

Date and Time: Saturday, May 4, 2024 2:27:00AM EEST

Job Number: 223498470

Documents (100)

1. [*Hizbullah pressure on Israel to exchange prisoners*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

2. [*Hizbullah rockets cannot be fired from buildings*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

3. [*Beirut station keeps Hizbullah message on air*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

4. [*Israel presses Hizbullah as Lebanese flee*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

5. [*Only ruin and rubble left in Hizbullah heartland*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to
Jul 31, 2006

6. [Comment & Debate: Only Hizbullah can defend against an Israeli invasion: Attempts to impose an international force would risk destroying Lebanon 's government and revive the danger of civil war](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to
Jul 31, 2006

7. ['Cowardly' Hezbollah criticized](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to
Jul 31, 2006

8. [Hezbollah hits Israeli positions](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to
Jul 31, 2006

9. [WHAT IS HEZBOLLAH?](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to
Jul 31, 2006

10. [Middle East crisis: A new war, but both sides recall old ones: Exodus from Beirut as Israel tightens vice and vows to disarm Hizbullah](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

11. [*500,000 mass for Hizbullah in Beirut: Shia poor throw their weight behind status quo*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

12. [*Middle East Crisis: Bombed-out buildings and packed-out bars - a tale of two Beiruts: Many wealthy Christians angry towards Hizbullah: But group's resistance has attracted new supporters*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

13. [*Hezbollah takes Israelis hostage*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

14. [*Hezbollah unveils new rocket*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

15. [*Hezbollah takes Israelis hostage*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

16. [*Hezbollah wins by looking strong*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

17. [*Hezbollah reaping the whirlwind*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

18. [*Middle East crisis: Fear and traffic jams Beirut wakes to a familiar nightmare: Airport, roads and bridges hit as blockade tightens: Jubilation over Hezbollah capture of Israeli soldiers*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

19. [*Syria 's exit from Lebanon may boost Hezbollah*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

20. [*Cease the fire? No, take out Hezbollah*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type

News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

21. [*Israeli strikes intensify as Hezbollah launches assaults*](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

22. [*EDITORIAL: Brutal and cussed*](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

23. [*Hezbollah's gamble may hurt Iranian ambitions*](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

24. [*War fans support for Hezbollah*](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

25. [*UN official slams both Hezbollah, Israel*](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

26. [*More Airstrikes as Hezbollah Rockets Hit Deeper*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

27. [*Hezbollah and Israel*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

28. [*Hezbollah's grip will be tough to break*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

29. [*Hezbollah Strong in Lebanese Region Vote*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

30. [*Hezbollah Rains 120 Rockets on Israel*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

31. [*ARTICLE: Eyeing Lebanon*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

32. [REVEALED How Hezbollah puts the innocent at risk They don't care](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

33. [Hezbollah chief bids for role as statesman](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

34. [Leader of Hezbollah Discovers A New Fray: Lebanese Politics](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

35. [Guardian Weekly: International News: Middle East crisis: 'Is Hizbullah here? Only children here,' cries one father: Millions wait in fear. Scores die and many are injured by bombs and missiles](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

36. [REVEALED How Hezbollah puts the innocent at risk They don't care](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

37. [HEZBOLLAH OFFICIAL: WITH OUR SPLENDID ROCKETS, WE CAN DO A GREAT DEAL](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

38. [Tide of Arab Opinion Turns To Support for Hezbollah](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

39. [Hezbollah, Israel forces clash; Guerrilla positions destroyed by air attacks in fighting along disputed Lebanese border](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

40. [Lebanon shares the guilt: Lebanese officials were complicit in Hezbollah's act of war](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

41. [London targeted by Hezbollah bombers Sleeper cells are poised to strike throughout Europe](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to
Jul 31, 2006

42. [Hezbollah and Israelis exchange fire; Shells and rockets were fired across Lebanon 's border. Israeli planes attacked guerrilla posts.](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to
Jul 31, 2006

43. [Mideast skies rain death, destruction: RELENTLESS TOLL: Civilian casualties mount as Israel , Hezbollah trade missiles, rocket fire](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to
Jul 31, 2006

44. [Hezbollah declares election sweep; Officials claim they won all 23 seats in a south Lebanon region bordering Israel](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to
Jul 31, 2006

45. [Empty Silence, Occasional Rocket Blasts, and Anger in a Bombed-Out Hezbollah Town](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to
Jul 31, 2006

46. [Hezbollah, Hamas illustrate power at ballot box; Voters reward groups with strong Islamic ties](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

47. [Middle East crisis: Israeli city shaken by Hizbullah rocket attack: Eight die, many injured in strike on Haifa rail depot Safety fears close schools, shops and factories](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

48. [Hezbollah claims regional victory: Second of four Lebanese elections. Voter turnout heavy in Shiite areas; group hopes to grow its political influence](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

49. [Counter-rally dwarfs protests against Syria : Organized by Hezbollah: In Beirut, thousands show up to denounce U.S.](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

50. [Hezbollah fires new rockets: New weapon can strike deep in Israel . Southern Lebanese villages pounded, but Israelis pull back from Gaza incursion](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

51. [Hezbollah claims win in 2d round of votes in Lebanon ; Results are due today. The guerrilla group fought Israel 's 18-year occupation of south Lebanon .](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

52. [Tide of Arab opinion turning to Hezbollah Top leaders, scrambling for distance from Washington, change their tone](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

53. [Iran restates intention to defend Syria in the event of any attack by Israel](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

54. [Middle East crisis: 'Is Hizbullah here? Only children here.' City mourns air strike dead: Israeli attacks on Lebanon port hit canal near Palestinian refugee camp](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

55. [Poll shows anger at Israeli actions](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

56. [Comment & Debate: Middle East crisis: the view from both sides: Is this a clash between a nation under threat and a terrorist group, or a bid to crush legitimate resistance to occupation and aggression?: This is a fight for our survival](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

57. [Party of God has no regrets](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

58. [Hezbollah's on air but not everywhere](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

59. [World has lost moral bearings in Israel crisis](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

60. [NAVY GO IN CARRIER TO EVACUATE BRITS FROM ISRAELI BLITZ 15 CHILDREN DIE AS JETS POUND VILLAGERS HEZBOLLAH MUST BE REINED IN, SAYS BUSH](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to

Jul 31, 2006

61. [*Half a million pro- Syrian Lebanese march in Beirut*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

62. [*Israelis to unleash 'bunker busters' in hunt for Nasrallah*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

63. [*Israeli army in Lebanon raid*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

64. [*40 dead in Lebanon strikes*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

65. [*Debate on the crisis in the Middle East*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

66. [*Events recall run-up to war of 1967*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

67. [*Israeli army raids Lebanon*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

68. [*Hamas and Big Bird feature at Iranian book fair*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

69. [*Blair calls for UN force in Lebanon*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

70. [*Middle East crisis: Profile: Charismatic leader who triggered crisis*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

71. [*The silent minority*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

72. [Shannon airport case acquittals](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

73. [In Lebanon , UN force overwhelmed](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

74. [Guardian Weekly: The scale of Lebanon 's human crisis emerges: UN launches emergency appeal and asks Israel for safe passage](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

75. [DEATH AT QANA: The world reacts](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

76. [Q & A: Lebanon 's elections](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to
Jul 31, 2006

77. [Opposition in Lebanon replies with huge rally; All sects take part, 'counterbalancing' Hezbollah protest](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to
Jul 31, 2006

78. [Lebanese Sunnis join massive anti- Syrian protest](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to
Jul 31, 2006

79. ['Yo, Blair'](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to
Jul 31, 2006

80. [Israelis shelter while rockets explode](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to
Jul 31, 2006

81. [Deal is short of full Syrian troop withdrawal](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

82. [*' Save us,' she screamed as another shell landed*](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

83. [*Middle East crisis: Israel : Streets empty as civilians in missile range hunker down*](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

84. [*Middle East crisis: Humanitarian crisis: Refugees shelter among victims of earlier conflict*](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

85. [*In Short*](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

86. [*Anger grows as Lebanese seek refuge*](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

87. [*Weck off now, Israel warned*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

88. [*The Wrap: Back off now, Israel warned*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

89. [*Means to an end - MIDDLE EAST IN CRISIS*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

90. [*Lebanese told to flee militant stronghold*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

91. [*Israeli air force pounds Lebanon*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

92. [*Now bombers target Europe*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

93. [*Scale of the human crisis emerges*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

94. [*A moral and strategic mistake*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

95. [*Lose-lose situation*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

96. [*'We had a dream. I'm sorry it didn't work.'*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

97. [*Israeli forces push deeper into Lebanon Secretary of State Rice visits Beirut*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

98. [*MID-EAST CRISIS Iran linked to missile ship attack*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

99. [*'Sitting-duck' Britons in Lebanon wait for the Royal Navy to arrive*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

100. [*Debate on crisis in the Middle East*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

Hizbullah pressure on Israel to exchange prisoners

The Irish Times

July 13, 2006 Thursday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 11

Length: 760 words

Body

MIDDLE EAST: The militant group's seizure of two Israeli soldiers was more than a gesture of solidarity with the Palestinians, writes Michael Jansen

Lebanon's Shia Hizbullah movement opened up a second Arab front against Israel yesterday because the movement could not ignore the challenge posed by Israel's escalating offensive in Gaza.

On the pan-Arab level, Hizbullah cannot claim to be a resistance organisation and sit tight while Israeli troops and tanks operate in Gaza.

Hizbullah's operation was more than a gesture of solidarity with the Palestinians: for some time it has been co-ordinating attacks against Israel with Palestinian factions based in Lebanon.

By mounting a dramatic raid across the Lebanese-Israeli frontier and capturing two Israeli soldiers, Hizbullah increased pressure on the Israeli government to negotiate an exchange of Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners held by Israel for the movement's captives and Cpl Gilad Shalit, snatched by Palestinian on the Gaza border on June 25th.

Israel has rejected the offer made by the head of Hamas's politburo, Khaled Mishaal, and Palestinian prime minister Ismail Haniyeh to release Cpl Shalit if Israel frees minor, female and elderly Palestinian prisoners, ends its offensive and halts assassinations of Palestinian activists.

Mr Mishaal, a hardliner based in Damascus, may have agreed to the deal under pressure from Syria. When the offer was rebuffed, Damascus may have encouraged Hizbullah to mount its operation.

Syria's ally, Iran, which founded Hizbullah during Israel's 1982 invasion and occupation of Lebanon and funded the movement for many years, would also back action.

Syria and Iran would like to see Israel humbled by forcing it to deal with Hamas, shunned by Israel and the international community since it formed a government, and to negotiate a second exchange with Hizbullah.

Syria allows radical Palestinian figures, including Mr Mishaal, to reside and maintain offices in its capital. Iran has a long-standing connection with Palestinian Islamic Jihad and has recently cultivated relations with Hamas.

On the Lebanese level, Hizbullah has to act to justify its defiance of a September 2004 UN resolution calling for the movement to disarm and dissolve its armed wing. Anti-Syrian Lebanese politicians have pressed Hizbullah to

Hizbullah pressure on Israel to exchange prisoners

submit and Damascus has been censured by the US, France and the UN for failing to secure Hizbullah's compliance.

By mounting this dramatic raid, Hizbullah also seized the initiative from Israel which is accused of masterminding assassinations of two Hizbullah officials and three Palestinian activists in Lebanon.

The latest, the murder at the end of May of an Islamic Jihad member and his brother, precipitated an exchange of fire.

Following Israel's military withdrawal from southern Lebanon in May 2000, Hizbullah said it would maintain pressure on Israel for the return to Lebanon of farmland belonging to the village of Shebaa and the repatriation of Lebanese in Israeli jails.

In October 2000, Hizbullah captured three Israeli soldiers on routine patrol and seized in mysterious circumstances an Israeli businessman, Elhanan Tannenbaum.

Although the soldiers died in the raid, Israel agreed in 2004 to exchange 340 Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners for the bodies and Mr Tannenbaum.

One prisoner Israel refused to swap however was Samir Kuntar, a Lebanese involved in a 1979 guerrilla operation in the Israeli town of Nahariya during which three Israelis died.

At the time of the exchange, Hizbullah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah said that Mr Kuntar would be returned in the "next exchange."

Hizbullah has designated 2006 as the year of the prisoner and has pledged to work for the release of all Arab detainees.

Mr Kuntar's freedom was Hizbullah's initial demand after yesterday's operation and Sheikh Nasrallah proclaimed that a prisoner exchange was the only means of securing the soldiers' freedom.

The Lebanese government, which formally supports the Arab right of resistance to Israeli occupation and demands the release of prisoners and the return of the Shebaa farms, has tried to put distance between it and Hizbullah, which is a mainstream political party with deputies in parliament and a minister in the cabinet.

In an effort to counter Israeli and US accusations that Damascus was involved, vice president Farouk Sharaa said Israel had prompted the attack by "provoking" Palestinians and Lebanese by occupying their territory and stated that "the resistance in South Lebanon and among the Palestinian people decides solely what to do and why."

Load-Date: July 26, 2006

Hizbullah rockets cannot be fired from buildings

The Irish Times

July 31, 2006 Monday

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Section: WORLD; Qana Bombing; Pg. 9

Length: 543 words

Byline: Tom Clonan

Body

Hizbullah has fired almost 2,000 missiles into Israel over the last fortnight, killing more than 50 Israelis and forcing almost one million into air raid shelters.

Despite this provocation, however, Israel's response has been sharply criticised as "disproportionate" in many quarters. In the aftermath of the deaths of dozens of innocent Lebanese women and children at Qana yesterday, even the US has urged the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) to modify their responses to Hizbullah's attacks.

IDF spokespeople are maintaining that Hizbullah had been mounting missile attacks on Israeli territory from Qana in recent days. The IDF has claimed it targeted the three-storey house in Qana at 1.30am local time in the belief it contained a Hizbullah "asset".

Any investigation into the targeting of this house will have to consider precisely what kind of Hizbullah "asset" could possibly have been hidden in a modest, low-rise building among the narrow streets of a village such as Qana.

The type of missiles being fired by Hizbullah at Israeli cities cannot be fired from within houses, mosques, hospitals or even UN facilities as has been suggested by the IDF. Due to the massive "back-blast" caused by the rocket launchers of these missiles, they can only be fired from open ground. To fire them from within a building would result in the instant death of the missile crew and probable destruction of the missile before launch. Most of the missiles are truck-mounted and are fired - on open ground - from the backs of flat-bedded trucks or larger four-wheel-drive vehicles.

When fired, these missiles generate an enormous flare of light, heat and sound energy - a heat and light signature which is readily detected by IDF target-acquisition systems. Accurate retaliatory fire can be directed at Hizbullah launch sites by IDF aircraft and ground artillery in seconds. Such a reaction would be considered by international military norms to be proportionate and within the general "rules of engagement".

In these circumstances, having fired their missiles, Hizbullah tends to disperse as rapidly as possible. It is unlikely that a flat-bedded truck with a multilaunch rocket-system mounted on it could be easily and rapidly hidden in a village as small as Qana. Nor is it likely that such a truck-mounted weapon or four-wheel-drive vehicle could easily be hidden in a house such as the one targeted by the IDF yesterday.

The pattern and circumstances of the attack are sinister. With no telltale scorch marks from a Hizbullah missile launch visible near the destroyed house, and with no Hizbullah fighters among the dead and injured, the question remains as to what kind of "asset" the IDF could credibly allege to have been contained within the building.

Hizbullah rockets cannot be fired from buildings

The timing of the attack, taking place as it did during a period of relative calm and not in the immediate aftermath of a **Hizbullah** missile launch, speaks of a punitive strike designed simply to kill members of the Shia community from which **Hizbullah** is drawn and receives its moral support. The targeting of unarmed Shia **women** and children would represent a deliberate targeting of innocent civilians for retaliatory or punitive purposes, and may well constitute a war crime.

Tom Clonan is The Irish Times security analyst.

Load-Date: July 31, 2006

End of Document

Beirut station keeps Hizbullah message on air

The Irish Times

July 21, 2006 Friday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 11

Length: 933 words

Body

MIDDLE EAST: Al-Manar is still broadcasting in spite of Israel's missiles, writes Mary Fitzgerald in Beirut

Somewhere in Beirut, most likely underground, the reporters and presenters of Al-Manar TV are scrambling to put another day's programming together.

The headquarters of the controversial Hizbullah-linked satellite TV station, situated close to the militant group's flattened offices in south Beirut, has been completely destroyed following sustained Israeli attacks, but the station has continued to broadcast from a secret location, believed to be a specially-built bunker.

A scaled back staff churns out a daily mix of news reporting, talk shows and phone-ins interspersed with non-stop replaying of the Hizbullah propaganda videos that have gained the station international notoriety and led to its banning in most of Europe and the US.

Despite the air strikes directed at it, Al-Manar - its name means lighthouse or beacon in Arabic - has broadcast almost continuously since the crisis erupted last week. Hizbullah's leader, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, used the station to first announce the kidnapping of the Israeli soldiers, and most recently appeared on its screens to declare open war against Israel.

"There is the possibility that we can be targeted at any time, so we're keeping staff to the minimum," Ibrahim Mussawi, an editor at Al-Manar, told The Irish Times. "It is very difficult because the main station has been destroyed, yet people are managing. It is as important as ever to keep broadcasting no matter what. This is an important part of the resistance and we are committed to that."

A typical day's schedule in the past week has included the usual Al-Manar fare of Koranic recitations, news bulletins presented by women in neatly pinned Islamic headscarves and solemn studio discussions held against a backdrop of the Lebanese flag.

The high emotions triggered by the Israeli bombardment play out in often tumultuous phone-ins during which angry, emotional and often hysterical viewers denounce Israel and praise Hizbullah with numerous declarations of 'Allahu Akbar [God is Greater]' while presenters nod sagely.

The studio broadcasts regularly fade into fast-paced Hizbullah propaganda montages featuring heavily armed militants drilling, taking part in massive rallies, and carrying out attacks on Israeli forces.

Other clips juxtapose images from the funerals of Hizbullah fighters and leaders with an admiring pan across a line of rocket launchers.

Beirut station keeps Hizbullah message on air

Nasrallah is shown in slow motion, speaking at Hizbullah parades and congratulating fighters. The station also lifts footage from Israeli TV to include in their videos, Hebrew script appearing below pictures of the destruction wrought by Hizbullah rocket attacks in the last week. One montage ends with a Star of David exploding into flames.

One lengthy and recurring clip shows grainy footage of the damage caused by Israeli strikes on the southern suburbs of Beirut, home to Al-Manar until it was bombed last week.

In between, an elderly woman wearing a headscarf stands among the ruined and burning buildings, shaking her fist at the sky and cursing Israel and America. Another montage uses a speech by US president George Bush about bringing democracy to the Middle East as a voiceover for a gruesome series of graphic images showing the dead and injured of the last week.

Hizbullah has long used media as a psychological warfare tool and Al-Manar, since it beamed its first signal in 1991, has played a leading role. During the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, the station was used to glorify Hizbullah's military manoeuvres.

Al-Manar cameramen often travelled alongside Hizbullah fighters, providing dramatic up-close footage of bomb attacks against Israeli forces.

Only too aware of Al-Manar's influence and audience of millions, Israeli forces have directed much of their fire at the station, hitting not only its main offices but also striking two of its transmitters.

The attacks have been criticised by a number of organisations, including the US-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). "The Geneva Conventions prohibit attacks on civilian targets unless they are used for military purposes. While Al-Manar may serve a propaganda function for Hizbullah, it does not appear, based on a monitoring of its broadcasts today, to be serving any discernible military function," the CPJ said.

Hizbullah has denied in the past that it controls Al-Manar, a claim taken sceptically by most, given that a large number of the station's shareholders and staff are members of the militant group. Elsewhere, the station has been accused of anti-Semitism as well as inciting hatred and terrorism. In 2004 the US State Department designated Al-Manar a terrorist organisation and France banned its broadcasts through the European satellite, Eutelsat.

The station provoked outrage some years ago by broadcasting a series titled The Diaspora based on The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, a discredited 19th-century tract that alleges a Zionist conspiracy to take over the world. More controversy followed when one guest declared on a live show that Zionists were trying to spread diseases, including Aids, in the Arab world.

The Israeli government has made no bones about its justification for attacking the station in this week's relentless bombardment of Lebanon, saying it does not consider the station a conventional media outlet.

"The Al-Manar station has for many years served as the main tool for propaganda and incitement by Hizbullah, and has also helped the organisation recruit people into its ranks," it said in a statement.

Load-Date: July 26, 2006

Israel presses Hizbullah as Lebanese flee

Christian Science Monitor

July 21, 2006, Friday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 6

Length: 997 words

Byline: Joshua Mitnick and Nicholas BlanfordCorrespondents of The Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: KIBBUTZ HANITA, ISRAEL AND TYRE, LEBANON

Highlight: Israeli troops crossed into southern Lebanon for the second day Thursday, hoping to create a buffer zone 'clean of Hizbullah.'

Body

Israel continued its precision incursion Thursday over the border into Lebanon as the army seeks to destroy the Hizbullah bunkers and lookout posts that have been used to infiltrate Israel.

Israeli artillery cannons thundered and white plumes of smoke rose up from southern Lebanon as Israeli combat engineers and armored vehicles moved against Hizbullah positions.

After Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000, the Shiite militia unfurled yellow flags over outposts in sight of Israel's border.

By the end of this round of fighting, Israel wants to ensure that the network of positions that allowed a proxy of Iran to peer over the border and collect intelligence is leveled.

"We need to be in a situation that there won't be any Hizbullah infrastructure near the border," says Reserve Gen. Yakov Amidror, the former head of the Israeli army's planning division. "If we don't take care of it now Hizbullah can return and say they never left."

The general speculated that Israel would have to clear positions six miles north of the border.

Israeli media reported Thursday that Israel's army Chief of Staff Dan Halutz said the offensive against Hizbullah will probably last a long time. And in an apparent attempt to counter the impression that Israel's government is reluctant to launch an invasion of Lebanon, Defense Minister Amir Peretz said there would be no constraints placed on the military.

"If they are hitting us from inside Lebanese territory, we will do everything necessary," he said. "It is entirely clear that we intend to settle the battle decisively.

One security official said Wednesday that a security buffer zone is being created that would "be clean of Hizbullah."

The Israeli army is moving in special forces to clear the area of mines before bringing in bulldozers "to flatten the area and remove any sign of Hizbullah outposts and even trees so that Hizbullah can't enter again," he said.

Israel presses Hizbullah as Lebanese flee

There is a reluctance in Israel to repeat the sweeping invasion in Lebanon in 1982 because many are concerned about the lack of an exit strategy. But many believe that Israel's achievement so far will be unfinished if there is no significantly stepped-up ground offensive. "We can't only do it from the air, that's too small," said General Amidor.

Deeper into southern Lebanon, Israeli units are believed to be moving against Hizbullah, who have fired more than 1,000 rockets into northern Israel over the past week, according to Israeli media reports.

"This is a minor operation. We are not talking about moving into and cleaning up southern Lebanon," says Shmuel Bar, a Middle East expert at the Herzliya Interdisciplinary Center, a private university outside Tel Aviv.

In Lebanon's south, some 850 foreign nationals and Lebanese UN employees evacuated Tyre Thursday by sea. Their departure came shortly after Israel warned all residents to move north of the Litani River, about 25 miles from the border with Israel.

With Hizbullah showing little sign of breaking, some see Israel's ultimatum as suggesting that its week-long onslaught against south Lebanon, which has claimed at least 300 civilian lives, could indeed strengthen.

"The foreigners have gone and that means the war will really begin now," says Hassan Bazzi, a port worker.

Hundreds of people crammed into vehicles to undertake the perilous trip northward. Normally a city of 100,000, up to 80 percent of residents have left.

Thursday was calmer than previous days. But for Hassan Fawaz, it was the eighth day he had spent trapped with 25 people in a basement near Tibnine, 12 miles south east of Tyre.

"We are very, very scared," says Mr. Fawaz, a translator with the UN peacekeeping force in south Lebanon (UNIFIL), speaking over a cellphone. "The UN says we should stay where we are, but we have been hearing the sounds of bombing 24 hours a day since it began," he says. "We are praying all the time. Pray for us, too."

