagine.

Mr. Barak hangs his own values on an unlikely hook. Realism is generally more prudent than fantasy.

SIDNEY HANDEL

Tel Aviv

Rabbis in the Yishuv

Sir, - Re "War of the sages against the prophets" (UpFront, July 31): I will not address Michael Netzer's polemic against our sages - but I must point out the generalizations he makes about the Orthodox rabbis of Europe and the libelous statements to the effect that they were opposed to returning to our homeland.

While it is true that some rabbis were against going to Eretz Yisrael, it must be pointed out that the old Yishuv, which existed for centuries before the reestablishment of the general Jewish settlement, was made up primarily of great rabbis, their students and their communities.

In the early 19th century, the Vilna Gaon sent all his students to settle in Erez Yisrael.

My own grandfather, Yehuda Leib Katz, made aliya in 1867 because his rabbi in Hungary said Erez Yisrael was the only place for a Jew to live. He helped found Petah Tikva and other places in Israel. When, in the late 1800s, the secular Zionists' aliya began, religious settlements such as Mazkeret Batya, Rehovot and Rishon Lezion already existed.

Unfortunately, Israeli history as taught today stresses only the secular Zionist movement and refuses to give credit to the religious Jews who withstood many hardships in these early years and played an important role in paving the way to reestablishing the Jewish state.

LEAH GROSS

Petah Tikva

Sir, - Michael Netzer put forth the absurdly shallow argument that the prophets (chiefly Isaiah) denigrated ritual observance in favor of spiritual conduct. The prophets could hardly be advocating the downgrading of formal ritual behavior since the Torah itself emphasizes the importance of the sacrificial services, issues of purity and impurity, holiday observances, etc.

From the selected passages Netzer quotes, it is clear that the prophet's criticism is aimed only at the hypocrisy of individuals who ostensibly observe the ritual commandments while simultaneously behaving immorally. In such cases, the ritual is emptied of all meaning and becomes an abomination.

It is clear that the myriad halachic ordinances instituted by the sages were meant to serve as a vehicle to train, elevate and refine the spiritual dimension of man. This is in contrast to Christianity, the religion of "love," more or less bereft of any halachic-style system of jurisprudence, in which such horrors as the Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition and, ultimately, Holocaust could freely develop.

MORRIS KARLIN

Mercaz Shapira

Michael Netzer responds:

Ms. Gross: There's a difference between leaders who made aliya with their communities and leaders who nourished a movement which prepared the homeland so that all Jews, religious and secular, could make aliya and rebuild the national home.

Mr. Karlin: When ceremonial worship supercedes "walking humbly in His ways," the prophets were explicit about ritual observance being expendable while spiritually moral conduct is not. The living proof: We no longer have the Temple for sacrifices, but will always have the opportunity to become a more just and righteous people.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Managing anti-Semitism in Germany

The Jerusalem Post July 12, 2009 Sunday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 13

Length: 1304 words

Byline: HENRYK M. BRODER and BENJAMIN WEINTHAL

Highlight: Three short-term remedies that could breathe some life and fire into fighting the disease. Henryk M. Broder is one of Germany's leading commentators and writes for Der Spiegel. Benjamin Weinthal is The Jerusalem

Post correspondent in Germany.

Body

One of the biggest achievements of political correctness in the Federal Republic of Germany is that there is a "representative" or "commissioner" for everything. There is a "commissioner for the armed forces" in the Bundestag (Lower House of Parliament) to whom soldiers can complain about long hours and bad food, a "federal drug commissioner" who wants to convince children to give up smoking, binge-drinking and the excessive use of computer games, and a "federal government representative for patient interests" at the Ministry of Health from whom we almost never hear anything.

Every large company has an "addiction issues representative" who takes care of employees addicted to alcohol or drugs, and there is an "equal opportunity commissioner" at every German college who ensures that <u>women</u> are not at a disadvantage. It is very fashionable for companies and institutions to have an "environmental issues manager." There is even a "commission for environmental questions" for the Protestant regional churches in Germany, and it won't be long before the Catholics follow their lead.

In this way an entirely new profession has been born, along the lines of "bankruptcy trustee" and "event manager" - another niche in post-industrial society where people who have no idea what else they could do establish themselves.

There have been discussions about an "anti-Semitism representative" since November 9, 2008 (the 70th anniversary of the Krystalnacht pogroms), when the Bundestag called on the federal government to convene a panel of experts to compile an annual "anti-Semitism report" combined with recommendations on how to come to grips with anti-Semitism. All the parliamentary parties agreed (which is quite rare) that a committee "of scientists and practitioners" was necessary.

Of course they did not consider the fact that they must first agree on what constitutes anti-Semitism.