UN officials estimate that about 60 percent of the population south of the Litani, which swells to about 290,000 in the summer, has already fled north.

Tyre Mayor Abdul Mohsen al-Husseini is struggling to cope with a humanitarian disaster. Some 20,000 people have fled their villages for the relative safety of the city, which has suffered only one air strike so far. "My house was destroyed two days ago," says Akhlas Jaber who had just arrived from Qana. She points to some of her children. "Are these fighters?" she asks angrily. "Is that baby a fighter? None of the fighters are dead, only the women, children, and sheikhs."

Further north, in Beirut, the city was constructing makeshift shelters and people slept in doorways and parks. The number of people who have fled homes has reached 400,000 to 600,000 people, says Asma Andraos of the newly formed governmental Higher Relief Council.

More than 100 public schools have opened their doors, but they are short on supplies. There are few showers or toilets. Most of the inhabitants are women and children who have only what could carry.

"This is the biggest crisis Lebanon has ever faced. When you have a population of 4 million and half a million are displaced, that's a catastrophe," she says.

Most of the displaced come from the south or the devastated southern suburbs of Beirut. Exact numbers are hard to come by. But "it's rising by the day. Thursday 10,000 people turned up at the schools," Mr. Andraos says.

Ali Makki, an IT consultant who volunteers for the Higher Relief Council, said he had fielded heart-breaking calls on Wednesday. One man called asking for food and mattresses because he had taken in two families. "He said, 'I had only \$10 in my pocket, and now I don't have anything. But I gave these people somewhere to sleep and I can't ask them to leave,'" says Mr. Makki. He was put on a waiting list at the overwhelmed center.

Israel presses Hizbullah as Lebanese flee

* Orly Halpern contributed reporting from Haifa, Israel; Lucy Fielder contributed from Beirut, Lebanon; wire material was used in this report.

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Load-Date: July 20, 2006

End of Document

Only ruin and rubble left in Hizbullah heartland

The Irish Times

July 20, 2006 Thursday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 13

Length: 825 words

Body

MIDDLE EAST: There are no cars on the road to Haret Hreik. The shelling stopped only hours ago and plumes of black smoke still hang in an otherwise flawless blue sky, writes Mary Fitzgerald in Beirut.

In the past, before the bombings, the 15-minute drive from downtown Beirut could feel at times disorientating as the brash glamour of the city centre gave way to austere streets where women in black chadors walked under commemorative portraits of Hizbullah's dead. Haret Hreik has always been a place apart but now more so than ever.

While residents elsewhere in Beirut cower in fear that their neighbourhood could be hit next, most of Haret Hreik's inhabitants have long fled this once teeming district that now bears the brunt of Israel's bombardment.

Eight days of relentless bombing have turned what used to be Hizbullah's Beirut heartland into a ghost town.

Israel's attacks have targeted and destroyed the militant group's headquarters, the home of its leader, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, and its TV station, but also overpasses and roads in Haret Hreik and the wider area known as the dahiya, Beirut's southern suburbs. Scores of buildings, homes and businesses have been reduced to rubble and the number of dead continues to rise. The few untouched streets on Haret Hreik's outskirts are deserted and piled with rubbish. Around one corner a blue and white municipal sign reads "Welcome to Haret Hreik" in Arabic and French. Beyond it devastation.

Half-collapsed tower blocks lean wobbly against each other. The entire outer wall of one apartment building has been ripped off in a blast, exposing rooms that once formed modest homes.

The top of the street is blocked with a row of tyres. It soon becomes apparent why. Heavily armed Hizbullah gunmen, dressed in black, appear silently from doorways at my car's approach. One of them, shaven-headed and paunchy, moves forward and we speak in Arabic. "Shu biddik?" he asks - "What do you want?". He explains gruffly that there is no access to the street and that all inquiries should go through the Hizbullah main office, a rather ridiculous statement given that it was completely destroyed in an Israeli strike earlier this week.

A turn down a narrow alley brings us out in front of one of the many flyovers targeted in the bombardment. This one used to lead to the airport further south but now it lies snapped in two, its exposed girders gaping in the sun. Someone has hung a Hizbullah flag from one of the metal spikes that jut out of the concrete. A green design on yellow background, the flag features an upheld fist clutching an AK 47 in silhouette.

The shutters of some nearby shops have buckled in the blast and the windows in one five-storey building are all blown out. But further down the street there is some semblance of normality, even if it appears surreal in the

Only ruin and rubble left in Hizbullah heartland

circumstances. Zuhair Dakkak has kept his small tyre-fitting shop open throughout the bombings but admits with a grin that business has been slow.

"My family are all at my brother's house in another part of the city," he says, sitting in the shade outside with some friends. "I want to keep this little place open no matter what. Of course I'm worried and frightened, but this is my business. I need to keep it going." A poster of Ayatollah Khomeini hangs lopsided on a lamp-post opposite. His face and that of Nasrallah gaze down on Haret Hreik's ruined streets.

Underneath the Hizbullah leader's turbanned head, a line reads in Arabic: "All of us are resistance." One Israeli missile hit the very centre of a small roundabout nearby, carving a deep crater that has churned up piles of the red Levant soil that lies under Beirut's concrete. Another landed in a street close by, cleaving down the middle of an office building.

Two young men roar past on a motorbike, Hizbullah's yellow banner fluttering from the back. They drive over dozens of mud-streaked leaflets that fell from the sky earlier this week, a warning from the Israelis to get out before they struck yet again. A few minutes away there are more signs of life. An elderly man cycles down an alleyway. A group of men sit on chairs outside a shuttered shop. Every so often a teenage boy in T-shirt and jeans will emerge from a narrow lane.

The last time I walked the streets of Haret Hreik was during the Shia holy day of Ashura earlier this year. Marking the death and martyrdom of the Prophet Muhammad's grandson, Imam Hussein, in Iraq 1,300 years ago, it is one of the most important dates in the Shia calendar and takes on extra significance in this Hizbullah stronghold, suffocated as it is with an ideology that draws inspiration from its "martyred" fighters.

I watched hundreds of thousands of Beirut's poverty-stricken Shia walk barefoot in the pouring rain, pounding their chests and chanting exhortations to the Imam Hussein. During the infrequent lulls, they would yell in unison, "Death to America, death to Israel." This is a conflict that is far from over.

Load-Date: July 26, 2006

**Comment & Debate: Only Hizbullah can defend against an Israeli invasion:
Attempts to impose an international force would risk destroying Lebanon's
government and revive the danger of civil war**

The Guardian - Final Edition

July 28, 2006 Friday

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Section: GUARDIAN COMMENT AND DEBATE PAGES ; Pg. 33

Length: 1090 words

Byline: Jonathan Steele, Beirut

Body

A rally of well-dressed middle-class ladies, perhaps 40 in all, protested outside the UN's offices here on Wednesday, calling for a ceasefire. Representing the Lebanese Council of Women, they handed out leaflets appealing to Kofi Annan to get something done.

They were fewer in number than the recent anti-war demonstrators in Tel Aviv, but more representative. While today's peaceniks in Israel are a lonely, though perhaps slowly growing, minority, the cry for a ceasefire is overwhelming in Lebanon. Why bother to demonstrate when the issue is so obvious?

So my strongest impression of the rally came from Lamia Osseiran, one of its organisers: "The Israelis are radicalising Lebanon, even liberal democrats like me. I took part in last year's demonstrations against Syria. I was a critic of Hizbullah. Now I cannot help but support Hizbullah's fighters who are defending our country." What about Hizbullah's rocket attacks on Haifa? "It's right," she replied. "It's not only Lebanese who should have to suffer. Are human rights available only to Israelis? You can't have winter and summer on the same roof."

Similar views can be heard from many Shias. They have closed ranks behind Hizbullah under the weight of Israeli bombing. Among Sunnis the mood is more complex. The port town of Sidon, south of Beirut, is 90% Sunni. Over the past week it has taken in 70,000 Shia refugees, most of them militant supporters of Hizbullah. They are eager to convince their new Sunni neighbours of the justice of the Hizbullah cause. Whether they have succeeded will not be known until the bombing stops, but every new day of Israel's air strikes on the south lessens the force of the argument that it is all Hizbullah's fault.

The stronghold of anti-Hizbullah feeling is in Lebanon's Christian areas. They have suffered little bombing, and many people argue that Hizbullah is reaping what it sowed. As Youssef Haddad, a young teacher at the American University of Beirut, put it: "If you want a war with Israel, you have to pay the price. I didn't take the decision to attack Israel."

Yet what counts most for now is not the popular reaction but what is happening inside the Lebanese government. Condoleezza Rice seems to have little understanding of the country's political forces. Last year's so-called cedar revolution, with its simplistic "people power" image and the election victory of anti-Syrian parties, apparently led Washington, and alarmingly Downing Street as well, to believe that Lebanon has a radically new and pro-western government.

Comment & Debate: Only Hizbullah can defend against an Israeli invasion: Attempts to impose an international force would risk destroying Lebanon's government a....

In fact, Lebanon has a government of national unity in which Hizbullah has two ministers. Being anti-Syrian is not the same as being anti-Hizbullah, and the election winners from the March 14 movement, which developed after the car-bomb murder of the former prime minister Rafik Hariri, wisely recognised that the party is an authentic part of Lebanese society. It was better to have it in the government rather than outside.

Demonising Hizbullah as terrorists or Iranian and Syrian agents confuses the picture. Moreover, the only party that declined to take part in government, the Maronite Christians led by Michel Aoun, made a tactical alliance with Hizbullah. Since the Israeli attacks Aoun has been one of Hizbullah's most vocal defenders.

While accepting Hizbullah's political weight, no Lebanese politician believes that its military wing can be disarmed against its will. Their view has to be the starting point for any discussion of an international force for southern Lebanon, whether it is a beefed-up version of the current UN force, Unifil, or some sort of "coalition of the willing".

In one sense Israel created Hizbullah. Its occupation of Lebanon after 1982 turned a group of suicide bombers into a resistance movement like Europe's second world war partisans. Expecting foreigners to remove Hizbullah's weapons is a non-starter. Israel is taking heavy casualties in attempting it. How would other foreign occupiers have more success?

Earlier this year Lebanese parties were holding a "national dialogue" to work out, among other issues, how to strengthen the Lebanese army and find a different role for Hizbullah's guerrilla forces. "One option would be to absorb the militia into the Lebanese army and another would be to turn it into a national guard under government control," Michel Faroun, an MP from the March 14 movement, said last week.

The dialogue on Lebanon's defence strategy was only exploratory, since the government agreed that no decisions could be taken until Israel withdrew from the land known as Shebaa farms, occupied since 1967. The latest two weeks of Israeli attacks have reinforced Hizbullah's argument that it cannot disarm until the Lebanese army is stronger.

It is not a question of redeploying the Lebanese army in Hizbullah's place. Only Hizbullah knows the terrain well enough, and has sufficient experience and motivation to defend Lebanon against any future Israeli invasion.

The Lebanese government's position on the idea of an international force is not yet clear. Hizbullah and Amal, the other Shia party, insist that the prime minister, Fouad Siniora, only had a mandate in Rome on Wednesday to call for a ceasefire and a prisoner exchange. Although Siniora expressed support for strengthening Unifil, analysts assume he thought this position was safe as long as the mandate and mission are still to be agreed. If the idea took off he would have time to argue that it can only come in with the consent of Hizbullah and Amal.

Attempts to impose a force would risk destroying the Lebanese government and revive the danger of a civil war. Perhaps this is Israel's intention. It has shown great skill in exacerbating splits between Fatah and Hamas in the Palestinian territories, and may think of doing the same in Lebanon.

European governments should resist the idea. Jacques Chirac has rightly said a Nato force is out of the question since the alliance is seen as "the armed wing of the west". Even without this association, any force would risk being seen as Israel's instrument. Israel's plan seems to be either to use foreigners to do its work or, if that fails, to turn south Lebanon into a giant Rafah - the city in Gaza where it demolished hundreds of homes and created a free-fire zone in which anything that moved was shot.

What Lebanon needs, as Siniora said in Rome, is an immediate ceasefire and an Israeli withdrawal so that refugees can go home before any more destruction is wrought. The world should take its cue from that.

j.steele@guardian.co.uk

Load-Date: July 28, 2006

Comment & Debate: Only Hizbullah can defend against an Israeli invasion: Attempts to impose an international force would risk destroying Lebanon 's government a....

End of Document

'Cowardly' Hezbollah criticized

The Toronto Star
July 25, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A09

Length: 675 words

Byline: Mitch Potter, Toronto Star With files from the Star's wire services

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Israeli troops punched deeper into southern Lebanon yesterday, closing in on the Hezbollah stronghold of Bint Jbail as a senior United Nations official accused the Shiite Muslim guerrilla group of "cowardly blending" among Lebanese civilians.

UN humanitarian chief Jan Egeland, one day after touring bombed-out sections of Beirut and declaring Israeli air strikes "disproportionate," directed equally strong words against Hezbollah, questioning the morality of its fighting style.

"Consistently, from the Hezbollah heartland, my message was that Hezbollah must stop this cowardly blending ... among women and children," Egeland told reporters last night in Cyprus, where he was en route to Israel.

"I heard they were proud because they lost very few fighters and that it was the civilians bearing the brunt of this. I don't think anyone should be proud of having many more women and children dead than armed men."

Egeland's comments came after another intensive day of fighting in the rugged terrain of southernmost Lebanon. Both sides sustained considerable casualties. Among them:

Two Israeli soldiers were killed almost simultaneously in separate incidents, as a Merkava tank was struck by an armour-piercing missile and a second tank rolled over a massive landmine during fighting on the edge of Bint Jbail. Another 14 Israeli troops were injured in clashes, including five believed to be struck by friendly fire from an Israeli attack helicopter.

Two Israeli pilots died when their Apache Longbow helicopter, flying a sortie to support ground troops, crashed and exploded north of the Israeli town of Safed.

At least 10 Hezbollah guerrillas were killed, according to Israel Defence Forces (IDF) estimates. Israeli media reports said the IDF captured two Hezbollah fighters alive and retrieved several bodies of Hezbollah's dead, ostensibly to be used as bargaining chips in prisoner negotiations.

Thirteen Israeli civilians were wounded in salvos of Katyusha rocket fire from Lebanon. Yesterday's 80-plus strikes bring to more than 2,000 the number of short- and medium-range rockets fired by Hezbollah. The IDF estimates it has destroyed another 2,200 rockets in 13 days of fighting. If accurate, the total of 4,200 represents less than half of the estimated 10,000 to 12,000 missiles in Hezbollah's arsenal.

'Cowardly' Hezbollah criticized

Four Ghanaian soldiers, all UN peacekeepers, were wounded when an IDF tank shell struck their position near the village of Rmeish. It was the third incident involving United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) personnel who have been trapped between combatants since July 12.

Lebanese security officials reported three civilian deaths, without specifying where they occurred, and 30 strikes in and around towns and on roads - down from 37 the day before.

As the search for a diplomatic solution intensifies, the toll on displaced civilians is becoming acute, with hospitals in the southern Lebanese port city of Tyre at capacity. It's estimated as many as 750,000 people, or 20 per cent of the population, are on the move.

Northern Israel, too, has emptied, with hundreds of thousands of people, including a third of the population of the port city of Haifa, taking refuge in central and southern areas beyond the proven range of Hezbollah rockets. Still, Israeli officials said half of the industrial factories in the north have now resumed operation, with staff returning to work despite a declaration of martial law.

Israel's overall death toll now stands at 40, with 17 people killed by Hezbollah rockets and 23 soldiers killed in the fighting. On the Lebanese side, officials said 384 people have been killed, including 20 soldiers and 11 Hezbollah guerrillas.

In the Gaza Strip early today, an Israeli air strike aimed at the home of a suspected militant wounded seven neighbours, residents said, a day after Israeli shells killed six people. An estimated 121 Palestinians have died in Israel's nearly month-long offensive in Gaza to force militants to release a kidnapped soldier and halt rocket fire.

With files from the Star's wire services

Graphic

Christopher Furlong Getty images The family of Shimon Glicklich mourn him during his funeral in the northern Israeli city of Haifa yesterday. Glicklich, 60, was killed on Sunday when tiny ball bearings packed inside a Hezbollah rocket pierced the windshield of his car.

Load-Date: July 25, 2006

Hezbollah hits Israeli positions

The Star Phoenix (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)

May 14, 2005 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: NATIONAL; Pg. B8

Length: 410 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: BEIRUT

Body

BEIRUT (AP) -- Hezbollah and Israeli forces exchanged barrages of shells and rockets across the Lebanese border Friday and Israeli warplanes destroyed a series of guerrilla positions in the heaviest clash in months between the two sides.

The exchange began when Hezbollah fighters fired a volley of shells and rockets at Israeli positions in the disputed border area of Chebaa Farms. Israeli forces retaliated with artillery fire against the apparent source of the fire in the Lebanese village of Kfar Chouba.

Witnesses counted at least 45 Israeli shells, and Israel said the barrage hit a Hezbollah position.

Warplanes and helicopter gunships firing missiles then stuck struck three more guerrilla posts, the Israeli military said. An Israeli tank also fired at a Hezbollah observation post near the village of Rmeish, far from the combat near the Mediterranean coastline, witnesses said.

There were no casualties from the Hezbollah fire, an Israeli military spokesperson said. There was no immediate word on casualties on the Lebanese side from the Israeli retaliation.

Hezbollah's Al-Manar television said the attack was in retaliation for Israeli attacks on Lebanese territory, including a hit on civilian houses in Kfar Chouba.

"The Islamic Resistance warns the Zionist enemy that any attack on civilians will be met with the appropriate response," the statement said.

The Israeli military accused Hezbollah of seeking to disturb the calm along the border and warned it will "not allow further provocations of any sort."

"What is most important at this stage is that there is a government in Beirut, and Lebanon is obliged by the UN not to allow Hezbollah or other terror organizations to act," Maj.-Gen. Benny Gantz, Israel's chief of the northern command, told reporters. "And as I said, if we have to respond we will respond."

Hezbollah hits Israeli positions

It was the heaviest clash between Israel and Hezbollah since January, when Hezbollah guerrillas blew up an Israeli bulldozer operating in Chebaa Farms and Israeli warplanes retaliated with strikes that wounded two Lebanese women.

The increase in tensions comes amid political turbulence in Lebanon. Hezbollah's ally Syria withdrew its troops from Lebanon last month, weakening Damascus' hold in the country -- while Hezbollah has been seeking a greater political role.

The Lebanese army has not deployed in the south, allowing Hezbollah to keep security control there since Israeli troops ended their 18-year occupation in the area in 2000.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Associated Press; An Israeli soldier inspects the border between Israel and Lebanon

Load-Date: May 14, 2005

WHAT IS HEZBOLLAH?

St. Petersburg Times (Florida)

July 13, 2006 Thursday

0 Edition

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Section: NATIONAL; Pg. 14A

Length: 404 words

Body

Hezbollah, or Party of God, is a powerful political and military organization of Shiite Muslims in Lebanon.

ITS BEGINNINGS: **Hezbollah** was conceived in 1982 by Muslim clerics after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. **Hezbollah** was formed primarily to offer resistance to the Israeli occupation.

ITS AGENDA: The party calls for the destruction of the state of Israel. It regards the whole of Palestine as occupied Muslim land. **Hezbollah** has sought to further an Islamic way of life, but says that its vision is not an attempt to impose an Islamic society on the Lebanese.

ITS BACKERS: The movement has long operated with neighboring Syria's blessing, protecting Damascus' interests in Lebanon. Iran has long provided arms and money. During the '90s Iran was believed to contribute \$10-million to \$20-million a month.

ITS ATTACKS: In 1983, militants who went on to join **Hezbollah** ranks were behind a suicide bombing that killed 241 U.S. Marines in Beirut. It has been linked to the bombings of two American Embassy buildings and kidnappings of more than 50 foreigners.

TODAY: **Hezbollah** has an important presence in the Lebanese Parliament and has built broad support by providing social services and health care. Its militia refuses to demilitarize.

CHRONOLOGY OF A CRISIS

Israeli-Arab violence since Gaza militants captured an Israeli soldier on June 25.

JUNE 25: Hamas-linked militants tunnel from the Gaza Strip into Israel and attack an army post, killing two Israeli soldiers and capturing Cpl. Gilad Shalit.

JUNE 26: Shalit's captors call for the release of all Palestinian **women** and children under 18 held in Israeli prisons in return for information about the soldier. Israel says it will not bargain.

JUNE 27: Israeli troops move into southern Gaza, where Shalit is believed to be held, and blast bridges and a power station.

JULY 4: Militants in Gaza launch a homemade rocket into the southern Israeli city of Ashkelon. More rocket attacks on Israel follow. No one is seriously hurt.

WHAT IS HEZBOLLAH?

JULY 5: Israeli tanks and troops move into northern Gaza and occupy residential areas, attempting to halt the rocket attacks.

SATURDAY: Israel broadens the Gaza offensive, sending troops and tanks into the eastern part of the strip.

WEDNESDAY: Lebanese **Hezbollah** guerrillas kidnap two Israeli soldiers, and eight Israeli soldiers are killed. Israel responds with a thrust into Lebanon. In Gaza, a home is bombed, targeting Hamas fugitives.

- Times wires

Graphic

MAP

Load-Date: July 13, 2006

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Middle East crisis: A new war, but both sides recall old ones: Exodus from Beirut as Israel tightens vice and vows to disarm Hizbullah

The Guardian - Final Edition

July 15, 2006 Saturday

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Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 16

Length: 1840 words

Byline: Brian Whitaker, Rory McCarthy, Conal Urquhart, Wendell Steavenson, Oliver Burkeman

Body

The three Syrian guest-workers arrived before dawn yesterday, as they did every morning, to set up their coffee stall beneath the flyover, hoping to catch the breakfast trade from early risers in the southern suburbs of Beirut. That was when the bomb blew them away, along with a large section of the road above their heads. Nobody seemed to remember their names: they were just Syrians.

Kaseem Moqdad, who lives nearby, had woken in darkness to the sound of jets overhead. By the time the overpass was bombed he was out in the street in a crowd of people, looking up at the sky. In addition to those killed, he said, 20 people were injured by flying glass and rubble.

A former corporal in the Royal Fusiliers, Mr Moqdad had been back in his native Lebanon for only a year and a half, and Israel's assault on its capital left him with a sense of torn loyalties. "I don't like Hizbullah and I don't hate Hizbullah," he said, in an accent that was half Lebanese, half north London. "We have to fix why people get mad, and we're not treating the cause." He was proud to be British, he said. "But you do get angry with the west. The Israelis don't see that they kill children and women and innocent people."

The Israeli rockets and bombs that struck southern Beirut yesterday appear to have hit their intended targets, mainly roads. Most of those roads, though, are yards away from shops and homes. In the Shia neighbourhoods where the damage was worst some residents sought to salvage what they could, while others just gaped, looking shellshocked.

"I thought they might hit (the Hizbullah TV station) al-Manar," said Ahmad, a barber, standing amid broken glass and torn metal in his shop. "I didn't think they would hit people's homes."

Al-Manar later reported that Israeli warplanes had destroyed the building housing the headquarters of Hizbullah guerrillas in south Beirut. Late last night, an Israeli missile ship off the coast of Lebanon was crippled by an unmanned Hizbullah aircraft rigged with explosives. The ship, which was carrying several dozen sailors, was set ablaze and had to be towed back to Israel. Although there were no official reports of casualties, the Arab satellite channel al-Jazeera said four Israeli sailors were missing following the attack.

A mass exodus from Beirut, mainly of young families, was gathering pace, but the options for escape from Lebanon were evaporating. The capital's airport has been bombed, its sea routes blockaded by warships, and the main highway into Syria is impassable. Air attacks have left 53 people dead so far, as part of an Israeli campaign to win the release of two soldiers captured by Hizbullah militants in cross-border raids on Wednesday. Hizbullah's

Middle East crisis: A new war, but both sides recall old ones: Exodus from Beirut as Israel tightens vice and vows to disarm Hizbullah

counter-assault continued yesterday, with dozens of rockets reaching into northern Israel, and deep into the Israeli psyche.

Civil war reminder

On both sides of the border the recent crisis has fuelled a powerful sense of déjà vu. For the Beirut residents frantically hoarding food, candles, batteries and petrol, the atmosphere recalled the country's 15-year civil war, and the 18-year Israeli occupation they thought had ended in 2000. For some in Israel the historical parallel was with the run-up to the war of 1967, and the prospect of direct military conflict between Israel and neighbouring countries—although some diplomats have voiced the view that the current actions are restrained compared with some Israeli military operations, for example in the 1982 war. For most of the day roads in northern Israel were empty, most people apparently obeying official instructions to stay inside. Many of the houses and apartment blocks have underground bunkers used in past conflicts. In mid-afternoon, in the almost-deserted centre of Nahariya in northern Israel, a Hizbullah rocket landed in the middle of a normally busy avenue, shattering windows in a shopping centre.

"We will continue suffering like this until the military makes them stop," said David Shevli, 32, who closed his grocery store on Thursday and spent yesterday fielding calls from worried friends. "We hope they will terminate them. People who criticise our attacks on Lebanon should come and live here themselves at a time like this. Then they will see." He added: "There will be no peace as long as Hizbullah is there on the border. They say they want Jerusalem. Then they will take Haifa. Give them a finger and they'll take your whole body. Let's erase Hizbullah and everything connected to them."

Israel is still reeling from the double assault on its military prestige by separate attacks from Hizbullah and Hamas, which captured an Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit, a month ago. Not only was the strongest army in the Middle East taken by surprise, but its assailants managed, through capturing soldiers, to prolong the pain.

Most Israelis could ignore the rocket attacks on Sderot and the farming communities that surround the Gaza Strip. The bombardment of northern Israel, home to 300,000 people, is physically much further from Tel Aviv than Sderot is, but psychologically much closer. Many Israelis have visited Haifa, or holidayed in Galilee. While there is little criticism in the media or on the street of Israel's attacks across the border, under the surface there are fears that Lebanon could again become a graveyard for its soldiers.

"This reminds me of a period before the 1967 war that was also characterised by mutual humiliations," said the Israeli historian Tom Segev. "From a military point of view the abduction of the soldiers should not have happened, but instead of admitting this the army uses it as a pretext to destroy the delicate political balance that exists in Lebanon . . . (Hizbullah leader Hassan) Nasrallah is a nasty guy. He's a bit like Saddam. So it's similar to the Iraq situation. We find it easier to relate to war in Lebanon than in Gaza."

Condemnation

The international response to the situation in Lebanon has been broadly condemnatory of Israel, but the US has given cautious backing to the attacks, and the issue seems likely to dominate the G8 summit in St Petersburg, starting today. In New York the UN security council was also expected to discuss the emergency, following an appeal from Lebanon's prime minister, Fouad Siniora, for it to intervene. Kofi Annan, the secretary general, has dispatched a three-person delegation to the region, and the EU's foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, was expected to follow.

But the immediate and longer term impact of the crisis will be measured inside Lebanon. As George Bush cautioned on Thursday, the attacks could destabilise the Beirut government and tear apart a fragile society made up of Shia and Sunni Muslims, Christians, and Druze. Just as problematically, it could also unite the population behind Hizbullah.

In Lebanon, unlike Israel, Hizbullah cannot be dismissed simply as a terrorist organisation. It has two seats in the coalition government, and essentially controls a swath of the south of the country.

Middle East crisis: A new war, but both sides recall old ones: Exodus from Beirut as Israel tightens vice and vows to disarm Hizbullah

If Israel's aim is to drive a wedge between Hizbullah and the rest of Lebanon there are signs it may not be succeeding. The patriotic music now playing on some of the Christian channels is one indication of the way the wind is blowing. Initial anger at Hizbullah has become more muted as attention focuses on the severity of the Israeli bombardment.

Israel's attempt to hold the Lebanese government responsible has also caused resentment. In remarks quoted by the Beirut Daily Star yesterday, the Druze leader, Walid Jumblatt, condemned "the use of violence against a state that did not wage war and does not assume the responsibility for it".

In Beirut yesterday Amal, seeing off relatives on a specially chartered coach to Syria, said she was not a Hizbullah supporter, but did not blame them for the current tragic turn of events. "They've been killing people in Gaza without anybody even raising a voice," she said. "That's why I don't see that Hizbullah is doing something wrong." Asked if the Lebanese government should hand Mr Nasrallah to Israel, her nephew Salah chipped in: "Nasrallah is like your annoying little brother. It is right to punish him, but he's still part of the household."

The Foreign Office last night warned against all travel to Lebanon and urged the 10,000 Britons who live there to "get ready for departure at short notice". The US state department also warned the 25,000 US citizens who live in Lebanon to consider leaving - if they could find a way out - while the Pentagon said it had ships in the region which could be used in the event of an evacuation.

Israel says its blockade of the country is, in part, an attempt to stop the captured soldiers being moved to Iran. The prime minister, Ehud Olmert, yesterday, vowed the offensive would continue until Hizbullah was disarmed. Ronnie Bar-On, the interior minister, said Mr Nasrallah had "issued his own sentence. I doubt if he would be able to find a life insurance agent these days".

The scale of the operation may also be an attempt by Mr Olmert and his defence minister, Amir Peretz, to establish military credibility in the eyes of the Palestinians and other states in the region: neither man has a long track record of military experience, and neither has been in power for more than a few months.

"I believe the current (Israeli) government will see this through, not because they are strong but because they are weak," said Israel Harel, a settler leader. "Neither the prime minister nor the defence minister has a security background, and the army has made tactical mistakes. They all have to prove that they can do what previous governments, who were led by stronger personalities such as Ariel Sharon and Ehud Barak, can do . . . on the surface this is all about freeing captured soldiers. But underneath it is about the prime minister ensuring that he can carry out the next phase of disengagement."

Whatever the logic of the attack, it was playing itself out with painful repercussions yesterday in, among other places, the now inaccessible Lebanese coastal village of Doueir. Israeli planes had been dropping leaflets in Hizbullah strongholds warning residents to evacuate.

"There are air raids all over," said Ahmed Ali, Doueir's supervisor of civil defence. A family with 10 children died just outside the village when missiles hit their home on Thursday night, he said. "Now, in Yater village, there has been a similar attack," Mr Ali said. "We don't know the casualties, because the bodies are still under the rubble."

Not many miles away, at an agricultural community in northern Israel, Amit Bar-on, a computer systems engineer, stood watching smoke from Hizbullah rockets rise into the sky. "It is a very bad situation that Israel has got into," he said. "We don't have a problem with Lebanese society, most of the Lebanese are good Christian people. We have a problem with Hizbullah. We got out of Lebanon six years ago and that was a good strategy. We thought there might be peace, not immediately but perhaps in 20 or 30 years. Now we don't see peace at all."

Load-Date: July 15, 2006

Middle East crisis: A new war, but both sides recall old ones: Exodus from Beirut as Israel tightens vice and vows to disarm Hizbullah

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500,000 mass for Hizbullah in Beirut: Shia poor throw their weight behind status quo

The Guardian (London) - Final Edition

March 9, 2005

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Section: Guardian Foreign Pages, Pg. 14

Length: 874 words

Byline: Brian Whitaker in Beirut

Body

Syria's supporters in Lebanon struck back against the "cedar revolution" yesterday with a show of strength which easily dwarfed anything their opponents have been able to muster.

They drove into Beirut throughout the morning in cars waving Lebanese flags and battered buses decorated with pictures of the Syrian-backed president, Emile Lahoud.

They came from towns and villages all over Lebanon: from the Beka'a valley, the mountains, and the far south. Opponents claimed that some had come from Syria.

Half an hour before the rally was due to begin Riad al-Solh Square, one of the largest open spaces in Beirut, was already full but more kept coming, often several hundred at a time, and overflowed into side roads and on to flyovers.

In the city centre many shops closed and streets were almost deserted. Large numbers of troops stood by on the fringes of the demonstration.

Trying to estimate the number was futile, but half a million would be plausible and a million not unbelievable.

From a distance it resembled a larger version of Monday's opposition rally. As on Monday, they patriotically waved the red and white Lebanese flag and the national anthem blared out several times over the loudspeakers.

But they also waved pictures of the Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad, and his Lebanese counterpart. There were even a few of President Assad's late and largely unlamented father.

Much of the language, unless decoded, sounded similar too: one of the slogans was "Sovereignty, not foreign intervention". But the foreigners referred to were the Americans, the Israelis, the French: anyone but the brotherly Syrians.

Looked at more closely, this was a very different crowd.

The anti-Syrian protesters who have attracted worldwide attention are mostly Christians, plus Sunni Muslims and Druze, and they are generally from the better-off sections of Lebanese society. Yesterday's masses were overwhelmingly the poorer - and historically downtrodden - Shia, who form 40% of the population.

500,000 mass for Hizbullah in Beirut: Shia poor throw their weight behind status quo

Armani sweaters and flashy sunglasses were not to be seen. Some of the women were clad from head to foot in black, Iranian style, a few cradling babies in their arms. Among the men there was more than a smattering of beards.

All, ostensibly, had turned out to show their gratitude to Syria for its efforts in Lebanon.

From a platform in front of the sea-green windows of the UN building the Hizbullah leader Hassan Nasrallah denounced security council resolution 1559 as a "coup" against the Taif accord which ended the Lebanese civil war.

The accord is Syria's justification for its leisurely moves to withdraw troops; the UN, citing resolution 1559, is demanding swift action.

Hizbullah has grievances of its own against 1559, because the resolution also calls for all militias in Lebanon to be disbanded. Although Hizbullah functions nowadays mainly as a political movement, it is loth to abandon its guerrilla wing entirely.

Yesterday it flexed its political muscles with conviction - though the rally was entirely its own. Other supporters included Amal (the other main Shia party), Nasserists, Ba'athists and a long list of obscure organisations.

What cannot be disputed is Hizbullah's ability to organise.

On Monday loudspeaker cars toured the streets of Nabatieh and other towns, calling on citizens to show their "opposition to foreign interference in Lebanese affairs, solidarity for the preservation of national unity and civil peace, objection to the UN resolution 1559, denunciation of the assassination of former premier Rafik Hariri and appreciation for Syria's sacrifices in Lebanon".

What is less clear is how many of those who joined the demonstration yesterday had strong personal feelings about any of these matters, and how many were pressed into attending or simply fancied a day trip to Beirut.

Opposition supporters alleged that influential figures in some towns and villages had strongly encouraged attendance, and there were groups of youngsters at the demonstration who looked like entire school classes.

None of this may be enough to save the Hizbullah militia from eventual extinction, but it plainly has no intention of going quietly.

Syrian troops made further moves yesterday in their planned redeployment to the Beka'a valley, according to witnesses in a mountainous area east of Beirut.

Two senior Lebanese officials said a major redeployment of the Syrian army from central and northern Lebanon would begin late last night and would be completed by March 23.

The Lebanese defence minister, Abdul-Rahim Murad, told the Associated Press: "All the force in the (central) mountains and north will move to the Beka'a as of 10pm tonight."

He said that included the main Syrian intelligence offices in Beirut.

Under an agreement between the Syrian and Lebanese presidents on Monday the redeployment will be followed at an unspecified date by complete withdrawal of the 14,000 Syrian forces personnel in Lebanon.

The controversial intelligence agents will also leave, a Damascus official source told Reuters yesterday.

"The fact that security forces were not mentioned in the (withdrawal) statement is merely because they move along with the armed forces. It is a given. The withdrawal is of all Syrian forces," the source said.

500,000 mass for Hizbullah in Beirut: Shia poor throw their weight behind status quo

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**Middle East Crisis: Bombed-out buildings and packed-out bars - a tale of two
Beiruts: Many wealthy Christians angry towards Hizbullah: But group's
resistance has attracted new supporters**

The Guardian - Final Edition

July 22, 2006 Saturday

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Section: GUARDIAN HOME PAGES; Pg. 4

Length: 1195 words

Byline: Suzanne Goldenberg, Broummana

Body

In the mountain resorts above Beirut, where well-off Lebanese have retreated, as they do every summer, to escape the season's heat, you can almost forget there is a war on. Lebanese women in tank tops and tight jeans weave through traffic that is thicker than on any city street, and while the southern suburbs of Beirut shudder under Israeli bombs, the hills here reverberate to the sound of hip-hop.

Hotels are booked up. Cafes are packed, and in the bars alcohol flows well into the night. Mating rituals for college students are in full swing. Overhead, hidden by heavy grey clouds, comes the roar of Israeli warplanes on bombing runs. There are few other outward signs of the war that is engulfing southern Lebanon and the poor Shia suburbs of Beirut. No troops, no discernible sign of panic.

But even at this remove, there is no escape from a conversation that has consumed Lebanon since this conflict began with the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers by Hizbullah 10 days ago. Was Hizbullah, a private militia, justified in plunging the country into a war with Israel? Will America come to the aid of a government whose election last year was claimed as a triumph for the Bush administration? And, with more than 330 people dead and 500,000 in flight, what price must Lebanon pay before the fighting ends?

In this wealthy Christian resort town north-east of Beirut, there is a burning anger at Hizbullah's leader, Sheikh Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, for reigniting the conflict with Israel after six years of relative quiet. This was supposed to be the year that Lebanon at last emerged from the wreckage of war. After sectarian conflict and nearly 20 years of occupation by Israel and Syria, Lebanon was a sovereign country, led by the first government to be elected without outside interference in 30 years. Beirut had risen from the rubble, rebuilt by the late prime minister, Rafiq Hariri. Arab tourists were jetting in; foreign investment was up - Ivana Trump was even toying with a project for Beirut. Now all those prospects are destroyed. "This is the worst summer ever," says Tania Khoury, an interior design student.

Others do not even bother to disguise a fury that seems directed almost equally at Hizbullah and Israel. "I can't support Hizbullah any more," says Ghada Kharsa, who is in the third year of a communications degree. "I think they don't have the right to make a decision on behalf of all the Lebanese people. They chose this. It wasn't all of Lebanon that chose it."

Middle East Crisis: Bombed-out buildings and packed-out bars - a tale of two Beiruts: Many wealthy Christians angry towards Hizbullah: But group's resistance ha....

Across the hills, in another Christian town, Baabda, the local mayor, Antoine Khoury, started the day picking his way across a carpet of shattered window panes and tiny gilt-edged coffee cups. Overnight the Israelis had bombed one of the two roads that stretch across the valley in front of the municipal building.

The other road was left intact - a bit of military planning the mayor could make no sense of yesterday. Baabda has no strategic targets, controls no key roads, and its population of 60,000 is almost entirely Christian. "We can't understand. Why Baabda?" Mr Khoury said. "We are all Christians. We are not participating in this. There are no fighters here, no supporters for the war."

As the toll on Lebanon of this conflict becomes more apparent, criticism of Hizbullah has begun to come out into the open. But for the first few days under bombardment, the ferocity of Israel's attack precluded any notion of criticising Hizbullah for dragging Lebanon into a fight that took its elected government and its people by surprise.

At the airport, Israeli warplanes staged repeated bombardments. In the Dahiya, the southern suburbs of Beirut dominated by Hizbullah, six- and eight-storey blocks of flats came tumbling down. Huge craters gouged out the roads, and the spans of concrete bridges extended uselessly into space. The refugees began to pour in from the south, bewildered and exhausted, crouching on their allotted blocks of foam rubber in city schools. Some began occupying vacant flats or sleeping in city parks.

The conflict could no longer be said to be confined to Hizbullah and Israel, and a growing number of people - who were not natural supporters of Sheikh Nasrallah - began to agree with the movement's steadfast followers in the southern suburbs: Israel's war was against all Lebanese. "The Lebanese resistance of Hizbullah is the main target of Israel, but it has now engulfed everyone," said Ali Nouredine, a clothing merchant in the Dahiya. National unity was paramount.

There was another lure too for a country which has watched 50 years of failure by Arab armies against Israel. For many Lebanese, the sight of Hizbullah wreaking havoc on Haifa with repeated missile barrages was an intoxicating one. For Rayan Tarraf, a television producer in Beirut, who, though Shia, had never supported Hizbullah, the turning point came on the third day of the bombardment.

In a broadcast on the Hizbullah station Sheikh Nasrallah made one of his ritualised promises to deliver Israel a "surprise". Moments later, in his apartment block overlooking the Mediterranean, Mr Tarraf heard an explosion. "I ran to the balcony, and I looked and there was a fire in the sea, and I felt excited and encouraged. I had goosebumps all over my body. You feel happy when someone does that for you. That is why I converted. I flipped right away."

A few days on, the effects of Mr Tarraf's conversion appear to be wearing off. It is becoming increasingly uncertain where Sheikh Nassrallah's bravado will end, and Lebanese are beginning to talk about a day of reckoning for the Islamist movement once the war is over.

"After this finishes, I think Hizbullah will have less leverage on the government than it has now," says Salah al-Harake, a politician from a powerful Shia family who used to represent the Dahiya in the Lebanese parliament. The cost of allowing Hizbullah to maintain its militia is too great for Lebanon to bear. "We have to face the reality. Will we be able to sustain the economy? What relationship can we have with the rest of the world?"

Meanwhile, the Lebanese government appears to have recovered somewhat from the surprise of Hizbullah's attack. Earlier this week the Lebanese prime minister, Fouad Siniora, summoned ambassadors to his office and accused them of abandoning the country, barely a year after hailing his government as an example of democracy in the Middle East. "No government can survive on the ruins of a nation," he told them.

That increasingly seems the fate of Mr Siniora's government, which is haunted by its failure to disarm the militia. And the Lebanese, while temporarily impressed by Hizbullah's military might, are perhaps less likely to feel as tolerant towards the militia once the war is at an end.

Middle East Crisis: Bombed-out buildings and packed-out bars - a tale of two Beiruts: Many wealthy Christians angry towards Hizbullah: But group's resistance ha....

"It's a big threat. This is the only armed political party and as we are seeing after 10 days of bombing, they still have rockets and they still have missiles," says Jad Akhaoui, one of the leaders of the Cedar Revolution. "What if they decided to turn these missiles against the Lebanese population?" He added: "We are feeling really like hostages from one side by Hizbullah, and from Israel on the other."

guardian.co.uk/lebanon >

Load-Date: July 22, 2006

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Hezbollah takes Israelis hostage

The Australian (Australia)

July 13, 2006 Thursday

All-round First Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 10

Length: 721 words

Byline: Martin Chulov Middle East correspondent

Body

MATP

IRANIAN-backed **Hezbollah** militants have kidnapped two Israeli soldiers in a cross-border raid that threatens to drag Lebanon and Syria into all-out war with Israel.

The Israeli Defence Force last night confirmed two soldiers had been seized by **Hezbollah** guerillas during a rocket barrage and immediately launched a ground invasion of southern Lebanon to find them. As many as seven Israeli soldiers are believed to have been killed in the strike.

The attack takes to three the number of Israeli soldiers being held hostage and is set to spark the most significant flashpoint in the western Middle East in more than a decade.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert declared the guerilla attack to be "an act of war" and vowed the response would be "very, very, very painful".

Less than an hour after the soldiers were seized, Israeli warplanes attacked three bridges in southern Lebanon to prevent the guerillas from taking their captives north.

Hezbollah positions destroyed by artillery three months ago were also under heavy attack. A rapid-deployment reserve division of 6000 troops headed for Israel's northern border last night ahead of a mooted full-scale invasion into parts of Lebanon from which the Israeli military withdrew in 2000.

Israel was preparing for an all-out assault against **Hezbollah**'s supporters, which could include targets in Syria and Beirut that provide the Shia-backed militants with weapons and money. Israel has previously said **Hezbollah**'s main benefactor, Iran, is not out of reach of its warplanes.

Mr Olmert warned: "There are elements from the north and from the south who threaten our stability and threaten to test our determination.

"They will fail and will pay a heavy price for their deeds."

He added that the raid was not an act of terror but an attack by a sovereign state on Israel.

The Lebanese Government, of which **Hezbollah** is a part, "must bear full responsibility", he said.

Hezbollah takes Israelis hostage

Israel's cabinet was to meet overnight to approve additional military activity in Lebanon, Mr Olmert said.

Six Israeli soldiers were injured in the Hezbollah assault, five civilians were wounded and a tank destroyed by a landmine.

The operation was seen as a diversion from the two-week siege of Gaza designed primarily to find a third Israeli soldier, Corporal Gilad Shalit, who was seized from a tank by Hamas-aligned militants late last month.

It came hours after the Palestinian militant most wanted by Israel for more than a decade apparently escaped a fourth attempt to kill him after surviving a strike by an F-16 jet on a building in central Gaza.

The 227kg bomb dropped at daybreak on Wednesday Israeli time killed six people and wounded 36 others, including civilians. But Mohammed Deif, the head of Hamas's military wing, the Izzedin al-Qassam Brigades, is believed to have fled the building.

Israel claims he was wounded in the strike. However, a spokesman for Hamas's military wing strongly denied the claim.

After the border fight, Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Mark Regev said: "For the second time in two weeks, we have been attacked in an unprovoked manner by jihadist groups.

"This underscores their true agenda. We withdrew to UN-sanctioned borders in accordance with international agreements and we continue to be attacked.

"This is proof that what we are seeing here is a continued push by global jihadi groups bent on Israel's destruction."

Within hours of seizing the captives, Hezbollah released a statement saying it was prepared to trade their freedom for the release of Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners being held in Israeli jails. "In the frame of our will to free Islamic resistance prisoners and detainees, we kidnapped two Israeli soldiers on the northern border of Palestine," the statement said.

"The two soldiers have been taken to a safe place."

Hamas officials have tried for the past two weeks to trade Corporal Shalit for female and juvenile prisoners jailed in Israel, but their attempts have been met with staunch refusals by the Israeli cabinet. Israel has repeatedly accused Syria of backing the Damascus-based head of Hamas's politburo, Khaled Meshaal, who it accuses of being behind the Shalit kidnapping.

Over the past two years, it has also blamed Syrian President Bashar al-Assad for sponsoring Hezbollah.

Lebanon and Syria remain sworn enemies of the Jewish state.

Load-Date: July 12, 2006

Hezbollah unveils new rocket

The Toronto Star
July 29, 2006 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A12

Length: 929 words

Byline: Kathy Gannon, ASSOCIATED PRESS With files from Canadian Press

Dateline: NAQOURA, Lebanon

Body

A top UN peacekeeping official said yesterday he feared the war in southern Lebanon would continue until late August and voiced fears Israel would flatten Lebanon's southern villages and destroy Tyre "neighbourhood by neighbourhood" if Hezbollah rockets keep landing in the Jewish state.

At UN peacekeeping headquarters in Naqoura, barely a stone's throw from Israel, political affairs officer Ryszard Morczynski said Tyre would become a target of intense Israeli attacks because Hezbollah was firing rockets from the city's suburbs into Israel's northern port of Haifa.

Hezbollah boasted yesterday of a new kind of rocket it called the Khaibar-1 that it fired deeper inside Israel than the hundreds of others since the outbreak of fighting more than two weeks ago.

"I have no doubt that Israel will flatten Tyre if civilian casualties continue in Haifa," Morczynski said. "I think Israel is contemplating flattening villages, flattening every single house to deny Hezbollah any advantage of urban fighting in the streets."

He estimated that 80 per cent of the roughly half-million people who live in southern Lebanon have already fled the embattled area. He also said he feared the civilian death toll in Lebanon was more than 600, well more than the official count of 400-plus.

The guerrillas said they used the Khaibar-1 - named after the site of a historic battle between Islam's Prophet Muhammad and Jewish tribes in the Arabian peninsula - to strike the Israeli town of Afula.

"With this, the Islamic Resistance begins a new stage of fighting, challenge and confrontation with a strong determination and full belief in God's victory," Hezbollah said in a statement.

Five of the rockets crashed into empty fields outside Afula, causing no injuries. Still, Israel deployed a Patriot interceptor missile battery north of Tel Aviv, believing the area could be in range of Hezbollah's barrages.

Israel said the Khaibar-1 rockets were renamed, Iranian-made Fajr-5s. They have four times the power and range of Katyusha rockets, making them able to hit Tel Aviv's northern outskirts.