NOW SOME representatives are mad at the government because so much time has passed and nothing has been done. Green Party MP Jerzy Montag (and chairman of the German- Israeli Parliamentary Friendship Group) no longer believes that such a committee will be established before the upcoming elections. Left Party MP Petra Pau has even called it a "disregard" for the German parliament and "ignorance in the light of a major social problem."

Managing anti-Semitism in Germany

These reactions are typical of a conviction, widely held in Germany, that a committee must be established in order to gain control of any problem. The "scientists and practitioners" will then take care of everything else.

Government representatives like Montag and Pau don't even notice that they themselves are standing in the way of understanding and fighting anti-Semitism. Montag quite innocently asked during a hearing of experts in the Bundestag's Committee on Internal Affairs whether there could be such a thing as "pure" anti-Zionism uncontaminated by anti-Semitism.

Pau's understanding of anti-Semitism is just as limited. She likes to travel to Jerusalem for anti-Semitism symposiums, but doesn't say a word when there are discussions within her own party about Israel's right to exist, since those discussions are not considered anti-Semitic but merely anti-Zionist.

Some of Pau's fellow party members have no problem taking part in pro-Hizbullah demonstrations or calling for a political and economic boycott of Israel - none of that counts as anti-Semitism. In Germany, distancing oneself from the classic anti-Semitism of the Nazis is a basic prerequisite before one can act as an anti-Zionist without arousing suspicion of being a common anti-Semite who has merely changed shirts. Establishing an anti-Semitism representative will not change anything. On the contrary, the government would merely be giving its blessing to these bogus claims of innocence.

There is a central paradox at the core of fighting anti-Semitism in post-Holocaust Germany. On the one hand, the German parliament passes resolutions pledging to combat anti-Semitism, and forms an anti-Semitism commission. Politicians lament that anti-Semitism has again "arrived in mainstream society." Morally charged admonitions such as "Never Again Auschwitz" and "stop it before it has a chance to start" are part and parcel of the German anti-anti-Semitism strategy.

ON THE OTHER HAND, anti-Semitism remains a faceless, nebulous concept that allegedly serves to silence criticism of Israel. Wolfgang Benz, director of the Berlin Center for Anti-Semitism Research, which advises the German government in formulating policies to fight Jew-hatred, asserted that the allegation of anti-Semitism is as dangerous as anti- Semitism itself. Referring to the accusation of anti- Semitism, Benz said: "In Germany it has become the discussion killer, in order to shut people up."

Benz and his colleagues at the publicly funded Center are reticent about calling those who hate Jews anti-Semites, and have resigned themselves to managing anti-Semitism and investigating Jews as if they are laboratory hamsters exposed to different forms of anti-Semitism. Yet by "managing" anti-Semitism, Benz has mismanaged it and, bizarrely, contributed to the staying power of modern Jew-hatred. The Berlin Center seems to believe that if you do not subscribe to the anti-Semitic worldview of Hitler's inner circle, then you are not anti-Semitic. Unfortunately, the Center simply reflects the limitations of mainstream thinking in modern Germany.

While there is strong civil resistance to the fragmented and largely impotent extreme right-wing groups that propagate Nazi-based racial anti-Semitism, there is hardly a bleep of resistance when widespread anti-Semitism is dressed up as ostensibly respectable criticism of Israel.

Many German foundations and media have perfected a tried-and-true method to avoid the charge of anti-Semitism-namely, subcontract the job to anti-Israel Jews like Jeff Halper in Israel, Alfred Grosser in France and Norman Finkelstein or Tony Judt in the US, although they articulate views that might meet the European Union's working definition of anti-Semitism. The Jewish origin of these so-called "Israel critics" is believed to insulate journalists, editors and NGOs from the accusation of stoking anti-Semitism.

What cannot be done directly is thus accomplished indirectly, and there is no shortage of subcontractors available. A recent telling example is the decision to award Halper the "Immanuel Kant world citizen prize" in May for his efforts to reconcile Jews and Palestinians. Halper told the Badische Zeitung, a local newspaper in Freiburg where he accepted the award, that "I am a Jewish Israeli and, nevertheless, I say that <u>Hamas</u> should not recognize Israel. You cannot expect from the Palestinians that they support Zionism." Continuing along these lines, Halper characterized Israel as a terror state.

THERE ARE three short-term remedies that could breathe some life and fire into fighting anti-Semitism in Germany:

- * Academics, journalists, NGOs and politicians should attach a human face to modern anti-Semitism (anti-Israelism);
- * The myth that the accusation of anti-Semitism is as lethal as anti-Semitism itself ought to be dismissed for the nonsense it is:
- * And insulating oneself against the charge of anti- Semitism by employing hard-core anti-Zionist Jews should be recognized as a mixture of cowardice and anti-Semitism.