The United Nations decided to remove 50 observers from the Israeli-Lebanon border, locating them instead at better-protected posts with 2,000 lightly armed UN peacekeepers. The move comes days after Israeli bombs hit a

Hezbollah unveils new rocket

UN observer station, killing three observers, while a fourth - Canadian Maj. Paeta Hess-von Kruegener - is missing and presumed dead.

About 12,500 Canadians have fled Lebanon, out of about 40,000 believed to be in the country, and Foreign Affairs officials said the evacuation effort is in its final phase. Ships ferrying Canadians out of Beirut yesterday and today were the last planned daily trips.

Senior federal officials stressed they will still assist Canadians in Lebanon who may want to leave. Officials say they are in contact with several Canadians who have not been able to get to Canadian-leased ships because of ongoing violence in southern Lebanon, but they are not sure of the total.

During a visit to Montreal on Thursday, Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day alluded to the fact that some of the people seeking to flee Lebanon had been barred from coming to Canada after a security screening.

A spokesperson for Day refused yesterday to elaborate on the number of people who were denied passage, saying only that the number was small and that "we are following the same procedures we normally would for anyone trying to gain entry," the Toronto Star's Sean Gordon reports.

In Beirut, **Hezbollah** signed on to a peace package that includes strengthening an international force in south Lebanon and disarming the guerrillas, the government said.

The agreement, reached at a cabinet meeting, was the first time that **Hezbollah** has agreed to a proposal for ending the crisis that includes the deploying of international forces.

The package falls short of U.S. and Israeli demands in that it calls for an immediate ceasefire before working out details of a force and includes other conditions. But European Union officials said it forms a basis for an agreement.

Late yesterday, the Israeli army said it killed 26 **Hezbollah** guerrillas in fighting for the Shiite town of Bint Jbail. The army did not report Israeli casualties, but Israel Radio said six soldiers were wounded.

Eight Israelis died fighting for control of Bint Jbail on Wednesday, the highest toll of the campaign which began after **Hezbollah** guerrillas killed three soldiers and captured two others in a cross-border raid into Israel. The war with **Hezbollah** opened a second front for Israel, which was already battling Palestinians in Gaza after Hamas militants seized a soldier in a cross-border raid June 25.

Israeli tanks and troops pulled back to the Israel-Gaza border yesterday after a deadly incursion that killed 30 Palestinians over three days.

With medicine, food and shelter trickling into southern Lebanon, the UN called for a three-day truce to let help aid get in and enable thousands of civilians trapped in the heat of the battle to get out - a call that got no response.

One Israeli air strike flattened a house in the village of Hadatha, and six people inside were believed dead or wounded, the Lebanese state news agency reported.

Missiles destroyed three buildings in the village of Kfar Jouz near the town of Nabatiyeh, apparently targeting the apartment of a **Hezbollah** activist. A Jordanian was killed in a nearby house, and the blasts collapsed a shelter, killing a Lebanese husband and wife.

Three **women** were killed in strikes on their homes in other southern villages.

With files from Canadian Press

Load-Date: July 29, 2006

Hezbollah unveils new rocket

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Hezbollah takes Israelis hostage

The Australian (Australia)

July 13, 2006 Thursday

All-round Country Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 10

Length: 719 words

Byline: Martin Chulov Middle East correspondent

Body

MATP

IRANIAN-backed **Hezbollah** militants yesterday kidnapped two Israeli soldiers in a cross-border raid that threatens to drag Lebanon and Syria into outright conflict with Israel.

The Israeli Defence Force last night confirmed two soldiers had been seized by **Hezbollah** guerillas during a rocket barrage and immediately launched a ground invasion of southern Lebanon to find them. At least three Israeli soldiers are believed to have been killed in the strike.

The attack takes to three the number of Israeli soldiers being held hostage and is set to spark the most significant flashpoint in the western Middle East in more than a decade. Less than an hour after the operation, Israeli warplanes attacked three bridges in southern Lebanon to prevent the guerillas from taking their captives further north.

Hezbollah positions destroyed by artillery three months ago were also under heavy attack. Reinforcements were being called to the northern border ahead of a mooted full-scale invasion into parts of Lebanon from which the Israeli military withdrew in 2000.

Israel was preparing for an all-out assault against **Hezbollah**'s supporters, which could include targets in Syria and Beirut that provide the Shia-backed militants with weapons and money. Israel has previously said **Hezbollah**'s main benefactor, Iran, is not out of reach of its warplanes.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert warned: "There are elements from the north and from the south who threaten our stability and threaten to test our determination.

"They will fail and will pay a heavy price for their deeds."

Six Israeli soldiers were injured in the **Hezbollah** assault, five civilians were moderately wounded and a tank destroyed by a landmine. The operation was seen as a diversion from the two-week siege of Gaza designed primarily to find a third Israeli soldier, Corporal Gilad Shalit, who was seized from a tank by Hamas-aligned militants late last month.

Hezbollah takes Israelis hostage

It came hours after the Palestinian militant most wanted by Israel for more than a decade apparently escaped a fourth attempt to kill him after surviving a strike by an F-16 jet on a building in central Gaza.

The 227kg bomb dropped at daybreak on Wednesday Israeli time killed six people and wounded 36 others, including civilians. But Mohammed Deif, the head of Hamas's military wing, the Izzedin al-Qassam Brigades, is believed to have fled the building.

Israel claims its chief quarry was wounded in the strike, which military officials said targeted a key Hamas hideout. However, a spokesman for Hamas's military wing last night strongly denied the claim.

After the border fight, Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Mark Regev said: "For the second time in two weeks, we have been attacked in an unprovoked manner by jihadist groups. This underscores their true agenda. We withdrew to UN-sanctioned borders in accordance with international agreements and we continue to be attacked.

"This is proof that what we are seeing here is a continued push by global jihadi groups bent on Israel's destruction."

Within hours of seizing the captives, Hezbollah released a statement saying it was prepared to trade their freedom for the release of Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners being held in Israeli jails.

"In the frame of our will to free Islamic resistance prisoners and detainees, we kidnapped two Israeli soldiers on the northern border of Palestine," the statement said. "The two soldiers have been taken to a safe place."

Hamas officials have tried for the past two weeks to trade Corporal Shalit for female and juvenile prisoners jailed in Israel, but their attempts have been met with staunch refusals by the Israeli cabinet. Israel has repeatedly accused Syria of backing the Damascus-based head of Hamas's politburo, Khaled Meshaal, who it accuses of being behind the Shalit kidnapping. For two years, it has also blamed Syrian President Bashar al-Assad for sponsoring Hezbollah. Lebanon and Syria remain sworn enemies of the Jewish state. The al-Aqsa Martyr's Brigades last night released a statement praising the Hezbollah operation.

"This heroic action returned the smiles to our faces and joy to the hearts of the Palestinian nation, especially those being massacred by Israel in Gaza," said a spokesman.

"We are proud of our Lebanese brothers and thank them for the joy they have given us."

Load-Date: July 12, 2006

Hezbollah wins by looking strong

The Toronto Star
July 31, 2006 Monday

Copyright 2006 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A14

Length: 381 words

Byline: Sally Buzbee, Associated Press

Dateline: CAIRO, Egypt

Body

It's hard to defeat a group of extremists who can mingle among civilian supporters and are pros at propaganda. Israel's military faces the same conundrum the United States has encountered elsewhere - finding that air strikes are costly in civilian deaths and public support, while ground attacks are risky for soldiers.

That does not mean Hezbollah is winning militarily.

But the guerrilla group has so far avoided a knockout by Israel, even as international pressure for a ceasefire has grown. And in the war of perceptions, Hezbollah has only to look strong against Israel and make Israel look bad to win across much of the Arab world, many analysts say.

That was brought into stark focus yesterday when an Israeli air strike flattened a house in southern Lebanon, killing more than 50 people, mostly women and children.

Israel apologized for the deaths and blamed Hezbollah, accusing it of using civilians as human shields.

But the backlash against Israel and its ally America was swift: Lebanese officials reacted in fury and Beirut protesters attacked a UN building and burned American flags. At an emergency UN Security Council meeting, Secretary General Kofi Annan said he was "deeply dismayed" his previous calls for a ceasefire had been ignored.

The United States knows this scenario well from Iraq and elsewhere: Pictures of dead children and women killed in air strikes can hurt support even among friends.

Yet the alternative for Israel, if it wants to push back Hezbollah, is either a full-scale ground war or a lengthy series of smaller-scale incursions to eliminate the group's positions along the Israeli-Lebanese border.

For now, Israel says it has no plans for a big land invasion, still leery from its costly occupation of south Lebanon from 1982 to 2000.

But the smaller incursions have brought relatively high Israeli casualties and low apparent impact: UN observers in south Lebanon say Hezbollah's supply of rockets remains adequate to fight, and most of its leaders have survived.

Hezbollah's strength comes from its ability to hide fighters and weapons - both among the populace and in bunkers and tunnels - who can pop up once the Israelis pass by and fire more missiles toward Israel. That ability springs from its wide support among people in southern Lebanon.

Hezbollah wins by looking strong

Analysis

Load-Date: July 31, 2006

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Hezbollah reaping the whirlwind

The Guardian (Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island)

July 21, 2006 Friday

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Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. A6

Length: 773 words

Byline: Jonas, George, National Post

Body

The Arab/Muslim side in the Middle East conflict follows what has become a three-step formula. One, sow the wind. Two, reap the whirlwind. Three, complain about the weather.

Amazingly, much of the world listens.

The facts in this latest round are straightforward. On Wednesday, July 12, Hezbollah, an Iranian- and Syrian-backed terrorist organization operating in southern Lebanon, unleashed a sudden and totally unprovoked attack into Israeli territory. Scores of Katyusha rockets rained down on such Israeli towns and villages as Nahariya, Zefat, Rosh Pina and the port city of Haifa. As Israel's UN ambassador, Dan Gillerman, reported to an emergency session of the Security Council, in a period of 48 hours more than 500 Katyushas and mortar shells were fired into the northern part of Israel. Initially they killed two civilians and wounded hundreds more, including many women and children. And while this barrage was going on, Hezbollah terrorists infiltrated Israel across the Lebanese border. They killed eight soldiers and captured two more, taking their captives deep into Lebanon.

I don't think that "sowing the wind" is too strong a term to describe such an action.

There's no country on Earth that wouldn't react to an assault of this kind with military measures if it had the capacity to do so.

React, that is, not necessarily in retaliation, but in defence. Whether a thrust like Hezbollah's should or shouldn't go unpunished may be debatable; what is beyond debate that it can't go unparried, and the only way to parry rocket and artillery thrusts is to destroy the batteries and launch pads from which they're fired.

In the words of Ambassador Gillerman: "Israel had no choice but to react, as would any other responsible democratic government. Having shown unparalleled restraint for six years while bearing the brunt of countless attacks, Israel had to respond to this absolutely unprovoked assault whose scale and depth was unprecedented in recent years."

Which brings us to the issue of proportionality. Granted that Israel "had to respond," as its ambassador put it, did it have to respond so strongly? Did it have to respond with a massive bombardment of Lebanon's infrastructure? Did it have to attack such seemingly non-military targets as roads, airports, apartment buildings, villages, inevitably causing civilian casualties?

There are long answers, but the short answer is: You bet.

Hezbollah reaping the whirlwind

Proportionality is smuggled into the moral debate mainly by those who worry about the consequences of their misdeeds, and look for insurance that no matter what they do, even if it's to deliberately fire rockets at civilians, they'll only suffer so much punishment for it. Proportionality certainly isn't the biblical injunction against misdeeds. The Lord didn't say: Sow the wind and you'll reap a proportionate wind. He said: Sow the wind and you'll reap the whirlwind. **Hezbollah**, being ostensibly men of God, ought to know this.

God's injunction aside, proportionality is a bizarre demand in any but a sporting contest. If taken literally, it would call for modern armies to scrap their smart bombs and fight with nothing except weapons and tactics available to Saddam and Slobodan. Such rules of engagement would have the coalition forces still battling Iraq's Republican Guards with Soviet-era tanks. Even more importantly, such a requirement would reward the most cynical ruses and deceptions, putting the side that is trying to observe the Geneva conventions at a disadvantage.

If a party used ambulances to transport ammunition, and as a consequence the other party started firing at ambulances, which party would be in breach of the Geneva conventions? This isn't an abstract question. **Hezbollah** and Hamas routinely employ such deceptions, then cry crocodile tears if Israel refuses to fall for them. As Ambassador Gillerman put it at the UN: "Many of the long- range missiles that have hit Israeli towns were launched from private homes with families residing inside, where a special room was designated as a launching pad, with the family playing host to the missile."

Terrorists use Arab families as human shields to launch rockets from their homes at Israeli families. They regard it as a win-win proposition: If Israel worries about collateral damage, **Hezbollah**'s launch pads are safe, and if Israel rejects this kind of moral blackmail, the terrorists create more "martyrs" and score more points in the propaganda war.

It worked in the past, but this time Israel seems willing to let **Hezbollah** win the propaganda war. What it won't let **Hezbollah** win is the war. Watch for the whirlwind.

George Jonas writes for the National Post.

Load-Date: July 21, 2006

Middle East crisis: Fear and traffic jams Beirut wakes to a familiar nightmare: Airport, roads and bridges hit as blockade tightens: Jubilation over Hizbullah capture of Israeli soldiers

The Guardian - Final Edition

July 14, 2006 Friday

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Section: GUARDIAN HOME PAGES; Pg. 3

Length: 949 words

Byline: Wendell Steavenson, Beirut

Body

Much of Beirut had slept for only a few hours when several blasts rang out from the city's international airport in the early hours of yesterday morning.

Khalil, a Shia driver, sat at dawn with his wife and two daughters drinking coffee and watching the black puffs of smoke rise over the runway. He was dismissive of the attack: 'The shelling will stay for two days but our dignity will last much longer.'

Khalil lives in Ouzai, a ramshackle slum next to the airport that is filled with Shia displaced from the south during the war. He echoed many Lebanese Shia, defiant and almost jubilant after **Hizbullah**'s successful ambush of an Israeli border patrol and capture of two soldiers.

In Mamoura, a Shia neighbourhood decked with portraits of people considered martyrs in the fight against Israel over the past 20 years, the Jaber family were trying to decide whether to leave for their house in the mountains.

Their daughter, Saana, a student, was sitting in front of a large-screen TV tuned to al-Jazeera with a packet of cigarettes, a mobile phone and a torch on the table in front of her. She said she was surprised the Israelis seemed hesitant in their retaliation or almost scared but she had been up all night. 'I'm nervous,' she said, 'I don't know why. Probably I'm just being paranoid.'

A few minutes later news came that Israeli warships positioned off the Lebanese coast were threatening to shell Dahiyeh, the staunch **Hizbullah** neighbourhood a few blocks away and had called for civilians to evacuate. Her brother showed off his nicotine-stained fingers from chain smoking all day and said he would stay in the apartment. Half an hour later she texted that they were all

leaving. 'I feel like a sell-out for running up to where it's safe,' she said.

As news of the threat spread, people in Shia neighbourhoods became increasingly stressed, cars bumped into each other and fights broke out between people queueing for petrol and bread. Most families stayed but some piled into minibuses and headed for relatives in Tripoli to the north or out to the Bekaa Valley.

Middle East crisis: Fear and traffic jams Beirut wakes to a familiar nightmare: Airport, roads and bridges hit as blockade tightens: Jubilation over Hizbullah c....

Hussein Nablisi, the Hizbullah press officer, denied there was any panic. 'This is usual,' he said. 'When people feel threatened, they want to take care of their basic needs.' He made his remarks hastily, fielding several telephone calls. Would the situation escalate? 'Everything depends on the Israelis,' he said. 'They said they

wanted to hit Beirut and Dahiyeh so we threatened to hit Haifa.'

The Israeli attack on the airport was a surgical and calibrated strike, said Jamil Mrowe, owner of the Lebanese English language newspaper, the Daily Star.

They had been careful to puncture only reasonable holes in the runway, not to destroy it, but to make it unusable, and in doing so destroy, with one blow, the lucrative summer tourist season, while holding the Lebanese government responsible for Hizbullah's actions. He was worried about escalation: it's a cliffhanger; it could go either way.

By nightfall, more than 50 people had been killed including a family of 10 and more people were injured. Hussein, a student who said he was close to Hizbullah's fighters, was defiant. 'My mother said, even if they kill us all, we won't give them their two soldiers.'

On the Christian side of town the atmosphere was different. In cafes and bakeries, people talked about the events being a disaster for Lebanon. People were angry with Hizbullah for dragging them into a war and lamented the loss of tourist business. The streets were emptier than usual and queues at petrol stations formed amid rumours of distributors holding back supplies to make a black market profit.

Many foreigners in Beirut - tourists, Syrian workers and businessmen - were not waiting to find out how the crisis would develop. Buses to Syria - the only way out after the airport was bombed and ships to Cyprus blockaded - were full.

Families waited for hours for a bus, carrying babies and baggage and clutching large denomination dollar bills. Women tightened their headscarves and looked strained, children cried in the heat.

One Yemeni family who had been on holiday complained that the Lebanese drivers were exploiting their desperation to leave and that prices had been doubled.

Wissan Hamoud, a Shia Lebanese from the south, said he was charging the normal rate to Damascus, \$10 for a seat in the car, and he'd been back and forth to Syria five times already. He said in 1996, during Israel's Grapes of Wrath campaign which lasted 17 days, it was worse. He wasn't worried: 'Nasrallah (Hassan Nasrallah, leader of Hizbullah) has the right,' he declared. 'We will all fight with him, women and children too.'

Occupancy in the Commodore Hotel, which became a home from home for the foreign press during the civil war, was down to 50%. Many at the Phoenicia, Beirut's swankiest hotel, were trying to decide how to leave. Michel Aznar, a Lebanese on business from London said he didn't want to take the road to Syria for fear of potential bombing. 'I think we're going to go up to the mountains and see how things go,' he said.

The shops in the tourist area were shut, cafes virtually abandoned and staff sent home. Trucks full of special forces soldiers in black berets closed the area around the parliament building as members of the cabinet convened to discuss the crisis.

By dusk, traffic was jamming the coastal highway into south Beirut. Some abandoned their cars and hauled suitcases along the road on foot. Off the beach, you could make out the silhouette of an Israeli warship, and along the famed Corniche an open-topped Mercedes sped by fluttering a Hizbullah flag.

Middle East crisis, pages 4-5 >=

Middle East debate, page 29 >=

Middle East crisis: Fear and traffic jams Beirut wakes to a familiar nightmare: Airport, roads and bridges hit as blockade tightens: Jubilation over Hizbullah c....

Leader comment, page 30 >=

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Syria's exit from Lebanon may boost Hezbollah

Charleston Gazette (West Virginia)

March 13, 2005, Sunday

Copyright 2005 Charleston Newspapers

Section: News; Pg. P5A

Length: 1140 words

Byline: Soraya Sarhaddi Nelson Knight Ridder Newspapers

Body

BAALBEK, Lebanon - If Syrian forces leave Lebanon in the face of growing international and Lebanese pressure, the Islamic militant group **Hezbollah** - entrenched in this Bekaa Valley hamlet and across much of eastern and southern Lebanon - is ready to fill the military and political vacuum.

Should it succeed, the anti-Syrian democratic protests that have attracted so much international attention since opposition leader Rafik Hariri was assassinated Feb. 14 could prove stillborn. Instead of clearing the way for pro-Western democrats, Syria's withdrawal could bring to the fore a virulently anti-Western political force believed to be responsible for attacks on U.S. Marines and the American Embassy in Beirut and for kidnapping dozens of foreigners.

Uncertainty may rule the streets of Beirut after dueling protests for and against Syrian involvement in Lebanon's affairs, but loyalties are crystal-clear in this town built around Roman ruins 6 miles east of the Syrian border.

Hezbollah's green and yellow flags flutter along its streets. Taped to nearly every shop window and plastered across intervening concrete walls, the face of **Hezbollah** leader Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah broods at passers-by, as it does throughout Lebanon's predominantly Shiite Muslim east and south.

Syria, whose forces have dominated Lebanon for the last three decades, is closely aligned with Nasrallah's movement and has readied it to take Syria's place as Lebanon's dominant power.

"The Syrians are trying to leave behind a system they can control. A pillar of that will be **Hezbollah**," said Michael Young, the opinion editor of Lebanon's English-language newspaper Daily Star.

The price could be further divisions in Lebanon. Young and others said that Syria, through its many agents and supporters in Lebanon, would move to lift the political restrictions that distribute power to religiously based factions according to an unwritten 1943 agreement that today leaves Lebanon's Shiite plurality underrepresented. That would net **Hezbollah** more parliamentary seats in May elections.

It's also likely to make **Hezbollah** a newly partisan player in a nation still smarting from 15 years of civil war that ended in 1990.

"For 10 to 15 years no one has dared to say much against **Hezbollah**," Young said. "That is changing because now they [**Hezbollah**] are using their muscle; they want to be Syria's enforcers."

Syria 's exit from Lebanon may boost Hezbollah

If the Syrians make good on their promises to withdraw to or beyond their border, Baalbek residents are confident that **Hezbollah** can take charge.

"Disarming **Hezbollah**" - as the West has called for - "is not an option, especially when we have Israel, our enemy, on our border," said Naji Awada, 28, who owns a cellular-phone store in Baalbek. "The weapons of the resistance are for the security of our country, to hold a knife to Israel's side. The army doesn't have the necessary knowledge to do that."

Backed by Syria and by the Shiite-run government of Iran, **Hezbollah** is under fire from the United States and its Western allies for periodic attacks on northern Israel and its support for Palestinian militant groups.

During Lebanon's civil war, **Hezbollah** was blamed for attacking and kidnapping Westerners, including the truck bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983, which killed 241 Marines, and the murders of CIA Lebanon chief of station William Buckley, U.S. Navy diver Robert Stethem and U.S. Army Col. William Higgins.

Hezbollah's ties to Iran are visible on its office walls, which feature framed photographs of the Islamic Republic's founder, Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, and the current supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Iranian arms are still delivered to **Hezbollah** via Syria, even as the group has become more self-sufficient in a Shiite population whose faith demands that they give part of their income to clerics. In the Bekaa Valley this week, for example, a half-dozen **Hezbollah** activists set up a donation stop along the Beirut-Damascus highway, collecting money from drivers.

Hezbollah has matured from a guerrilla group during the civil war to a military and political powerhouse, patrolling the southern Lebanese skies with robot aircraft and representing the country's largest religious group, with 12 seats in the Parliament.

Community involvement may be the secret to **Hezbollah**'s popular appeal. **Hezbollah**-funded hospitals and schools serve thousands of poor and underemployed Lebanese in the Shiite-dominated south and east.

In Baalbek, Mohammed Yezbek, 47, shrugged when he was asked why he had pictures of Nasrallah in his fabric shop and not slain former Prime Minister Hariri, whose posters have adorned buildings across Beirut since his assassination. "He never came to Baalbek in 12 years," during his terms as prime minister, Yezbek said.

Hezbollah, on the other hand, is active every day in Baalbek. Residents say the Islamic group holds a 70 percent share of power in town, including the mayor's seat. Few here appear to want a clerical government, and despite its power **Hezbollah** hasn't imposed one, residents said.

In fact, **Hezbollah** activists help run Baalbek's annual classical music festival, which draws thousand of Lebanese and foreign tourists to the world-famous Roman ruins here each year. The hotels serve alcohol - taboo for Muslims - and many **women** walk the streets without the Islamic veil.

Hezbollah also provides security by patrolling the country's southern border with Israel. Lebanon's army mans a few checkpoints and little else.

Hezbollah forces attained legendary status on the border after Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak withdrew his soldiers from southern Lebanon under fire in May 2000. **Hezbollah**'s anti-Israeli stance resonates where the memory of 22 years of Israeli occupation is still fresh.

Israel's fighter jets still crack the sound barrier over Lebanese airspace and Israeli forces attack **Hezbollah** and Syrian outposts from time to time when the militant group fires Katyusha rockets or antiaircraft guns at Israeli targets.

Many Lebanese think that **Hezbollah**, commonly known as "the resistance," and its guerrilla tactics - rather than the army - are better suited to fighting their southern neighbor.

Syria 's exit from Lebanon may boost Hezbollah

Hezbollah also has captured anti-American sentiment brought on by the U.S. presence in Lebanon during its civil war and more recent Bush administration policies in the Middle East.

Now the group has its eye on the general elections in May.

"We are not with the opposition and we're not part of the government," said **Hezbollah** Parliament member Mohammad Raad, 49.

Its policies include preserving Syrian-Lebanese ties, keeping **Hezbollah** armed and rejecting the assimilation of Palestinian refugees, which might lessen their claims to a right to return to their homes in what's now Israel.

"Otherwise, Lebanon could become part of a greater American project for the Middle East," Raad said.

Load-Date: March 14, 2005

End of Document

Cease the fire? No, take out Hezbollah

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

July 19, 2006 Wednesday

Main Edition

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The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. 17A; EQUAL TIME

Length: 587 words

Byline: FRIDA GHITIS

For the Journal-Constitution

Body

Once again, the images and the awful reality of the Middle East pierce our hearts. The sight of elderly women crying, of children in bomb shelters shivering in fear and of rockets tearing apart innocent lives offends the senses, and it creates the urge to do something. Anything.

That's why politicians and diplomats, many of them well-meaning, are now urging the fighters on both sides of Lebanon's border to immediately cease their fire.

Unfortunately for all sides, asking the Middle East combatants to silence their weapons will accomplish little. In fact, an unconditional quieting of the guns right now would only guarantee a more devastating war in the not very distant future that could engulf the entire Middle East. The ripples would reach every shore around the world. While civilians on all sides pay with their lives, simply stopping now is not the answer.

Ironically, before Hezbollah triggered this latest round by launching a raid into Israel, killing eight Israeli soldiers and kidnapping two, Lebanon and Israel looked like two countries that could have been headed for peace. Except, that is, that Hezbollah, receiving some \$200 million per year from Iran, and taking its orders from Damascus and Tehran, made that impossible. After Israel withdrew from Lebanon in 2000, the United Nations demanded that the Lebanese government disarm Hezbollah. But the government, afraid of starting a civil war, and under the influence of Syria, did not act. Now Lebanon, barely recovering from 20 years of civil war, faces devastation.

But unless the Lebanese government and the international community make sure Hezbollah stops running a violent fiefdom in south Lebanon, the problem will not end. Hezbollah, with its massive Iranian weapons caches hidden among civilian populations, wants to remain relevant. And it, along with Iran and Syria, want peace negotiations scrapped from everyone's agenda. Conflict with Israel is their most powerful domestic political weapon.

This is the heartbreaking reality. And it is not a tragedy that will end if Israel suddenly moves its weapons into storage. It won't even end if Hezbollah returns the captured Israeli soldiers. If the fighting ends with the Shiite militia

Cease the fire? No, take out Hezbollah

still in control of Lebanon's border with Israel, the Iranian proxy will become emboldened and the next round will make this one look like a schoolyard scuffle.

That's why even some of Israel's enemies know Hezbollah is the root of the conflict and must be removed. During an Arab league meeting in Cairo, Saudi Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal called the group's actions "unexpected, inappropriate and irresponsible," declaring, ". . . we cannot simply accept them." Many Arab countries agreed. The Saudis hope Israel will trounce Hezbollah, hence defeating an Iran they view with suspicion.

For the sake of future peace, Hezbollah must be defanged. That's why Israel, to the dismay of innocent Lebanese, is bombing Lebanon's shipping routes. Otherwise, Hezbollah could bring reinforcements, escalating and prolonging the fight.

If the guns of July go quiet prematurely, they will soon roar again more loudly. A strong Hezbollah means a weak Lebanon. It means an empowered Iran, even as it pursues its nuclear objectives. And it means ever more distant prospects for finding true peace on the region.

Without Hezbollah, Lebanon and Israel will one day work toward reconciliation.

* Frida Ghitis is a writer living in Decatur.

This column is solicited to provide another viewpoint to an AJC editorial published today.

Graphic

Photo: Frida Ghitis

Photo: TYLER HICKS / New York TimesA man carries food and some of his belongings from his apartment Monday in the coastal city of Tyre, Lebanon. The apartment building was among those buildings hit Sunday during a series of Israeli air strikes that have left a number of people dead and others injured in southern Lebanon.

Load-Date: July 19, 2006

Israeli strikes intensify as Hezbollah launches assaults

Irish News

July 29, 2006 Saturday

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Section: Pg. 13

Length: 445 words

Body

Israeli warplanes and artillery intensified strikes yesterday, hitting Hezbollah positions and crushing houses and roads in towns in southern Lebanon, killing as many as 12 people, officials said.

Hezbollah said it launched an assault on troops in a small border village seized by Israeli forces last weekend.

Hezbollah announced it used a new rocket, the Khaibar-1 - named after a famed battle between Islam's prophet Muhammad and Jewish tribes in the Arabian peninsula - to strike at the Israeli town of Afula, its deepest yet into Israel.

Five rockets hit outside the town but caused no injured, Israeli police said.

In the 17th day of warfare, diplomatic efforts to end the crisis were emerging on several fronts as allies pressed Washington to speed up efforts to secure a ceasefire.

US President George Bush has suggested he would support the offensive for as long as it would take to cripple Hezbollah.

He also sharply condemned Iran for providing military support to the guerrillas - a charge that Iran's foreign ministry denied yesterday.

In France, President Jacques Chirac said his country would press for the rapid adoption of a UN Security Council resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in Lebanon.

He cited the "deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Lebanon".

France hoped to circulate a draft resolution in the coming days.

Israel said its warplanes hit 130 targets in Lebanon on Thursday and early yesterday, including a Hezbollah base in the Bekaa Valley, where long-range rockets were stored and 57 Hezbollah structures, six missile launching sites and six communication facilities.

An air strike flattened a house in the village of Hadath and six people inside were believed dead or wounded, the state news agency reported. Hezbollah's al-Manar TV said all six were dead.

Missiles fired by Israeli jets also destroyed three buildings in the village of Kfar Jouz near the market town of Nabatiyeh, killing three and wounding nine people, Lebanese security officials said.

Israeli strikes intensify as Hezbollah launches assaults

The raid apparently targeted an apartment belonging a Hezbollah activist.

The toll from the strike could rise. Civil defence teams were struggling in Kfar Jouz to rescue some people believed buried under the rubble of one of the buildings, a three-story structure, witnesses said.

Three women were killed in strikes on their homes in southern villages of Talouseh, Sheitiyeh and Bazouriyeh, the hometown of Hezbollah leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, security officials said.

Israeli artillery also fired more than 40 shells at the village of Arnoun just outside Nabatiyeh, next to the strategic Crusader's Beaufort Castle, which has a commanding view of the border area, witnesses said.

Load-Date: July 31, 2006

End of Document

EDITORIAL: Brutal and cussed

The Nation (AsiaNet)

July 30, 2006 Sunday

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Section: NATIONWIDE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 566 words

Body

NOT at all unexpected, Israel has turned down a UN appeal for temporary truce in Lebanon to allow the desperately needed humanitarian aid to be rendered to the victims of its brutal and indiscriminate aerial onslaught, now in its 20th day. Instead, with US Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice in Jerusalem it intensified air raids of housing compounds.

Hizbullah stronghold at Qana and the country's infrastructure, killing more than 50 people, most of them women and children, on Sunday and taking the overwhelmingly civilian death toll to well over 500 since the operation began. Sunday's toll is likely to rise since bodies were still being dragged out of the rubble. So far, hundreds of thousands have been rendered homeless, and roads, bridges, airports, fuel dumps and any vital installation that came into the airmen's view targeted to paralyse life. On Saturday, Israeli planes again hit UN observation post in southern Lebanon, injuring two peacekeepers.

The collective punishment is designed to bring home to the Lebanese authorities the point that if they wanted peace and security, it has to be on Tel Aviv and Washington's terms. As hopes of a possible ceasefire were being expressed on the arrival of Secretary Rice in the region, this latest attack has come as a setback, with Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora saying that he would not hold talks with her until a ceasefire was called.

"There is no place on this sad morning for any discussion other than an immediate and unconditional ceasefire as well as international investigation into the Israeli massacres in Lebanon," he told a news conference in Beirut on Sunday. As a result, she has delayed her trip to Beirut, but continues to insist that calls for a ceasefire are premature 'until a sustainable settlement can be worked out.'

Both Israel and the US have been opposed to the call for ceasefire that has repeatedly been made by the rest of the international community as well as the UN. Ms Rice, representing the neocon Bush administration, the main player in the war and is operating from behind the stage, has made it abundantly clear that the end of hostilities would not serve the purpose.

It would leave **Hizbullah** in control of southern Lebanon. A Foreign Ministry official at Tel Aviv cited fears of the 'terrorist organisation' of **Hizbullah** gathering together civilians during the lull in the hostilities to form a human shield, as one reason for disagreeing with the latest UN request for a three-day end to hostilities. The pause would have enabled the casualties to be removed from the war zone and made possible to provide food and medical assistance where needed. According to UN relief coordinator Jan Egeland, one-third of the casualties comprised children.

As Israeli troops withdraw from Bint Jbeil, the **Hezbollah** leader asserted that the Jewish state had failed to gain victory. The deaths of innocent Lebanese, **Hizbullah** fighters, Israeli soldiers and civilians and the massive

EDITORIAL: Brutal and cussed

destruction of the Arab state paint a tragic scenario. It points to no other solution but an immediate ceasefire and concerted and sincere efforts to resolve the Palestinian problem without loss of time. It is a pity that while paying lip service to promoting democracy, the US is working hard to strike at manifestations of democratic aspirations of the people. Islamabad must take a definite and open stand on this dark situation.

Load-Date: August 1, 2006

End of Document

Hezbollah's gamble may hurt Iranian ambitions

Ottawa Citizen

July 26, 2006 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A10; David Warren

Length: 827 words

Byline: David Warren, The Ottawa Citizen

Body

Before I get to the uplifting substance of today's column, let me briefly skirmish with the many correspondents who have filled my inbox with outrage against my justifications for Israel's attacks. They parrot what they have heard in the liberal media. The errors of fact I'm about to correct are beneath the elementary. But it is necessary to correct big lies as well as small.

Item: Israel has attacked Lebanon, which is too weak to defend itself.

This is a lie. The Israelis have made it abundantly clear they are not attacking Lebanon, but Hezbollah entrenched in Lebanese soil. Israelis, as anyone with any decency, feel sorry for innocent Lebanese caught in the crossfire. But as Israel's foreign minister, Tzipi Livni, put it to the German newsmagazine Der Spiegel: "Whether weak or strong, a government carries the responsibility for whatever happens within its country." She went on to hint the obvious: that Israel would prefer a Lebanon strong enough to disarm Hezbollah without Israeli help.

Item: The Israeli military operations are "excessive," and include unnecessary strikes against Lebanon's infrastructure and capital city.

This is a damned lie. Israel has been attacking Hezbollah in Lebanon, which necessarily includes infrastructure that Hezbollah uses. Even the attacks on the Beirut airport were for a purpose openly stated, and advertised in extensive leafletting and broadcasting before the airport's runways were cratered and fuel depots taken out. From hard past experience, the Israelis knew Hezbollah would be using that airport not only to whisk their prisoners to safekeeping in Iran, but as a conduit to bring Iranian and Syrian advisers, and crucial supplies, into and out of the country.

The strikes elsewhere in Beirut are overwhelmingly on the southern, Shia part of the city, where Hezbollah's masters have their command. Lebanese television and radio have themselves been broadcasting Israeli communiques, clearly warning what they will hit, when and why.

Item: There is a huge civilian toll.

Given the scale of the conflict, the number of deaths is not abnormally high. Our media have been giving running totals of civilian deaths in Lebanon that they should know are both wrong and misleading. They cannot know how many have been killed in Hezbollah's "hidey holes." They are unable to distinguish between real civilians and the Hezbollah fighters who blend among them. Even the United Nations' humanitarian point-man, Jan Egeland -- no

Hezbollah's gamble may hurt Iranian ambitions

friend of Israel -- has noted actual boasts from Hezbollah that their "human shield" strategy has got so many women and children killed, and so few of their own fighters. They cache their weapons in schools, hospitals, houses, apartment buildings. They hold civilians at gunpoint who are trying to flee. In light of all this, the stress on specific casualties -- for instance the poor little boy who was suffering hideously in a hospital in Tyre, whom CNN went to town on Monday night -- is a flagrant appeal to emotionalism, calculated to inflame misinformed audiences against Israel.

But now we come to the paradox. Despite some of the best efforts I've seen by our liberal media to spread poison, there is a growing understanding of what is taking place. Better yet, the response of the Arab world is increasingly directed against Hezbollah, Syria and Iran, and even against Iran's other client, Hamas in Gaza (now suing for peace). This is unprecedented.

In a partly incoherent, rambling and apocalyptic address on official Iranian TV Sunday, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said, "Lebanon is the scene of a historic test, which will determine the future of humanity." Then, after condemning the unnamed leaders of various Arab regimes that had failed to align with Iran and Hezbollah, "This is the day that all things secret will be tested."

Iran unquestionably ordered the rocket and kidnapping attacks with which Hezbollah and Hamas provoked the current Israeli reaction (though that reaction may have been greater than it expected). The ayatollahs are probably also behind the current terror spike within Iraq. Their motive is quite obvious: to change the subject from the Western and growing Arab alarm about Iran's own emergence as a bellicose nuclear power. The ayatollahs are, further, trying to cement their claim to be the managing directors of the international jihad.

Ahmadinejad is right: this is "a historic test." But it does not follow that he is winning it. Instead, it appears, by pushing too hard and fast, that Iran has opened a civil breach across the Muslim world between Shia and Sunni. The ayatollahs have thus created a new opportunity for the West to form alliances with Sunni Muslim states against Iran's aspiring regional hegemony, which the Bush administration is now rightly trying to exploit. Ahmadinejad has, in short, given us a reason to hope -- as Hitler did, when he began to make too many enemies.

David Warren's column appears Sunday, Wednesday and Saturday.

Load-Date: July 26, 2006

War fans support for Hezbollah

The Toronto Star
July 29, 2006 Saturday

Copyright 2006 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A16

Length: 1634 words

Byline: Andrew Mills, SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Dateline: TYRE, Lebanon

Body

The smouldering heap that used to be the apartment block where his family lived now stands just a bit taller than 17-year-old Wa'el Ferron.

The evening before, Israeli jets swooped frighteningly low and took aim at the six-storey building that housed civilian apartments and, Ferron said, three floors of Hezbollah offices, including the headquarters of southern commander Nabil Kaok.

Moments later, two giant thuds jolted the entire city as a pair of bombs slammed into the building. Floor after concrete floor collapsed to the ground, sending a plume of smoke and dust skyward and broken glass and bits of furniture into the surrounding streets.

The blast injured 13 people, six of them children, in neighbouring buildings. Nobody knows exactly who was inside when the structure went down, but it's certain they were crushed to death. Kaok appears to have survived.

Every day for 17 days now, scenes like this have unfolded all across southern Lebanon, as Israel continues its attempt to destroy Hezbollah and its ability to launch missiles into Israel. Yesterday alone, Israel struck more than 130 of what the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) call Hezbollah targets.

But despite the intense Israeli bombardment, Hezbollah has not been weakened. Militants have attacked deeper into Israel than ever before, killing 51 Israelis. And for countless Lebanese like Ferron, all that Israel's attacks are doing is making them support Hezbollah even more.

"I have no home, but I feel stronger now," Ferron says.

With arms crossed defiantly in front of him, the future medical student surveys the rubble. His living room sofa sits on its end, twisted as if wrung out by a giant pair of hands. Near a collapsed Mercedes and downed power lines, amid shattered glass and chunks of concrete, he finds a half-burned family photo album. Apart from a smashed easy chair, everything else of his family's home is buried in the rubble.

"Since I was born, the Israelis have come and killed us. And we don't move and we don't talk," he says. "But now, it's time to."

War fans support for Hezbollah

To Ferron, it doesn't matter that Hezbollah may have awoken the dragon next door 18 days ago when guerrillas kidnapped two Israeli soldiers and killed three more. All that matters to him is that Israel has killed at least 458 of his Lebanese countrymen and injured more than 1,000.

"Israelis don't think anymore of children, of women, of old people," Ferron says. "They think of blood and crimes."

This is war, and in this battered city just 20 kilometres north of Israel, people are lining up behind Hezbollah like never before.

The skies above Tyre (pronounced "tire") are constantly buzzing with unmanned Israeli aircraft collecting information about the next target the F-16 fighter jets and Apache helicopters will pinpoint.

The aircraft usually strike in the hills to the east or along the coastal plain to the south. Fireballs flash into the sky, followed by plumes of smoke. Seconds later, the deep thud of explosions echo through empty city streets.

The planes drop 450-kg and 225-kg bombs, the helicopters shoot guided missiles, and tanks in Israel or warships offshore lob 150-mm artillery rounds.

Almost every assault means new victims, and Red Cross ambulances rush to the attack sites and begin ferrying casualties to Tyre's handful of hospitals.

Standing in his office at the hospital he runs, Dr. Jawad Najem shakes a cardboard box filled with about 20 pieces of shrapnel. There are jagged pieces of a computer chip attached to tiny wires and chunks of metal no bigger than a nickel. Everything is still covered with bits of human flesh, deep red and slimy.

The 53-year-old surgeon can't remember out of whose body he picked these pieces of shrapnel. An estimated 125 casualties have come through his hospital in the last 17 days; 21 have died.

"There are multiple, multiple, multiple wounded. Multiple lacerated wounded. All kinds of wounded. All kinds of shrapnel," Najem says.

His 21-year-old son, Ali, sits beside him with a laptop computer, flipping through digital photos of the wounded. This is not what he expected to be doing when he came home for the summer from medical school in Cairo.

One photo shows a child's burned, peeling face, swollen beyond recognition and slathered with cream. Israeli aircraft fired at the car in which his family was fleeing. Israeli planes had dropped leaflets warning them to head north because their village was about to be attacked.

A car stopped to rescue the family from the flames, but on the way to hospital it too was attacked, Najem says.

"From his face, you see oozing blood, laceration of the skin from the burns. The oozing of the blood means that the second layer is affected of the skin," he says. "There is edema (abnormal swelling) in his eye. Both the eyes are closed. Edema is from the effect of the burns."

The burns extend into the child's respiratory system and the family nearly suffocated in the attack, which suggests to Najem they were hit by phosphorus bombs, unconventional weapons that burst into flames upon impact.

Other doctors, Lebanese government officials and Human Rights Watch researchers have all accused Israel in recent days of using phosphorous bombs.

Ali flips to another photo.

"From the first days of this war, we noticed that the shrapnel affected the nervous system of the patients," Najem says, pointing to the laptop.

In some patients, he explains, vital organs like the heart, liver and kidney will continue working normally, but unusual symptoms, likely tied to the nervous system, crop up.

War fans support for Hezbollah

"Nervousness, convulsions, irritability, always crying, maybe calm, maybe go into deep coma or a coma," Najem says, listing off the symptoms he's seen.

He has no way to confirm it, but Najem says he thinks Israel may be using toxic material in its weapons. Yet despite the fact he's seen the absolute worst of what Israel has done to the people of southern Lebanon in the last 17 days, Najem doesn't get involved politically. He's a humanitarian, he says, it's not his job to play politics.

"What can I do? Nothing. I have no control over Israel and Hezbollah. We want to live in peace. We want to live for my children and we don't like to kill children on both sides," he said.

But his son Ali can't avoid the politics of Israel's offensive. As a child, he was injured in a 1990 Israeli attack. And in 1996, when he was 11, Ali watched as the victims of an Israeli attack on refugees sheltered at the UN base at Qana flooded into his father's hospital. That attack killed 102 and left 120 wounded.

"And now, I'm seeing that Israel is not stopping. Everything is increasing more and more," Ali Najem says.

"But we are people, we are not animals slaughtered every day on the roads. We should live as they should live. I don't have any problem with any Israeli citizen. I have a problem with their policy, with how they are dealing with us as people."

Lebanon's dignity, he says, means never surrendering to Israel.

Other health workers in Tyre take things a step further: "With every victim that comes in, we love Hezbollah even more," says nursing director Mahdi Asaad, 27. "They are defending our country. They are our only defence."

There are no official estimates and it's impossible to know for certain, but locals say Tyre's population has dwindled to about a tenth of its usual 150,000. All that is left, it seems, are thousands of stray cats and dogs wandering the streets, and piles of uncollected garbage baking in the 35C heat.

Most of the city's residents have fled north to the relative safety of Beirut or the mountains of northern Lebanon.

Ancient Mercedes sedans, their windshields shattered by explosions, are packed with passengers - sometimes as many as eight - and heading north at terrifying speeds. The road is a junkyard of battered vehicles that have crashed into telephone poles or driven into the 20-metre deep craters left by Israeli bombs.

The usual route north is impassable, as bombers have taken out dozens of bridges. So cars detour onto a dusty one-way track through banana and orange groves then head back onto the main coastal route, which is lined with deserted beach resorts and posters of Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah's secretary general.

Cars full of refugees fleeing villages in the dangerous swath of land along the Israeli border flood into Tyre as well, on their way north.

Ali Lutfisrou, a 53-year-old tobacco farmer, stands at the roadside, nervously peering into every car that passes. He sent his wife and children north to Sidon, but promised to wait for his sister and her children to arrive from their village.

The day before, Israeli leaflets dropped from the sky warned everyone to leave because attacks were imminent. "I've been waiting all day and I'm very concerned," says Lutfisrou. "It's not a long drive. I don't know where they are."

Beside him, soldiers have turned what used to be a parking lot into a mass grave. Piles of sandy soil mark the spot where 84 corpses were buried earlier this week. Backhoes have already dug a trench that can hold 100 more, he says.

Lutfisrou watched the burials from his house nearby, and is sure that Hezbollah fighters are among the dead. Martyrs, he calls them.

War fans support for Hezbollah

He didn't used to be much of a **Hezbollah** supporter, but the last 17 days have changed his opinion. He's watched the Lebanese government look helpless while the only ones striking back at Israel have been **Hezbollah**.

"The most a human being can give is his blood. They've given blood. They've taken risks for us, for all Lebanese, not just us Shiites in the south," Lutfisroure says. "If Israel was trying to kill you, your family, your people, wouldn't you support the only ones who are defending you?" 'With every victim that comes in, we love **Hezbollah** even more. They are defending our country. They are our only defence'

Mahdi Asaad, 27, nursing director

Graphic

NASSER NASSER ap Lebanese men search for survivors in the rubble of an apartment building destroyed on Wednesday by Israeli bombs in the southern coastal city of Tyre. Some Lebanese say support for **Hezbollah** is growing in the wake of such attacks.

Load-Date: July 29, 2006

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UN official slams both Hezbollah, Israel

Prince George Citizen (British Columbia)

July 25, 2006 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 16

Length: 398 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: BEIRUT

Body

BEIRUT (AP) -- The UN humanitarian chief accused **Hezbollah** on Monday of "cowardly blending" in among Lebanese civilians and causing the deaths of hundreds during two weeks of cross-border violence with Israel.

The militant group has built bunkers and tunnels near the Israeli border to shelter weapons and fighters, and its members easily blend in among civilians.

Jan Egeland spoke to reporters at Larnaca airport in Cyprus late Monday after visiting Lebanon to co-ordinate an international aid effort. On Sunday, he toured the rubble of Beirut's southern suburbs, a once-teeming Shiite district where **Hezbollah** had its headquarters.

During that visit, he condemned the killing and wounding of civilians by both sides and called Israel's offensive "disproportionate" and "a violation of international humanitarian law."

On Monday, he had strong words for **Hezbollah**, which crossed into Israel, captured two soldiers and killed eight others on July 12, triggering fierce fighting.

"Consistently, from the **Hezbollah** heartland, my message was that **Hezbollah** must stop this cowardly blending ... among **women** and children," he said. "I heard they were proud because they lost very few fighters and that it was the civilians bearing the brunt of this. I don't think anyone should be proud of having many more children and **women** dead than armed men."

"We need a cessation of hostilities because this is a war where civilians are paying the price," said Egeland, who was heading to Israel next.

At least 600,000 Lebanese have fled their homes, according to the World Health Organization. One estimate by Lebanon's finance minister putting the number at 750,000, nearly 20 per cent of the population.