Wallowing in meaningless resolutions and a fluffy anti-Semitism parliamentary commission represents the path of least resistance; it means managing anti-Semitism instead of confronting it when it comes disguised as criticism of Israel.

Anti-Semitism is a disease in society, as is anti- Zionism. Both phenomena fall under the authority of the federal government's representative for patient interests, and that position has already been filled. He just needs to become more active.

Graphic

Photo: THE GERMAN Parliament building. All the parties agreed that it was necessary to establish a committee 'of scientists and practitioners' to fight anti-Semitism, but they failed to provide a modern definition of the term. (Credit: Bloomberg)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Windsor Star (Ontario)

November 23, 2009 Monday

Final Edition

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Length: 1478 words

Byline: Star News Services

Body

EUROPE

RARE DARWIN BOOK FOUND IN TOILET

LONDON -- A first edition of Charles Darwin's seminal On the Origin of Species will be sold this week after it was found in a family's toilet in southern Britain, an auction house said Sunday.

The book, which was first printed in 1859, was bought by a family for just a few shillings in a shop about 40 years ago, Christie's auction house said.

The family has since kept the work on a bookcase in the guest lavatory at their home in the Oxford area, it said.

The book will go under the hammer in London on Tuesday, to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the publication of the father of the theory of evolution's famous work.

The book, about 1,250 copies of which were first printed, is expected to fetch \$99US,000.

FLOOD CLEANUP STARTS IN BRITAIN

LONDON -- Clean-up efforts were underway Sunday in flood-hit towns following the heaviest downpours ever recorded in England, as fears mounted for a woman thought swept into a swollen river in Wales.

Some 314 millimetres of rain fell in 24 hours -- the highest level since records began -- over Cumbria as torrential rains swept across Britain and Ireland.

The Environment Agency said 65 flood warnings were in force across England and Wales, with four severe warnings in Cumbria in northwest England, the area hardest hit.

FAILED N.IRELAND BOMB A THREAT SIGN

BELFAST -- A massive car bomb that failed to explode properly was designed to cause widespread destruction in Belfast, police said Sunday, underscoring the threat to Northern Ireland's fragile peace.

The car, containing a 180-kilogram device, crashed through barriers outside a police headquarters in Belfast late on Saturday and partially exploded, police said.

Elsewhere, police exchanged shots with paramilitaries in a border village. Three people have been arrested in Northern Ireland and one across the border in the Republic of Ireland, police said.

MIDDLE EAST

'PROGRESS' IN TALKS TO FREE SOLDIER

JERUSALEM -- Israeli President Shimon Peres said on Sunday there has been "progress" in talks to free soldier Gilad Shalit, held captive by Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip for the past three years.

"Everyone knows there is progress and I hope it will come to something," Peres said on Channel 2 commercial television on his return from a trip to Egypt to meet President Hosni Mubarak.

Peres, the only political leader to have spoken about the case in recent days, did not elaborate.

Israeli military censorship has imposed a blackout on information about indirect negotiations brokered by a German intermediary between Israel and the Islamist *Hamas* movement, which holds the 23-year-old.

Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Gabi Ashkenazi defended the censorship on the talks, saying that leaks "have already caused damage."

IRAQI TURKMEN LEADER ASSASSINATED

BAGHDAD -- An Iraqi Turkmen leader was assassinated at his home in the northern city of Mosul on Sunday by gunmen who knocked at his door, then shot him, police and Turkmen sources said.

"Armed men opened fire at Yauz Ahmad Efendi before making their escape," a police official told AFP.

Efendi was a member of the executive committee of the Turkmen Front, Iraq's main Turkmen political party.

OCT. 25 BOMBERS FROM SYRIA: IRAQ

BAGHDAD -- For the first time, Iraq said the bombers who killed more than 150 people in Baghdad on Oct. 25 came from neighbouring Syria, but steer-ed well clear of accusing Damascus of collusion.

"The group came from Syria but we are not accusing Syria again," said government spokesman Ali al-Dabbagh on state television Sunday.

His comments followed the broadcast of confessions from three men said to have plotted the two massive bombings in the Iraqi capital that killed 153 people and wounded hundreds.

U.S. SOLDIER KILLED IN SOUTHERN IRAQ

BAGHDAD -- An American soldier was killed on Sunday in southern Iraq, the U.S. military said, without providing further details.

"A Multi-National Division South soldier was killed in action," the army said, adding that the soldier's name is being withheld pending notification of next of kin and clearance by the Defence Department.

The multinational force now consists only of U.S. troops.