During his visit to Lebanon earlier Monday, Egeland issued an emergency appeal for \$150 million US to help Lebanon through the next three months. He told reporters in Beirut the money was needed to pay for food, health care, water and sanitation.

UN official slams both Hezbollah, Israel

"Approximately 500,000 to 800,000 people have been affected by the conflict, of whom some have become displaced persons or refugees," a UN statement said.

The United Nations has contracted 100 trucks to deliver aid coming into Beirut around the country. Egeland said the UN hoped to send its first land convoy to Tyre on Wednesday. Similar convoys will be scheduled every second day after that. An international Red Cross convoy was expected in the city Monday.

Load-Date: July 25, 2006

End of Document

More Airstrikes as Hezbollah Rockets Hit Deeper

The New York Times

July 15, 2006 Saturday

The New York Times on the Web

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

Length: 1083 words

Byline: By GREG MYRE

Dateline: METULA, Israel, July 15

Body

In another day of cross-border shooting exchanges, Israeli airstrikes killed more than 20 Lebanese civilians on Saturday, including at least 15 who died when their convoy of vehicles was attempting to flee the south Lebanon border area, according to news reports.

In another development, an Israeli military official claimed that Iranian Revolutionary Guards were involved on some level in a missile strike that badly damaged an Israeli naval boat off Lebanon's capital Beirut on Friday, killing one Israeli sailor and leaving three missing.

The official said the exact role of the Revolutionary Guards was not clear, but the Iranian forces were working closely with Hezbollah in Lebanon, as they have for more than two decades.

Israel's military initially said that the ship was hit by an unmanned drone aircraft packed with explosives. But the military revised its assessment on Saturday, saying the ship was hit by a radar-guided, C802 missile fired from the Lebanese shore. The missile came from Iran, the military said.

The Israeli war ship, which had been imposing a naval blockade of Lebanon, returned home on Saturday, the military said.

Meanwhile, many residents on both sides of the Israel-Lebanon border have fled the frontier to avoid the heavy shooting, which was in its fourth day Saturday.

The Lebanese convoy was evacuating from the border village of Marwaheen when it came under attack, and at least 15 people, including women and children, were killed when two cars were hit, according to Reuters.

There was no letup in the shooting Saturday, particularly on the Israel-Lebanon front, where the fighting erupted Wednesday with a Hezbollah attack that led to the capture of two Israeli soldiers and the deaths of eight more.

Despite talks at the United Nations, the Group of Eight leaders meeting in St. Petersburg, Russia, and an emergency session of Arab League foreign ministers in Cairo, there were no signs of a diplomatic progress. The crisis has raised concerns that the turmoil could further destabilize the region.

More Airstrikes as Hezbollah Rockets Hit Deeper

Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, declared an open war against Israel on Friday after his offices were bombed in Beirut. Israel responded by bombing the office again on Saturday. Israel also hit several other sites in Beirut on Saturday, Lebanese officials said.

Overall, more than 80 Lebanese have been killed, most of them civilians, and more than 200 wounded, in the past four days, according to Lebanese officials.

Israeli leaders have warned that the battle could be a long one, and say that Israel will not accept a return to the conditions that existed before the fighting broke out, with Hezbollah and not the Lebanese army controlling Lebanon's southern border with Israel.

We can't go back to the status quo, said Mark Regev, a spokesman for Israel's Foreign Ministry. That would mean that Hezbollah still has its finger on the trigger and can start a regional crisis whenever that serves its interest.

Israel's military goal is to push Hezbollah away from the border so it cannot strike at Israel, Mr. Regev said. The political goal, he said, is the implementation of a United Nations Security Council resolution, passed two years ago, which calls for the Lebanese government to take control of its southern border and disarm militias, such as Hezbollah.

The Lebanese government has demanded an end to the Israeli air, naval and artillery strikes on Lebanon. The government has also disavowed the cross-border raid by Hezbollah that ignited the fighting. But the Lebanese leadership has said and done little as the crisis has escalated, and the government has not given any indication that it will act against Hezbollah, which receives support from Iran and Syria.

Also, Hezbollah kept up its fire, unleashing more than 40 Katyusha rockets deep into northern Israel on Saturday, and for the first time, striking the resort town of Tiberias.

Several buildings were hit and damaged, though there were no serious injuries, Israeli officials said. Sunbathers scrambled for cover following the attacks, and the town, which had been full of activity, quickly fell quiet and the streets became deserted.

Israeli security officials have said for some time that Hezbollah had longer range rockets, but the recent attacks have still alarmed many Israelis.

Tiberias, on the Sea of Galilee, is about 20 miles south of the Lebanese border, and no Hezbollah rockets had landed near the town. However, Hezbollah demonstrated its increased range when on Thursday it struck the Mediterranean port city of Haifa, which is also around 20 miles from the border.

Most northern Israeli cities are now ghost towns, with residents having fled south, taken refuge in bomb shelters or simply remaining inside their homes.

Several Katyusha rockets scored direct hits on empty buildings Saturday. In Hatzor Haglilit, a small hillside community surrounded by pine trees, a rocket crashed through the red tile roof of a home and damaged the living room, but the residents had gone to Tel Aviv, according to neighbors.

Prior to this week, the last time the community was shelled was in the 1960s by Syrian forces in the Golan Heights, several miles to the east, according to the mayor, Shaul Kamisa. Israel captured the heights from Syria in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

But more than 20 rockets have hit in and around the community in the past four days.

We never dreamed the terror would arrive here, Mr. Kamisa said as he inspected the damaged home.

One Israeli man, Rafi Cohen, traveled north to show solidarity with people in the coastal town of Nahariya, which has been hard hit. But when he showed up at the beach, which is usually crowded on Saturdays during the summer, he found himself alone, and a bit surprised.

More Airstrikes as Hezbollah Rockets Hit Deeper

We should show Hezbollah how strong we are and live our lives as normal, Mr. Cohen told Israel radio.

The Hezbollah rockets have killed four Israeli civilians and wounded more than 150 since the barrage began on Wednesday.

In the Gaza Strip, meanwhile, the Israeli air force bombed in Gaza City, hitting the Palestinian Economy Ministry and a factory suspected of making rockets.

Palestinians said one man was killed and about a dozen injured in the attack on the factory, which was in a residential area of Gaza City, Palestinians said. Hamas militants quickly took control of the bomb site, which left a deep crater.

Palestinian militants also fired rockets into southern Israel on Saturday, but they did not cause damage or injuries.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos: Israeli artillery near the border fired into southern Lebanon today. (Photo by Kevin Frayer/Associated Press)

Smoke rose from the Beirut airport after Israeli planes bombed it on Friday. (Photo by Paul Taggart/World Picture News)

A Lebanese soldier stood next to a crater produced by an Israeli airstrike in Beirut Friday. Hezbollah fired more than 100 rockets into Israel. (Photo by Pierre Bou Karam/Associated Press)

The Israeli Army fired artillery shells into southern Lebanon yesterday. Its air force also bombed the Beirut airport for a second day as clashes with Hezbollah intensified. (Photo by Kate Brooks/Polaris, for The New York Times)

Lebanese men watched the Beirut airport burn after an Israeli airstrike. (Photo by Kate Brooks/Polaris, for The New York Times)

The ruins of Hezbollah's headquarters in Beirut Friday. (Photo by Pierre Bou Karam/Associated Press)

Lebanese civilians fled their home south of Beirut today. (Photo by Ramzi Haidar/Getty Images)

Load-Date: July 17, 2006

Hezbollah and Israel

Aberdeen Press and Journal

July 21, 2006 Friday

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Section: Pg. 17

Length: 799 words

Body

Sir, - The Press and Journal reports the war between Israel and Hezbollah without sensationalism and as a matter of fact.

Prior to the beginning of the hostilities between the two factions, the P&J printed an article on a northern camp in Gaza where a teenager and two children were killed and eight others were wounded. The dead children were a five-year-old boy and a seven-year-old girl. A sixteen-year-old girl died later of her wounds. I didn't hear any reports or, indeed, see anything on TV regarding this "incident", other than reading about it in the P&J.

The Israeli military reported the car involved was carrying militants at the time. Now, the Israelis are attempting to bomb Hezbollah into submission and in doing so are wrecking the infrastructure of a democratic country which has sadly become the new war and killing grounds of the Middle East.

If anyone was to recall history, the bombing of Vietnam and the Blitz on Britain did little to quell the population and if anything strengthened their resolve.

Far too many innocent men, women and, sadly, children are now in the front firing line and hostilities between the two factions should cease immediately and dialogue begin, as both sides appear to have scant regard for loss of life on either side.

James Murray,

250 George Street,

Aberdeen.

Middle East conflict

SIR, - I find it difficult to believe that some of your readers still do not understand why Israel has had to take action against Hezbollah and Hamas terrorist groups.

Israel has ached for peace for decades, proven by the many agreements by which land has been given to its enemies in the forlorn hope that they would beat their swords into ploughshares.

The Arab and Moslem zealots want Israel destroyed; that is why there is a Middle East conflict. Everything else is commentary.

Why shouldn't Israel defend itself? It is surrounded by countries which have made no secret of their intentions.

Hezbollah and Israel

Syria supports and shelters Hezbollah, while Iran, controlled by unholy clerics, supplies weapons and millions in funds.

Heaven help us all if they ever get an atomic weapon.

Like it or not, facts have to be faced: appeasement will never work when dealing with fanatics.

T. Barron,

65 Manse Road,

Nairn.

Occupation of lands

SIR, - It is somewhat concerning that our leaders seem not to realise that Israel is in illegal occupation of Palestinian land and has been for the best part of 40 years.

There are internationally recognised borders as recorded in United Nations resolutions of 1967.

Do our leaders not recognise that so long as Israel occupies these lands, Palestinians and other nations will fight their own version of war and that war will extend not only against Israel but against those friends of Israel who could do something effective about it but choose not to?

The question is, has Israel stoked up so much hate that nothing will stop their enemies using whatever means they can?

Bob Ross,

19 Blackpark Terrace,

Inverness.

Photographs of graves

SIR, - On holiday in Egypt some months ago, I spent a day at the museum and Commonwealth cemetery at El Alamein, site of the battle which was the turning point of the North African campaign in World War II.

The Gordon Highlanders played a major part in the fighting and many who died there are buried in the cemetery. I took photographs of several of the graves, including the following:

2889774 Private A. Atchison, died October 26, 1942, aged 27.

2885071 Private J. Bell, died October 29, aged 26.

2870791 Colour Sergeant W. Thomson, died November 4, aged 36.

If any members of the families of these soldiers would like to have the photographs, I can be contacted at the address below.

Dr Iain F.W.K. Davidson,

177 Spital,

Aberdeen AB24 3JB.

Sustainable water supplies

Hezbollah and Israel

SIR, - My family and I have lived in Aboyne since 1972 and in many of these 34 years there have been local water shortages.

In 2006, there has been no water in our home on two of the last three days.

Water shortages are now predictable in summer, and this year is no exception, with a "water warning" currently operating for the whole of Aboyne.

Do our councillors and Scottish Water consider that they have a locally co-ordinated and sustainable policy of water management in Aboyne, allowing the building of yet more large houses for incomers which will place further demands on our water supply?

Margaret W. Jenkins,

1 Barclay Park,

Aboyne.

Putting a date to Cullen skink

SIR, - Evelyn Hood (Letters, July 20) is correct in her assumption that the Oxford English Dictionary is wrong in its dating of the term Cullen skink.

I have a recipe for this tasty dish in a cookbook called The Scots Kitchen, printed in 1929, in which Cullen skink is described in the soup section as a cottage recipe from the Moray coast.

Anne Sinclair,

32 Henderson Drive,

Westhill,

Aberdeenshire.

Load-Date: July 22, 2006

Hezbollah's grip will be tough to break

St. Petersburg Times (Florida)

July 14, 2006 Friday

0 Edition

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Section: NATIONAL; Pg. 10A

Length: 947 words

Byline: SUSAN TAYLOR MARTIN SENIOR CORRESPONDENT

Body

When I was in Lebanon last year, I had an interview with one of the leaders of *Hezbollah*, the radical Shiite organization that kidnapped two Israeli soldiers this week.

To accompany me, I hired an interpreter, a blond, blue-eyed Lebanese Christian woman in spike heels and a short skirt. As we drove to *Hezbollah*'s headquarters in southern Beirut, home to hundreds of thousands of poor Shiites, the streets got more crowded, the buildings more decrepit, the *women* more modestly dressed to the point many wore Iranian-style black abayas and head scarves.

My interpreter, eyes widening as a truly foreign scene unfolded before her, had a confession: Even though she was born in Beirut, she had never seen this part of the city.

"I had no idea," she kept repeating.

In many ways it was a moment that told the story of Lebanon and showed why its government may be unable to crack down on *Hezbollah* even in the face of huge Israeli pressure. In retaliation for the kidnappings and rocket attacks, Israel on Thursday bombed Beirut's international airport, blockaded its seaport and created a near panic that sent thousands of visitors fleeing to neighboring Syria.

After Lebanon's terrible civil war ended in 1990, central Beirut went through a building boom that helped restore its image as the "Paris of the Mideast." Today, the Beirut that my interpreter and many other well-to-do Lebanese know is a city of luxury hotels, smart shops, fast cars and trendy restaurants.

Much of the credit for Beirut's transformation went to the late Rafik Hariri, a Sunni entrepreneur who started out in the construction business in Saudi Arabia and returned home to become one of Lebanon's richest and most influential citizens. He twice served as prime minister, favoring friends and relatives, critics say, and largely ignoring the Shiites who populated the slums of south Beirut and the villages in southern Lebanon close to the Israeli border.

Hezbollah stepped into the gap left by the government, starting schools and health care clinics and building a base of support among the Shiites, who are thought to make up a majority of Lebanon's 4-million people. (There has been no official census since 1932.) The organization now has 14 seats in Lebanon's Parliament and, along with Amal, another Shiite party, controls about a third of the Cabinet.

Hezbollah's grip will be tough to break

Thus, part of the reason Lebanon's government will find it difficult to disarm Hezbollah is that Hezbollah is a substantial part of the government.

"It's not a promising situation for the Israelis," says Robert Lowe, an expert on the Mideast at London's Chatham House. "The influence they can bring to bear on the government is limited and the influence on Hezbollah is even more limited."

Though it has moved into politics and social services, Hezbollah has never abandoned its raison d'etre, which is the destruction of Israel. It has been supported in that goal by Iran, a Shiite country that reportedly has funneled millions of dollars and tons of armaments into Lebanon via Syria.

Kenneth Stein, professor of Mideast and Israeli studies at Emory University, recalls a trip to Beirut in the 1980s when a Christian militia member pointed out a plane at the airport.

"That's an Iranian airliner that just arrived with weapons to go to Hezbollah," Stein was told.

Two decades later, Hezbollah is even better armed and far more sophisticated militarily than Hamas and other Palestinian groups. While Palestinians still use notoriously unreliable Qassam rockets, a Hezbollah missile hit Haifa, Israel's third largest city Thursday, and scores of rockets rained down on northern Israel, killing two people and wounding at least 120.

"Hezbollah does not want to disarm," Stein says. "What is Hezbollah if it can't use force as a tool for perpetuating its goal of trying to destroy the state of Israel? Does it merely want to be a political party within the Lebanese Parliament? And the answer is no."

Israel's retaliation - defended by President Bush but criticized by many other foreign leaders as an excessive use of force - could not have come at a worse time for Lebanon. This is the start of the peak tourist season when thousands of Persian Gulf Arabs flee the scorching heat of their conservative homelands for Lebanon's cool mountains, balmy Mediterranean coast and relaxed attitude toward drinking and dress.

Thousands of other visitors are also in the country, including Pilar Saad, a Tampa high school teacher who came for her daughter's June 23 wedding to a Lebanese-American. The couple have since returned to New Jersey, but Saad has been virtually trapped in her in-laws' 10th floor apartment for the past two days as Israel bombarded Beirut's airport, port and parts of the city.

"We went to the beach on Tuesday and on Wednesday all hell broke loose," she said in a telephone interview when I reached her at midnight Beirut time, 5 p.m. Florida time. (Communications have been spotty.)

"I can see the southern suburbs; they're still smoking. I think it was a gas station they (the Israelis) hit. We could see lighted missiles from the sea flying to the south. With what's going on, people are just scrambling to get to safety. Many of the shops and things are closed and people are buying bread at the bakeries because we don't know what's going to happen."

Saad is due to return home in two weeks, but with Lebanon's only international airport now full of bomb craters she is unsure if she'll have to leave by land through Syria. Still, she sounded remarkably collected.

"This is not my first experience with Israeli bombardment," explained Saad, a repeat visitor to Lebanon. "I'm sort of like a veteran, but if this was the first time, I'd be in a panic."

Load-Date: July 14, 2006

Hezbollah Strong in Lebanese Region Vote

The New York Times

June 6, 2005 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 7

Length: 548 words

Byline: By JOHN KIFNER

Dateline: BEIRUT, Lebanon, June 5

Body

Shiite political parties long supported by and identified with Syria -- appeared to be heading to a sweeping victory on Sunday night in the second of four rounds of parliamentary elections, this time in the hilly Shiite heartland along Lebanon's southern border with Israel.

Caravans of cars waving both the yellow flags of **Hezbollah** and the green flags of Amal, its ally and sometimes rival, swooped through the twisting mountain roads and villages of stone houses, where black-veiled young **women** handed out campaign posters.

The overwhelmingly strong showing of the Shiite parties, locked in an electoral alliance, raises questions about the political power of the growing opposition to Syria's longtime influence over Lebanon among other religiously oriented political groups and, more important, about whether this troubled land could again fall into sectarian strife.

In the first round of voting in Beirut and its environs on May 29, the ballots strongly reflected the views of more cosmopolitan Lebanese, who have been galvanized by the assassination in February of the former prime minister Rafik Hariri -- widely viewed as an act of the Syrians -- which brought street demonstrations demanding a new era. Under strong international pressure after the Hariri killing, Syria withdrew its troops from Lebanon on April 26, ending a 29-year military presence.

The next round of voting, a week from now, will be in Mount Lebanon, the traditional Maronite Christian heartland. The Maronites are the longtime ruling class and the main opponent of the Syrians.

The results on Sunday cast doubt on whether the desire for change would go beyond sectarian differences.

With polls closing at 6 p.m., celebrations were in full swing in Nabatiye, the major Shiite center, and surrounding villages, with fireworks and men doing the traditional Dabke Arab dance. By contrast, in Merj 'Uyun, a mixed but mostly Christian town, turnout appeared light, and was even more so in the chain of Christian areas around Jezzin, where steep mountain villages once sheltered Maronite militiamen who were longtime allies of Israel.

In early results with roughly two-thirds of the votes counted in the first election district -- where the leading candidate was the Amal chieftain Nabih Berri, the speaker of Parliament, a post traditionally reserved for Shiites -- the combined Amal-**Hezbollah** list appeared to have about 33,000 votes, compared with 5,000 votes for its nearest

Hezbollah Strong in Lebanese Region Vote

rival. Similarly, in the second election district, the Amal-Hezbollah list appeared to have about 80,000 votes, compared with 8,000 for its nearest rival.

In those polling places, the areas where ballots were cast were strictly divided, with Christians voting in one area while Shiites and other Muslims voted in another.

At stake were 23 seats representing the southern region in the 128-seat Parliament, in which a complex formula is used to allot power among the country's more than one dozen major and minor religious sects.

From the time Lebanon gained independence after World War II, the bulk of power had gone to the Christians, particularly the Maronite Catholics, who controlled the presidency and commanded the Army under an unwritten pact known as the Confessional Agreement. That led to a civil war from 1975 to 1990.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo: At the group's election center in Nabatiye, members of Hezbollah followed the results of parliamentary voting yesterday. Hezbollah and Amal, its election ally, appeared headed for a big victory in the southern region. (Photo by Moustafa Hammoud/Agence France-Presse -- Getty Images)

Load-Date: June 6, 2005

End of Document

Hezbollah Rains 120 Rockets on Israel

The New York Times

July 14, 2006 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 11; TURMOIL IN THE MIDEAST: BORDER ATTACK

Length: 741 words

Byline: By GREG MYRE

Dateline: NAHARIYA, Israel, July 13

Body

Hezbollah rockets rained on the northern part of the country on Thursday, and this resort, tucked into the far northwestern corner, was perhaps the hardest hit.

The second day of heavy shooting across the border by the Lebanese militant group began early in the morning, when one rocket slammed into an open field just 200 yards from Western Galilee Hospital, the town's main medical center. An apartment building took a direct hit and burst into flames. One woman was killed while on the balcony of her apartment in another building. A man also died in the town of Safad.

In the Israeli Arab village of Majdel Krum, a few miles southeast of Nahariya, a resident, Farhat Farhat, 23, said, "I was walking next door to my cousin's house when I heard this tremendous explosion."

"When I looked up," he continued, "it seemed like my whole house was flying through the air -- the roof, the glass, even the water heater."

Seconds later, he said, a second rocket slammed into his cousin's house. Mr. Farhat had minor cuts on his left hand and left leg, and no one in either house was seriously wounded.

In the summer, Israelis normally flock to Nahariya and other towns in the north for vacations in the rolling hills of the Galilee. But on Thursday, the traffic on the main roads was almost all headed south, as residents sought to move out of rocket range.

Those who remained moved into bomb shelters, creating a ghost town atmosphere across Israel's northern strip. Clouds of smoke rose on the horizon in several places, the result of a cluster of rockets that ignited fires.

At the hospital in Nahariya, the patients, including expectant mothers, were moved into underground rooms as a precaution. In the emergency ward, a steady stream of wailing **women** and sobbing children filled the chaotic hallways. The hospital treated more than 30 civilians for injuries, while more than 120 arrived, many from Majdel Krum, saying they were suffering from shock.

Hezbollah launched more than 120 Katyusha rockets into northern Israel on Thursday in one of its largest such attacks, the Israeli military said.

Hezbollah Rains 120 Rockets on Israel

Eyad Deep, an ambulance driver in the town of Acre, received word of the attack in Majdel Krum, his home village. He said that when he arrived there he discovered that the home of his brother had been hit, though no one in his family was seriously hurt.

The probable target of the rocket barrage on Majdel Krum was the neighboring Jewish town of Carmiel. Both are more than 10 miles south of the border, beyond the usual range of Hezbollah attacks. But on Thursday evening, the coastal town of Haifa, which is 18 miles south of the Lebanese frontier, was hit by rockets for the first time. "This is something we've never seen in this area," Mr. Deep said.

Dr. Jack Stoler, who runs the emergency room at the main hospital in Nahariya, has been coping with rockets out of nearby Lebanon for three decades, and he said Thursday was one of the roughest days he had seen. "I've never been an optimist," said Dr. Stoler, 57, smoking a cigarette during a brief lull between rocket attacks on Thursday afternoon. "We've had a period of calm for a few years, but I always thought we would see more trouble."

Katyusha rockets are not precise weapons, but they are more accurate and have a much greater range than the Qassam rockets that the Palestinians fire out of northern Gaza. In addition, Hezbollah has stockpiled thousands of rockets and can fire them by the dozen, while the Qassam rockets are typically fired in much smaller numbers.

For Israelis who have endured the rocket fire in north since the 1970's, it was not supposed to turn out this way. When Israel pulled out of southern Lebanon in 2000, ending two decades of occupation, many believed, or at least hoped, that the rural Galilee would once again become a tranquil retreat known for its hiking and horseback riding rather than as the front line of a relentless conflict.

"I see a lot of people who are crying, who are angry, who feel the carpet has just been pulled out from under them," said Dr. Yehuda Shacham, who runs the Community Stress Prevention Center in Kiryat Shmona, in Israel's northern panhandle, the town that has been Hezbollah's most frequent target over the years. "Most people here have been through this experience many times," said Dr. Shacham. "We had bad periods in the 1980's and the 1990's. We just hope this one won't last for long."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo: An Israeli police officer approached a building in Nahariya that was hit by a Hezbollah rocket yesterday. (Photo by Ariel Schalit/Associated Press)

Load-Date: July 14, 2006

ARTICLE: Eyeing Lebanon

The Nation (AsiaNet)

July 25, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: NATIONWIDE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 873 words

Body

By AMAL SHAKIB

After nearly a week of the ongoing Lebanon crises, I unfortunately found myself in earshot of two youngsters, overhearing a part of their conversation, which I would like to re-narrate over here. Boy to girl: Is there any war going on these days? Girl: None that I know of. It may seem to be a joke, but it is a true tale. Why? Is it because Pakistanis have become so indifferent, or is it because killings have stopped bothering people anymore.

Has war become such an unimportant event that people have stopped paying any heed towards it or has it become so common that no one views a news channel showing war coverage anymore? Every war is the same. Whether, Palestine, Iraq, or now Lebanon, to a Pakistani commoner it is hard to tell the difference from war footage. The wreckage is always the same, so is the shattered look of all the victims.

Have people stopped reading a news item with a headline related to war and terrorism? When there isn't the will or the courage to oppose injustice and brutality, maybe it's better not to think at all, as ignorance is after all bliss. Or is there some third explanation to this apathy? That we are caught up in our own lives in such a way that our thinking doesn't travel beyond the premises of our home and office.

We are worried about the weather, and electricity, loadshedding and bills, about inflation, unemployment, crime and what not. Can one's thinking travel far away when there are so many small things in the way? After all Lebanon is far away, farther than Karachi, farther than any mosque near our house, which may be bombed any day. Farther than India, which may open fire any day as revenge.

Maybe we would be concerned about the international scenario if it had something to do with the US or UK, because we have relatives living over there. However, there is no such reason to care about Lebanon or Iraq or Palestine, where a comparatively smaller Pakistani community resides. We don't even have to care about refugees either, because who in his right mind would come to Pakistan to seek refuge.

Even I am ignorant. I fail to understand what is going on? A whole country against a militant group? After reading and reading on the issue, I still can't understand why Lebanese civilians have to pay the price of Hezbollah's doing? Even those who do not support Hizbullah are suffering, just for residing in Lebanon. When innocent Lebanese are being killed, doesn't it become the responsibility of Lebanon's government to protect its citizens, which is in fact just pleading for a ceasefire?

Then aren't the Lebanese justified in showing confidence in Hizbullah? Are they wrong in believing that their real protector is Hizbullah, which emerged with the aim of preventing Israel's return in Lebanon? Even after more than ten days, Hezbollah's strength has not weakened. Thus, reports say, that many Lebanese are impressed and not

ARTICLE: Eyeing Lebanon

scared of Israel anymore, as they believe that now they are not in the same position as they were in 1982, now they are resisting.

Whether Hizbullah is at fault or Israel, at the end of the day innocent lives are being lost. More civilians than soldiers are being killed. What are these people sacrificing their lives for, not for freedom and not for peace. Israel's humanitarian concern is quite evident with the statement of Commander of Israeli forces fighting on the Lebanese front, given to the Israeli television, "I suggest we don't count the dead until it's all over." No more needs to be said or heard. They are determined to kill.

Everyone remembers clearly the primary reason of attacking Iraq, a country hiding weapons of mass destruction. By now anyone with a normal IQ level can tell there were no weapons. If there were any, what were the Iraqis saving them for, why didn't they ever use them for self-protection? Today, who are the supplier and user of weapons and who is causing mass destruction? Or is it that the term mass destruction is used only when America is being destroyed, otherwise it is all for the better.

It is clever to kill Muslim women and children, so that no more children grow up to fight and no more wombs are left to produce more fighters. The young would eventually grow old and the old will eventually die. No matter how hard we resist, sooner or later we Pakistanis will have to accept that we cannot remain ignorant. Reason being the strong link that exists between Pakistan and whatever goes on in Middle East. Because one by one, every Muslim country is being targeted by Jewish and American missiles.

While we struggle here night and day to earn enough to buy ourselves a plot of land and construct our homes, one morning we might wake up with the bang of a bomb, which would take away everything we had owned, including our worldly belongings and our beloveds. Lebanon serves as an example.

Israel dropped leaflets warning residents to move. People are constantly trying to evacuate, but is it possible to leave, going to an unknown place, with no home. Can people take their young daughters and sisters out like this? They do, everyone does in times of war and then sorrow tales follow, of looting, killing and rapes. Whether staying to get bombed or fleeing to save lives, the end is always tragic.

Load-Date: July 26, 2006

REVEALED How Hezbollah puts the innocent at risk; They don't care

Sunday Mail (South Australia)

July 30, 2006 Sunday

State Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 588 words

Byline: Chris Tinkler

Body

THIS is a picture that damns **Hezbollah**.

It is one of several graphic images smuggled out from behind Lebanon's battle lines showing how **Hezbollah** is waging war amid suburban homes.

Obtained exclusively by News Ltd, they depict how the extremists are using high-density residential areas as launch pads for rockets and heavy calibre weapons.

Dressed in civilian clothing so they can quickly melt back into suburbia the fighters, carrying automatic assault rifles, ride in trucks laden with cannons.

The photographs from the Christian area of Wadi Chahrour in the east of Beirut were snapped by a visiting journalist caught in the midst of the war, then smuggled out by a friend.

The images have emerged as:

ISRAEL called up another 30,000 reserve troops.

THE United Nations humanitarian chief Jan Egeland has called for a three-day truce between Israel and **Hezbollah** to evacuate trapped civilians and replenish supplies to areas cut off by the fighting.

A PALESTINIAN militant group said yesterday it had kidnapped, killed and burned an Israeli settler in the West Bank.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice returned to the Middle East to discuss a UN resolution to end the 17-day-old war between Israel and Lebanese **Hezbollah** guerillas.

While these pictures have escaped the ravaged country, other images and footage taken by local newspaper and television teams are routinely seized by armed **Hezbollah** fighters at road blocks.

In one image a group of fighters, including youths, are preparing to fire an anti-aircraft gun just metres from an apartment block with sheets drying on a balcony.

Others show a **Hezbollah** fighter armed with a nickel-plated AK47 rifle guarding no-go zones after Israeli blitzes.

REVEALED How Hezbollah puts the innocent at risk They don't care

Another depicts the remnants of a Hezbollah Katyusha rocket in the middle of a residential block, blown up in an Israeli air attack.

The Melbourne man who smuggled the shots out of Beirut told yesterday how he was less than 400m from the block when it was obliterated.

"Hezbollah came in to launch their rockets, then within minutes the area was blasted by Israeli jets," he said.

"Until the Hezbollah fighters arrived, it had not been touched by the Israelis. Then it was devastated.

"After the attacks they didn't even allow the ambulances or the Lebanese Army to come in until they had cleaned the area, removing their rockets and hiding other evidence.

"It was carnage. Two innocent people died in that incident but it was so lucky it was not more. The people there were horrified and disgusted at what Hezbollah were doing."

The fighters used trucks, driven into residential areas, as launch pads for the rockets, he said.

Another image shows a line of decimated trucks sitting behind a 5m crater. The tourist who smuggled the images back to Melbourne said the trucks had been carrying rockets.

The release of the images comes as Hezbollah fighters face increasing censure for using innocent civilians as "human shields".

A UN humanitarian chief blasted Hezbollah as "cowards" for operating among Lebanese civilians.

Jan Egeland yesterday called for a three-day truce between Israel and Hezbollah to evacuate trapped civilians and replenish supplies to areas cut off by the fighting.

Hundreds on both sides have been killed in the fighting.

Mr Egeland said when he was in in the Hezbollah heartland, he said: "I said Hezbollah must stop this cowardly blending in among women and children.

"I heard them saying they were proud of losing fewer armed men than civilians. It's hard to see how they could be proud of such a situation."

Load-Date: July 30, 2006

Hezbollah chief bids for role as statesman

The International Herald Tribune

March 14, 2005 Monday

Copyright 2005 International Herald Tribune

Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 1143 words

Byline: Neil Macfarquhar

Dateline: BEIRUT:

Body

When Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Lebanon's militant *Hezbollah* organization, addressed the hundreds of thousands of party faithful who gathered in the largest rally in Lebanon's modern history last week, his usual theme of liberating Jerusalem went unmentioned.

Instead, Nasrallah, a 44-year-old bearded cleric, focused, uncharacteristically, on the future of Lebanon.

The speech last Tuesday was also remarkable for its venue downtown Beirut and the absence of the trademark *Hezbollah* backdrop, its green and yellow banner with a fist brandishing a Kalashnikov rifle.

Manar Television, the organization's satellite channel, ended its somewhat triumphant reporting with a tight shot of Nasrallah standing on the balcony of a sparkling white sandstone building in front of a Lebanese flag.

The New York Times

"Today Sayyid Nasrallah has become a national leader," the announcer intoned.

With the assassination of the former prime minister, Rafik Hariri, on Feb. 14, Lebanon lost a rare man who succeeded in appealing to some extent across the patchwork of often murderous sects who compete for the spoils in this tiny mountainous country.

The question is whether anyone can fill his shoes as a kind of national arbitrator. The huge march on Tuesday served as Nasrallah's opening bid for the job.

"This is the first time that Nasrallah played the role of statesman, we have never seen him as a Lebanese leader," said Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, a professor at the Lebanese American University and author of a book on *Hezbollah*'s politics and religion. "*Hezbollah* might emerge as the new power broker in Lebanon outside Syria."

Nasrallah's bid is a major gamble. To some extent, he has stayed above the endlessly bickering fray of Lebanese politics.

He gained national stature by directing *Hezbollah*'s considerable firepower and thousands of armed men against the Israeli Army, winning admiration across the Arab world for ending the 22-year Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon in 2000.

Hezbollah chief bids for role as statesman

Once he plunges fully into the political fray, however, he becomes less of a pan-Arab, pan-Islamic figurehead and may be considered just one more Lebanese ward boss, albeit representing the largest Shiite bloc.

It is also questionable how his support for Syria his speech on Tuesday was laced with glowing references to Syria's Assad dynasty and ended with the line "Long live Syria!" will play in a country where many are sick of what they see as its exploitative neighbor.

But becoming "more Lebanese" could well prove necessary. With the anticipated departure of Hezbollah's Syrian protectors, it will be harder for the group to pursue its emphasis on maintaining Lebanon as a battlefield for the Palestinian cause.

It is only by flexing the muscles of the Shiite community that Nasrallah can ensure that Hezbollah retains a voice in a political system where religious identification remains all-important. (Under Lebanon's rigid divisions, the highest political post a Shiite Muslim can aspire to is speaker of Parliament.)

At the very least, the scale of the march on Tuesday is almost certain to stall the U.S.-led attempt to disarm Hezbollah, which Washington has labeled a terrorist organization.

Hani Hammoud, one of Hariri's closest advisers, summed up Nasrallah's gamble in organizing the extraordinary march this way: "Before he did it, when the Americans and the French and the UN said disarm Hezbollah, you had at least 50 percent of all Lebanese who said no, this is not a militia, this is not a terrorist movement."

"This is not bin Laden," Hammoud said in reference to the Al Qaeda leader, "this is a national resistance movement, the only one that ever liberated any Arab land."

The next phase could be markedly different.

"But if he turns himself into a local political player and keeps repeating 'We want Syria,' pretty soon you will find that not just 50 percent of the Lebanese, but even 50 percent of the Shiites, will start asking, 'Why does that militia still hold its weapons?' This is the risk," Hammoud concluded.

In some ways the struggle over post-Hariri Lebanon resurrected the long fight over how the Lebanese see themselves. Hariri was a Sunni Muslim who believed in Arab causes, but he also spoke to the many Lebanese, particularly Christians, who consider themselves misplaced Europeans.

He was a self-made billionaire real estate tycoon. He wore good suits, smoked expensive cigars, spoke three languages fluently and lunched with friends like the president of France, Jacques Chirac.

He was rebuilding downtown Beirut to make it the financial and tourism Mecca it had been before the civil war. He ran up some \$35 billion in debt

Many Lebanese took note Tuesday that Nasrallah, in his black turban, spoke from a balcony right above the trendy Buddha Bar and just a few buildings away from Bank Street, lined with the country's premier financial institutions, which together hold an estimated \$65 billion to \$85 billion

It is not turf frequented by the bulk of the working-class Shiite Muslims from the capital's unkempt southern suburbs who form Hezbollah's backbone. Indeed, it was the group's emergence during the civil war that gave that underclass its first substantial voice.

The march underscored that the downtrodden were not going to cede turf to the more secular, more Westernized coalition of Christians, Sunni Muslims and Druse who have been marching weekly since Hariri died.

"He staged the march in central Beirut, in Hariri's Beirut," said Saad-Ghorayeb, the professor. "For them it symbolized that they too belong to Beirut."

Hezbollah chief bids for role as statesman

Many in the crowd were hoisting pictures of President Bashar al-Assad of Syria or his late father which prompted some in other sects to claim that the bulk of the marchers were from the estimated 300,000 Syrian workers in Lebanon or were even bused over the border.

What really shocked many people was their first face-to-face encounter with Nasrallah's core constituency.

"There is a whole generation who had a sort of curtain in front of their eyes, who did not realize that this country was not only theirs," said Ghassan Tuani, the retired publisher of An Nahar newspaper and the dean of Lebanese political analysts.

In reaction, the opposition is trying to pull off its own gargantuan rally on Monday. The math of the Lebanese population means that no sect is big enough to dominate.

Nasrallah himself says he has never tried to direct his appeal only toward Shiite Muslims. Although the dour pictures of Iran's revolutionary patriarchs stare down on Hezbollah neighborhoods, there is no forced veiling for women or other Islamic rigidity.

"We don't think in a sectarian manner," he said in an interview with The New York Times in November 2002. "It is true that I am a Shiite Muslim, but when I think about Palestine or Iraq or any other country, I don't think within the limits of the Shiites affiliated with my own sect."

Load-Date: March 14, 2005

End of Document

Leader of Hezbollah Discovers A New Fray: Lebanese Politics

The New York Times

March 13, 2005 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section 1; Column 5; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

Length: 1501 words

Byline: By NEIL MacFARQUHAR

Dateline: BEIRUT, Lebanon, March 12

Body

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The speech was also remarkable for its venue -- downtown Beirut -- and the absence of the trademark **Hezbollah** backdrop, its green and yellow banner with a fist brandishing a Kalashnikov rifle. Manar Television, the organization's satellite channel, ended its somewhat triumphant reporting with a tight shot of Sheik Nasrallah, standing on the balcony of a sparkling white sandstone building and in front of a Lebanese flag.

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Leader of Hezbollah Discovers A New Fray: Lebanese Politics

Assad dynasty and ended with the line "Long live Syria!" -- will play in a country where many are sick of what they see as its exploitive neighbor.

But becoming "more Lebanese" could well prove necessary. With the anticipated departure of Hezbollah's Syrian protectors, it will be harder for the group to pursue its emphasis on maintaining Lebanon as a battlefield for the Palestinian cause. It is only by flexing the muscles of the Shiite community that Sheik Nasrallah can ensure that Hezbollah retains a voice in a political system where religious identification remains all-important. (Under Lebanon's rigid divisions, the highest political post a Shiite Muslim can aspire to is speaker of Parliament.)

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He was rebuilding downtown Beirut to become the financial and tourism Mecca it had been before the civil war. He ran up some \$35 billion in debt -- but Lebanese habitually live beyond their means.

Many Lebanese took note on Tuesday that Sheik Nasrallah, in his black turban, spoke from a balcony right above the trendy Buddha Bar and just a few buildings away from Bank Street, lined with the country's premier financial institutions, which together hold an estimated \$65 billion to \$85 billion.

It is not turf frequented by the bulk of the working-class Shiite Muslims from the capital's unkempt southern suburbs who form Hezbollah's backbone. Indeed, it was the group's emergence during the civil war that gave that underclass its first substantial voice. The march underscored that the downtrodden were not going to cede turf to the more secular, more Westernized coalition of Christians, Sunni Muslims and Druze who have been marching weekly since Mr. Hariri died. The strength of the Shiite showing was shocking to many Lebanese.

"There is a whole generation who had a sort of curtain in front of their eyes, who did not realize that this country was not only theirs," said Ghassan Tuani, the retired publisher of An Nahar newspaper and the dean of Lebanese political analysts.

In reaction, the opposition is trying to pull off its own gargantuan rally on Monday. The math of the Lebanese population means no sect is big enough to dominate. Sheik Nasrallah himself says he has never tried to direct his appeal only toward Shiite Muslims. Although the dour pictures of Iran's revolutionary patriarchs stare down on Hezbollah neighborhoods, there is no forced veiling for women or other Islamic rigidity.

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Leader of Hezbollah Discovers A New Fray: Lebanese Politics

Part of Sheik Nasrallah's appeal is rooted in his own story. He was born in Beirut, the son of a grocer, and attended public schools until leaving at age 15 for Najaf, Iraq, where he studied in a Shiite seminary. He fled in 1978 when Saddam Hussein's government rounded up Lebanese clergy, and for the next decade his studies were interrupted repeatedly by the vagaries of Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war.

In 1989, he did a short stint in Qum, an Iranian city holy to Shiites.

When Israel assassinated Sheik Abbas Musawi, his spiritual mentor and Hezbollah's leader in 1992, he took over the organization at age 32.

Among the scores of Hezbollah foot soldiers who died fighting the Israeli Army was his son Hadi, the oldest of his five children, killed in September 1997.

A leader whose children suffer for his cause is virtually unknown in the Arab world. That combined with his modest lifestyle lends Sheik Nasrallah and other Hezbollah politicians a reputation for not being corrupt, rare among Lebanese leaders. Hezbollah has 13 Parliament members and could double the number once the Syrians are no longer around to force them into an election alliance with a rival movement, Amal.

Still, the Hezbollah march left a distinct unease that an alien fundamentalist state had suddenly sprouted in Lebanon. "Christians are really afraid that he could take control whenever he wants," said Georges Kenaan, a 20-year-old business major eating an avocado salad for lunch at a chic Beirut restaurant on Friday. "I don't have a problem with Hezbollah, but not for him to have his own arms; he's kind of scary."

Even Shiite critics argue that Hezbollah must reconcile its long-held stand as a body of persecuted outsiders with its yearning for more stature before it tries to lead the nation.

The issues, says Waddah Sharara, a Lebanese University sociology professor, start with small, symbolic matters like the fact that most people in Hezbollah neighborhoods refuse to pay their electric bills -- but never get cut off.

On a larger scale, Lebanon's potential will be hobbled as long as Hezbollah remains a possible source of instability, he argues. .

"Hariri paid for all the windows broken by Syria and Iran via Hezbollah, but even he realized it could not continue," said Mr. Sharara, adding that Sheik Nasrallah espoused "a political program for a community, not a state."

"Ultimately it squeezes Lebanon both economically and politically," he said.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos: Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, the Hezbollah leader, was featured in portraits being sold yesterday in the town of Nabatiya in southern Lebanon. He may have to become "more Lebanese" as he enters the political fray there.

Crowds in Beirut protested Tuesday against the withdrawal of Syrian troops and United Nations Resolution 1559, which seeks the pullout. (Photographs by Lynsey Addario for The New York Times)(pg. 4)

Sheik Hassan Nasrallah addressing a rally last week in Beirut. (Photo by Mohamed Azakir/Reuters)(pg. 1)

Leader of Hezbollah Discovers A New Fray: Lebanese Politics

Load-Date: March 13, 2005

End of Document

Guardian Weekly: International News: Middle East crisis: 'Is Hizbullah here? Only children here,' cries one father: Millions wait in fear. Scores die and many are injured by bombs and missiles

Guardian Weekly

July 21, 2006 Friday

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***The*GuardianWeekly**

Section: Pg. 10

Length: 712 words

Byline: Clancy Chassay, Tyre and Brian Whitaker, Beirut

Body

Twelve-year-old Nour lay heavily bandaged and fighting for her life in a hospital in the southern Lebanese city of Tyre on Monday. She is one of many child victims of Israeli air strikes on the Mediterranean port.

"We are praying for her," said Fatima, a laboratory technician doubling as a nurse at Jabal Amal hospital. Ali, the doctor treating Nour, said he did not know if she would survive. "She has large burns all over her body; she is losing a lot of fluids. Her life is now in God's hands."

More ambulances streamed into the hospital. Whatever the Israelis' intended target, a bomb had fallen on a small canal next to the Qasmia refugee camp, home to 500 Palestinians. Its victims were 11 children taking a swim. Seven were injured, three critically. Three have not been found.

Ismael, the father of one, sat on the edge of the crater, weeping. "Children! Children!" he roared through his tears, "Children here! My son here." He stood and looked down into the crater: "Is Hizbullah here?"

Ahmed Mrouwe, the hospital's director, said that more than 200 wounded had been brought into the hospital, one of three in the area. "We have received 196 wounded and 25 dead; the majority of them are children and women."

Monday was the one of the bloodiest so far in Lebanon, with 41 dead. In Sidon, south of Beirut, an Israeli air strike on a road bridge hit two vehicles, killing 10 civilians and wounding at least seven, medical sources told Reuters. They said both vehicles had been crossing the Rmeileh bridge, heading to Beirut. Leaflets dropped from Israeli planes have been urging residents in Hizbullah-controlled areas of the south to leave.

Canada said seven of its nationals had been killed in an Israeli strike while holidaying in the southern Lebanese village of Aitaroun. It was targeted again on Monday night with six killed, local television reports said.

Early morning attacks left two men dead in the port of Beirut, and eight Lebanese soldiers were killed in a rocket attack on an army position near Tripoli in the north.

Guardian Weekly: International News: Middle East crisis: 'Is Hizbullah here? Only children here,' cries one father: Millions wait in fear. Scores die and many a....

An annex of the hospital in Tyre had been bombed the day before. The attack came as doctors were tending to victims of a strike on a 12-storey residential building, which also housed the civil defence offices, in Tyre. That attack left 21 dead, including several children. Dr Mrouwe said nine people in one family had been killed; only the father had survived.

Asked how it compared with 1996 when Israel launched an attack on the south, killing scores of civilians, Dr Mrouwe said: "It's incomparable. In 1996 the majority [of casualties] were fighters. This time we have yet to receive any fighters."

In Beirut, where the Israelis are also dropping leaflets from the air urging residents to leave suburbs controlled by Hizbullah, schools are being overwhelmed as families set up temporary homes in classrooms. Hundreds of others are sleeping out in the open.

Before the war began, more than half a million Shia were believed to be living in Dahiyeh, the suburb most heavily targeted by the Israelis. The Lebanese authorities opened dozens of schools last weekend but these are now overflowing. The Chakib Arslan school in Verdun was considered suitable for up to 180 people, but now holds 850. Most had only brought what they were wearing or could carry.

As the sound of three bombs shook the school, a teenage girl burst into tears. Faten and her 16 relatives are living in a classroom. "Our house was not safe," she said. "Hizbullah told us to go and we left four days ago. We have \$100 between us and my father needs medicine. We can't get it for him."

Rami, a volunteer, said: "Sometimes the families buy food. Most of the time the government doesn't help much but it sends a little food." The relief effort is being run by several organisations and political groups, and includes Christians and Muslims. "It began with a sit-in, in solidarity with Gaza, but then turned into relief work," said Ghassan Makarem of Helem, a Lebanese gay and lesbian organisation. "It's a mix of NGOs, leftist groups, Palestinian youth groups, and others," he said.

Outside Beirut, though, there is no such help and people are having to fend for themselves. Many cannot leave because roads are impassable, and those who do escape face the risk of being attacked.

Load-Date: August 2, 2006

REVEALED How Hezbollah puts the innocent at risk; They don't care

Sunday Mail (South Australia)

July 30, 2006 Sunday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 599 words

Byline: Chris Tinkler

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The photographs, from the Christian area of Wadi Chahrour in the east of Beirut, were snapped by a visiting journalist caught in the midst of the war, then smuggled out by a friend.

The images have emerged as:

ISRAEL called up another 30,000 reserve troops.

A REQUEST by the UN for a three-day ceasefire to get in supplies and evacuate civilians was rejected by Israel.

AN explosion, believed to be from Israeli artillery, hit a convoy evacuating villagers from Rmeish, wounding a driver and a cameraman for German TV news. Another strike hit a food truck and a car, wounding three.

A PALESTINIAN militant group said yesterday it had kidnapped, killed and burned an Israeli settler in the West Bank.

IN southern Lebanon, Israeli missiles and artillery rained down around towns and roads, targeting sites believed connected to **Hezbollah** but wreaking destruction in populated areas.