A total of 4,365 American soldiers have died in Iraq since the 2003 U.S.-led invasion, according to an AFP count based on data from the independent icasualties.org website.

PAKISTAN REPULSES MILITANT ATTACK

KHAR -- Pakistani troops on Sunday repulsed an attack by militants on one of their posts in a lawless tribal region, killing 11 rebels, officials said.

Armed with heavy weapons, a group of 30-40 militants launched the attack on an army post in Rashakai area in the Bajaur region, which borders Afghanistan, senior local administration official Adalat Khan told AFP.

IRAN TO 'ANNIHILATE' ISRAELI PLANES

TEHRAN -- A commander of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards said on Sunday that air defence forces would "annihilate" Israeli warplanes if they attacked the Islamic republic, as the forces began five days of war games.

The manoeuvres are aimed at practising responses to simulated attacks on the country's nuclear facilities.

"Their (Israeli) F-15 and F-16 fighters will be trapped by our air defence forces and will be annihilated," Amir Ali Hajizadeh, who heads the Guards' air force wing, told the Fars news agency. An aide to Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei also said on Saturday that if Iran is attacked, it will retaliate against the Israeli metropolis of Tel Aviv.

SOMALI PIRATES HOLDING GIRL, 12

MADRID -- A Spanish trawler captain released by Somali pirates said he is haunted by his failure to save a 12-year-old Ukrainian girl held captive for more than six months, a newspaper reported Sunday.

Ricardo Blach, skipper of the Alakrana, which was freed Tuesday after being held by pirates for some six weeks, told how he saw the young girl aboard another hijacked ship, in logbook extracts published in El Mundo.

During his captivity, Blach boarded a second vessel, the cargo ship Ariana, to hand over supplies including medicines and fuel.

Somali pirates have been holding the Ariana with its Ukrainian crew for around half a year. On board the ship, Blach saw the blue-eyed Ukrainian girl with her mother and her father, who was a member of the ship's crew.

AFRICA

ALGERIA CLEARS GITMO DETAINEES

ALGIERS -- An Algiers court on Sunday cleared two men held at Guantanamo Bay for seven years, according to a legal source.

Faghoul Abdelli and Mohamed Terari were accused of belonging to an overseas terrorist group but were acquitted by the criminal court in Algiers. During the trial, the men said they were "savagely tortured" while in detention at the U.S.-run prison camp in Cuba.

They were alleged to have left Algeria in the early 1990s for Germany, before travelling to Afghanistan, where they were arrested by Pakistani police following the September 11, 2001, attacks in the U.S.

ASIA

SUDAN SENTENCED KIDS TO DIE FOR RAID

KHARTOUM -- Sudan sentenced six children to death for taking part in a Darfur rebel attack on Khartoum but has since promised not to execute them, a top United Nations official said on Sunday.

A Sudanese government official said he could not comment on the case but added child executions were not allowed under the law and there were checks to keep youngsters off death row.

"We have six from the attack on death row," said Radhika Coomaraswamy, the U.N. Secretary-General's special representative for children and armed conflict.

"The government claims that a military panel has found that these were not children.

But the assessment of the international agencies is that they are children."

The United Nations defines a child as anyone under 18.

MINE EXPLOSION DEATHS REACH 104

HEGANG, CHINA -- Relatives of victims of a gas blast at a mine in northeastern China scuffled with police and demanded answers from the owners today as state media put the toll from the country's latest mine disaster at 104.

The explosion at the mine in Hegang in the frigid province of Heilongjiang erupted early Saturday when more than 500 miners were underground, though most were rescued.

A dozen <u>women</u>, relatives of the dead, braved the freezing temperatures on Monday to take their complaints about a lack of information to the mine's entrance, where they argued and scuffled with police and mine security.

Some of the <u>women</u> were taken inside the mine compound, while others were driven away in a large white van. Police moved along bystanders, and formed a line with mine security guards inside the entrance to prevent unwanted visitors.

Men who declined to identify themselves also tried to stop reporters speaking to the <u>women</u>, putting their hands in front of cameras.

The protest came a day after another 11 miners were killed in a explosion at a mine in the southern province of Hunan, Xinhua said. Three were still missing in the latest accident in the world's deadliest major coal mining industry.

Graphic

Photo: Metro TV, Agence France-Presse, Getty Images; FERRY DISASTER OFF INDONESIA: An image taken from Indonesian television shows two survivors floating in the sea before being evacuated by a rescue team after their ferry sank off Karimun, near Indonesia's Sumatra island, on Sunday. Twenty-one people were killed and another 232 were plucked to safety after a ferry sank in heavy seas off Sumatra island, an official said.;

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