THE Mediterranean was threatened by its worst ever environmental disaster after the bombing of a power plant in Jiyeh had sent thousands of tonnes of fuel gushing into the sea, Lebanon's environment minister Yacub Sarraf said last night.

REVEALED How Hezbollah puts the innocent at risk They don't care

Images and footage of Hezbollah activities taken by local newspapers and TV crews are routinely seized by the group's fighters at road blocks. But in our image, taken clandestinely, a group of fighters are preparing to fire a truck-mounted anti-aircraft gun just metres from an apartment block with sheets drying on the balcony.

Others show a Hezbollah fighter armed with a nickel-plated AK47 rifle guarding no-go zones after Israeli blitzes. Another depicts the remnants of a Hezbollah Katyusha rocket in the middle of a residential block, blown up in an Israeli air attack.

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Another image shows a line of decimated trucks, said to have been carrying rockets, sitting behind a 5m crater. The release of the images comes as Hezbollah fighters face increasing censure for using innocent civilians as "human shields". UN humanitarian chief Jan Egeland blasted Hezbollah as "cowards" for operating among Lebanese civilians.

Mr Egeland said when he was in the Hezbollah heartland, he had said: "I said Hezbollah must stop this cowardly blending in among women and children.

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Load-Date: July 30, 2006

HEZBOLLAH OFFICIAL: WITH OUR SPLENDID ROCKETS, WE CAN DO A GREAT DEAL

What the Papers Say Part A (Russia)

July 19, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: PRESS EXTRACTS;; No. 129

Length: 586 words

Byline: Nadezhda Popova

Highlight: An interview with Hezbollah official Ahmad Malli; Hezbollah intends to continue its war with Israel. Its leader, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, has called on Arab countries to "support the partisans who are fighting the Zionist enemy." Lebanese civilians continue to die in this battle. How can Hezbollah justify these casualties?

Body

Hezbollah intends to continue its war with Israel. Its leader, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, has called on Arab countries to "support the partisans who are fighting the Zionist enemy." Lebanese civilians continue to die in this battle. How can Hezbollah justify these casualties? We asked Ahmad Malli, a member of Hezbollah's political council.

Question: You have become involved in a military conflict. Dozens of innocent people are being killed in Lebanon every day. But you still keep talking about freeing Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. Do you think the Lebanese people really care about that, when Israeli rockets could blow their homes to fragments at any moment?

Ahmad Malli: Well, what can you do - such are the laws of war. We didn't start this war. It was started by the terrorist organization known as Israel. Besides, there are also Lebanese prisoners in Israeli jails, some of them women and children. They are held in terrible conditions. Look what the Israelis have done for the sake of two soldiers - but they don't care about tens of thousands of prisoners. We're also fighting to free our territory from Israel. The Zionists are still occupying Lebanese lands [the heights known as the Shebaa farms - editor. If fascists occupied Kaliningrad or Paris, I don't think the Europeans would say "let's resolve this by negotiation" and do nothing more.

Question: Lebanese civilians are dying. If you free the Israeli soldiers, you would save many lives in Lebanon.

Ahmad Malli: Yes, all right, we captured two soldiers. So let the Israelis attack us for that. But no - the Zionists started bombing civilians. They have destroyed roads and important facilities. They're afraid to confront us face to face; they fire rockets, or use air strikes. They don't want to fight us Mujaheddin directly. Many days have passed since the military action began, but the Israeli army still hasn't moved deep into Lebanese territory. We are courageously defending our land. Hezbollah doesn't exaggerate its capabilities, of course - but believe me, with the help of our splendid rockets we can do a great deal.

Question: Would you bomb Tel-Aviv?

Ahmad Malli: We would use even the most extreme measures to defend our country. For the first time, the Lebanese people are attacking Israeli cities. It always used to be the reverse: Israelis killing Arabs, with impunity. We don't want that to happen again. Hezbollah is confident of victory.

HEZBOLLAH OFFICIAL: WITH OUR SPLENDID ROCKETS, WE CAN DO A GREAT DEAL

Question: Would you negotiate with the United Nations?

Ahmad Malli: We are opposed to cooperating with that organization or any other organizations which are the puppets of the United States. Just imagine: the residents of a village in South Lebanon recently approached the local United Nations for help, but they were told to "go away." And then those people died.

Question: Where are you hiding the Israeli soldiers? Where are Hezbollah's leaders hiding?

Ahmad Malli: I can't tell you that.

Question: Are you getting any support from abroad?

Ahmad Malli: We are supported by all free peoples who oppose the hegemony of imperialism: not only Syria and Iran, but many others - Kuwait, Bahrain, Jordan. I'm sure we have sympathizers in the capitals of Europe as well.

Question: Do you realize where your confrontation with Israel could lead?

Ahmad Malli: Momentous times are approaching in the Arab world. I hope the world's impression of Hezbollah will change - at least in Europe, since there's no hope of that in America now.

Source: Izvestia, July 19, 2006, p. 3

Translated by Elena Leonova

Load-Date: July 19, 2006

End of Document

Tide of Arab Opinion Turns To Support for Hezbollah

The New York Times

July 28, 2006 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 5; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1; HOSTILITIES IN THE MIDEAST: CHANGING REACTION

Length: 1279 words

Byline: By NEIL MacFARQUHAR; Mona el-Naggar contributed reporting from Cairo for this article, and Suha Maayeh from Amman, Jordan.

Dateline: DAMASCUS, Syria, July 27

Body

At the onset of the Lebanese crisis, Arab governments, starting with Saudi Arabia, slammed Hezbollah for recklessly provoking a war, providing what the United States and Israel took as a wink and a nod to continue the fight.

Now, with hundreds of Lebanese dead and Hezbollah holding out against the vaunted Israeli military for more than two weeks, the tide of public opinion across the Arab world is surging behind the organization, transforming the Shiite group's leader, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, into a folk hero and forcing a change in official statements.

The Saudi royal family and King Abdullah II of Jordan, who were initially more worried about the rising power of Shiite Iran, Hezbollah's main sponsor, are scrambling to distance themselves from Washington.

An outpouring of newspaper columns, cartoons, blogs and public poetry readings have showered praise on Hezbollah while attacking the United States and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice for trumpeting American plans for a "new Middle East" that they say has led only to violence and repression.

Even Al Qaeda, run by violent Sunni Muslim extremists normally hostile to all Shiites, has gotten into the act, with its deputy leader, Ayman al-Zawahri, releasing a taped message saying that through its fighting in Iraq, his organization was also trying to liberate Palestine.

Mouin Rabbani, a senior Middle East analyst in Amman, Jordan, with the International Crisis Group, said, "The Arab-Israeli conflict remains the most potent issue in this part of the world."

Distinctive changes in tone are audible throughout the Sunni world. This week, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt emphasized his attempts to arrange a cease-fire to protect all sects in Lebanon, while the Jordanian king announced that his country was dispatching medical teams "for the victims of Israeli aggression." Both countries have peace treaties with Israel.

The Saudi royal court has issued a dire warning that its 2002 peace plan -- offering Israel full recognition by all Arab states in exchange for returning to the borders that predated the 1967 Arab-Israeli war -- could well perish.

Tide of Arab Opinion Turns To Support for Hezbollah

"If the peace option is rejected due to the Israeli arrogance," it said, "then only the war option remains, and no one knows the repercussions befalling the region, including wars and conflict that will spare no one, including those whose military power is now tempting them to play with fire."

The Saudis were putting the West on notice that they would not exert pressure on anyone in the Arab world until Washington did something to halt the destruction of Lebanon, Saudi commentators said.

American officials say that while the Arab leaders need to take a harder line publicly for domestic political reasons, what matters more is what they tell the United States in private, which the Americans still see as a wink and a nod.

There are evident concerns among Arab governments that a victory for Hezbollah -- and it has already achieved something of a victory by holding out this long -- would further nourish the Islamist tide engulfing the region and challenge their authority. Hence their first priority is to cool simmering public opinion.

But perhaps not since President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt made his emotional outpourings about Arab unity in the 1960's, before the Arab defeat in the 1967 war, has the public been so electrified by a confrontation with Israel, played out repeatedly on satellite television stations with horrific images from Lebanon of wounded children and distraught women fleeing their homes.

Egypt's opposition press has had a field day comparing Sheik Nasrallah to Nasser, while demonstrators waved pictures of both.

An editorial in the weekly Al Dustur by Ibrahim Issa, who faces a lengthy jail sentence for his previous criticism of President Mubarak, compared current Arab leaders to the medieval princes who let the Crusaders chip away at Muslim lands until they controlled them all.

After attending an intellectual rally in Cairo for Lebanon, the Egyptian poet Ahmed Fouad Negm wrote a column describing how he had watched a companion buy 20 posters of Sheik Nasrallah.

"People are praying for him as they walk in the street, because we were made to feel oppressed, weak and handicapped," Mr. Negm said in an interview. "I asked the man who sweeps the street under my building what he thought, and he said: 'Uncle Ahmed, he has awakened the dead man inside me! May God make him triumphant!'"

In Lebanon, Rasha Salti, a freelance writer, summarized the sense that Sheik Nasrallah differed from other Arab leaders.

"Since the war broke out, Hassan Nasrallah has displayed a persona, and public behavior also, to the exact opposite of Arab heads of states," she wrote in an e-mail message posted on many blogs.

In comparison, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's brief visit to the region sparked widespread criticism of her cold demeanor and her choice of words, particularly a statement that the bloodshed represented the birth pangs of a "new Middle East." That catchphrase was much used by Shimon Peres, the veteran Israeli leader who was a principal negotiator of the 1993 Oslo Accords, which ultimately failed to lead to the Palestinian state they envisaged.

A cartoon by Emad Hajjaj in Jordan labeled "The New Middle East" showed an Israeli tank sitting on a broken apartment house in the shape of the Arab world.

Fawaz al-Trabalsi, a columnist in the Lebanese daily As Safir, suggested that the real new thing in the Middle East was the ability of one group to challenge Israeli militarily.

Perhaps nothing underscored Hezbollah's rising stock more than the sudden appearance of a tape from the Qaeda leadership attempting to grab some of the limelight.

Al Jazeera satellite television broadcast a tape from Mr. Zawahri (za-WAH-ri). Large panels behind him showed a picture of the exploding World Trade Center as well as portraits of two Egyptian Qaeda members, Muhammad Atef,

Tide of Arab Opinion Turns To Support for Hezbollah

a Qaeda commander who was killed by an American airstrike in Afghanistan, and Mohamed Atta, the lead hijacker on Sept. 11, 2001. He described the two as fighters for the Palestinians.

Mr. Zawahri tried to argue that the fight against American forces in Iraq paralleled what Hezbollah was doing, though he did not mention the organization by name.

"It is an advantage that Iraq is near Palestine," he said. "Muslims should support its holy warriors until an Islamic emirate dedicated to jihad is established there, which could then transfer the jihad to the borders of Palestine."

Mr. Zawahri also adopted some of the language of Hezbollah and Shiite Muslims in general. That was rather ironic, since previously in Iraq, Al Qaeda has labeled Shiites Muslim as infidels and claimed responsibility for some of the bloodier assaults on Shiite neighborhoods there.

But by taking on Israel, Hezbollah had instantly eclipsed Al Qaeda, analysts said. "Everyone will be asking, 'Where is Al Qaeda now?' " said Adel al-Toraifi, a Saudi columnist and expert on Sunni extremists.

Mr. Rabbani of the International Crisis Group said Hezbollah's ability to withstand the Israeli assault and to continue to lob missiles well into Israel exposed the weaknesses of Arab governments with far greater resources than Hezbollah.

"Public opinion says that if they are getting more on the battlefield than you are at the negotiating table, and you have so many more means at your disposal, then what the hell are you doing?" Mr. Rabbani said. "In comparison with the small embattled guerrilla movement, the Arab states seem to be standing idly by twiddling their thumbs."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos: A crowd in Cairo on Wednesday, cordoned off by the police, condemned the killing of Lebanese civilians and expressed support for Hezbollah. (Photo by Agence France-Presse -- Getty Images)(pg. A16): GAZA -- Palestinians buried an 8-month-old girl who was killed, along with her mother and sister, by an Israeli artillery shell. Israeli troops and Palestinian militants clashed again along the eastern edge of Gaza City. (Photo by Suhaib Salem/Reuters)

HAIFA -- Mourners at the funeral of the Israeli soldier who was killed Wednesday in Marun al Ras, Lebanon. Israel's justice minister said the stalled cease-fire talks this week were in effect a go-ahead to continue fighting. (Photo by Lynsey Addario for The New York Times)(pg. A1)

Load-Date: July 28, 2006

Hezbollah, Israel forces clash; Guerrilla positions destroyed by air attacks in fighting along disputed Lebanese border

The Record (Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario)

May 14, 2005 Saturday Final Edition

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Section: FRONT; Pg. A9; NEWS

Length: 461 words

Dateline: BEIRUT

Body

Hezbollah and Israeli forces exchanged barrages of shells and rockets across the Lebanese border yesterday and Israeli warplanes destroyed guerrilla positions in the heaviest clash in months between the two sides.

The exchange began when **Hezbollah** fighters fired a volley of shells and rockets at Israeli positions in the disputed border area of Chebaa Farms.

Israeli forces retaliated with artillery fire against the apparent source of the fire in the Lebanese village of Kfar Chouba.

Associated Press

Witnesses counted at least 45 Israeli shells, and Israel said the barrage hit a **Hezbollah** position.

Warplanes and helicopter gunships then struck three more guerrilla posts, the Israeli military said. An Israeli tank also fired at a **Hezbollah** observation post near the village of Rmeish, far from the combat near the Mediterranean coastline, witnesses said.

There were no Israeli casualties from the **Hezbollah** fire, a military spokesperson said. There was no immediate word on casualties on the Lebanese side.

Hezbollah's Al-Manar television said the attack was in retaliation for Israeli attacks on Lebanese territory, including a hit on civilian houses in Kfar Chouba.

"The Islamic Resistance warns the Zionist enemy that any attack on civilians will be met with the appropriate response," it said.

The Israeli military accused **Hezbollah** of trying to disturb the calm along the border and said it will "not allow further provocations of any sort."

"What is most important at this stage is that there is a government in Beirut, and Lebanon is obliged by the UN not to allow **Hezbollah** or other terror organizations to act," Maj.-Gen. Benny Gantz said. "If we have to respond we will respond."

Hezbollah, Israel forces clash; Guerrilla positions destroyed by air attacks in fighting along disputed Lebanese border

It was the heaviest clash between Israel and Hezbollah since January, when Hezbollah guerrillas blew up an Israeli bulldozer operating in Chebaa Farms and Israeli warplanes retaliated with strikes that wounded two Lebanese women.

The increase in tensions comes amid political turbulence in Lebanon. Hezbollah's ally Syria withdrew its troops from Lebanon last month, weakening Damascus' hold in the country -- while Hezbollah has been seeking a greater political role.

At the same time, Hezbollah is under international pressure to disarm, with a UN resolution demanding militias in Lebanon give up their weapons. The guerrilla group has refused, and Lebanese authorities have resisted pressuring Hezbollah, calling it a resistance movement, not a militia.

The Lebanese army has not deployed in the south, allowing Hezbollah to keep security control there since Israeli troops ended their 18-year occupation in the area in 2000.

The guerrilla group's years-long confrontation with Israel has been a major source of its popularity in Lebanon, even beyond the country's Shiite community.

Load-Date: May 14, 2005

End of Document

Lebanon shares the guilt: Lebanese officials were complicit in Hezbollah's act of war

The Gazette (Montreal)

July 25, 2006 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL / OP-ED; Pg. A19

Length: 959 words

Byline: BERYL P. WAJSMAN, Freelance

Body

Jack Todd's Saturday column on fighting terrorism with "state terrorism" presents an erroneous view of the origins of the current Middle East conflict and a misunderstanding of state responsibilities and appropriate response in the existing international legal order.

When he asks whether it matters who started the conflict he exhibits a dangerous naivete. Responsibility matters. And it matters precisely because terrorists and terror-states must know that their actions cannot be carried out without consequences.

This conflict did not start with the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers by Hezbollah. It started when Israel unilaterally pulled out of Gaza and was subsequently assaulted by 1,000 Qassam rocket attacks carried out by Hamas. Todd states someone has to have the courage to stop conflict. Well, Israel tried. It did not retaliate for a single attack. It took the body blows.

But then Hamas was elected the government of the Palestinian Authority. That was the beginning of the road we are on today. Within an hour after the attack on Kerem Shalom on the Israeli side of the Gaza border, which resulted in the deaths of two Israeli soldiers and the kidnapping of another, Hamas gleefully accepted responsibility for planning and execution. Hamas, as the ruling entity of a political jurisdiction, had committed an act of war against another political jurisdiction.

Hezbollah's attack near Kiryat Shemona in the north of Israel, which resulted in eight dead Israeli soldiers and the kidnapping of two others, was also no mere act of a terrorist group, for Hezbollah is much more than that. Hezbollah, as a political party, is part of the Lebanese government holding two cabinet posts. That government has for two years refused to comply with UN Resolution 1559 and disarm Hezbollah's military wing.

Lebanese President Emile Lahoud and Prime Minister Fouad Siniora have gone beyond that. Siniora told Italy's respected Corriere della Sera that he does not want Hezbollah disarmed. Lahoud flatly declared that the Lebanese army, which Lebanon has consistently refused to dispatch to Hezbollah territory, will fight with Hezbollah against Israel. Lebanon has declared, in fact and in law, that the Hezbollah military is a division of the Lebanese army. In so doing, the Lebanese government has hoisted itself on its own petard.

Lebanon shares the guilt: Lebanese officials were complicit in Hezbollah's act of war

International law recognizes that any country attacked by a terrorist group may prosecute military reprisals against the host country of such a group as if, in international legal authority Robert Tucker's words, "That country itself participated in those attacks." This is known as the doctrine of "self-help."

But in the case of Lebanon we need not even resort to these noble standards of international law. The government of Lebanon has made it clear that Hezbollah is an integral part of the Lebanese authority and of its army. Therefore, Hezbollah's actions were ipso facto done in the name of the Lebanese state and were, therefore, acts of war committed by Lebanon. Israel is permitted full retaliatory response to defend itself and its people.

Furthermore, Todd's implication that Israel is targeting Lebanese civilians and not taking even minimum precautions to protect them borders on the worst kind of bias. Israel has showered Beirut with millions of leaflets hours before any raids. Israel did the same in south Lebanon asking people to move back 30 kilometres. It even invited television crews to film preparations on the northern border, something that NBC military analyst and U.S. Medal of Honour winner Colonel Jack Jacobs called wonderfully humanitarian but militarily "stupid" because it put Israel's soldiers at risk by exposing their positions to Hezbollah.

No civilians have ever been targeted. Israel's bombing of Hezbollah positions in south Lebanon and in Beirut has been as surgical as possible. Contrary to many of the pictures we see on television, even the bombing in south Beirut has been limited to an area approximately 20 blocks long by 10 blocks wide.

Anyone seeing the tape will view a Beirut quite intact except for the area where the Hezbollah cowers position their guns and headquarters under the human shield of civilians. Why doesn't Todd question Hezbollah's strategy of hiding behind women and children not only in south Beirut, but in the villages of south Lebanon?

And curiously, he fails to mention that Hezbollah and Hamas have openly stated all Israeli civilians are fodder for their homicide bombers. Yes, it is sad that hundreds of Lebanese have been killed. But is it any less sad that Israelis have had to suffer over 9,000 terror attacks and thousands dead in the past six years? Or is Israeli blood cheaper than Lebanese blood?

Contrary to Todd's argument, Prime Minister Stephen Harper is not following the United States. He is leading Canada. He was the first Western leader to demand Hamas renounce violence upon its election, the first to cut off non-humanitarian aid to Hamas, and the first to demand the arrest of Saeed Mortazavi, the Iranian prosecutor who beat Montreal photojournalist Zara Khazemi over the head with his shoe during torture sessions that led to her death, when Iran sent him as its observer to the UN Human Rights Council meeting in Geneva.

And when Harper declared in Kandahar that Canadians "don't cut and run" he restored Canadian pride and purpose and put the world on notice we were back on course as a nation that would be engaged in mankind's transcendent struggles for redemptive change. No longer were we to be just salon liberals cowering in smug self-satisfaction that masked nothing less than our own self-doubt driven by a jealousy of others' self-belief.

Beryl P. Wajzman is the president of the Institute for Public Affairs of Montreal.

Graphic

Photo: HUSSEIN MALL, AP; Lebanese citizens check their houses in a destroyed street in the southern suburbs of Beirut, where most of Hezbollah's forces in the Lebanese capital are based.

Load-Date: July 25, 2006

Lebanon shares the guilt: Lebanese officials were complicit in Hezbollah's act of war

End of Document

London targeted by Hezbollah bombers; Sleeper cells are poised to strike throughout Europe

Sunday Express

July 30, 2006 Sunday

U.K. 1st Edition

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Section: NEWS; 4

Length: 590 words

Byline: EXCLUSIVE By Julia Hartley-Brewer POLITICAL EDITOR

Body

HEZBOLLAH "sleeper" cells across Western Europe have been ordered to prepare to carry out terror attacks on London and other cities in protest at the Israeli bombardment of Lebanon.

The militant Lebanese group is reported to have cells in more than 20 countries around the world - and all are poised to launch deadly bombing attacks on innocent civilians.

Imad Mugniyeh, Lebanese commander of **Hezbollah's** overseas operations, is understood to be behind the plan and is co-ordinating its execution. He headed the FBI's Most Wanted Terrorists list until the 9/11 attacks saw Osama Bin Laden become America's public enemy number one.

According to German intelligence sources, the attacks will be launched if Israel continues its military offensive against Lebanon.

A similar alarm has been raised by Israel's Shin Bet security service and Israeli embassies and institutions have been placed on high alert.

It is believed that **Hezbollah**, which also has sleeper cells in Latin America and southeast Asia, has already been involved in several spectacular attacks on western targets.

Mugniyeh, who is known as "the Lebanese Bin Laden", lives in Iran and has evaded capture for more than 20 years, despite the US placing a GBP 3million bounty on his head.

Western intelligence reports claim he has connections in Europe, Africa, Latin America and the US and is said to have met Bin Laden.

He is thought to be almost impossible to trace after having plastic surgery to disguise his face and change his fingerprints.

The young Mugniyeh first attracted the attention of western intelligence services over his involvement in the kidnapping and torture of William Buckley, the CIA station chief in Beirut, in 1984. Mugniyeh, in his mid-forties, has also been linked to the bombing of the American embassy and marine barracks in Beirut in 1983, as well as the 1985 hijacking of a TWA jet and murder of one of its passengers.

London targeted by Hezbollah bombers Sleeper cells are poised to strike throughout Europe

He is wanted in Argentina for his role in recruiting the bombers of the Israeli embassy and Jewish centre in Buenos Aires in 1992.

Mugniyeh left Lebanon and fled to Iran in 1994 with his wife and son after a failed assassination attempt. He is believed to have played an active role in fomenting trouble in Iraq.

Former CIA agent Robert Baer has described Mugniyeh as "the master terrorist", saying: "He is the most dangerous terrorist we have ever faced. Mugniyeh is probably the most intelligent, most capable operative we have ever run across, including the KGB or anybody else."

Mugniyeh is known to have close links with the Iranian leadership, reportedly attending a "terror summit" in Syria this year alongside Iran's hardline fundamentalist President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. In Damascus, the pair met the leaders of Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad and Hamas.

US officials and Israeli intelligence sources believe Mugniyeh has now taken charge of plotting Iran's retaliation against western targets should President Bush order a strike on Iranian nuclear sites. Last night Nadim Shehadi, a Middle East expert at Chatham House, the foreign policy think tank in London, warned that the current crisis could also make a fresh Al Qaeda attack on Western Europe more likely.

He said: "There is a strong rivalry between Hezbollah and Al Qaeda. The real risk is how this will affect Al Qaeda. They have been attacking Hezbollah, accusing them of being infidels and Hezbollah have hit back saying Al Qaeda kill women and children.

"Now Al Qaeda are being upstaged and they need to show their might - to prove their credentials with another major attack."

Graphic

NO LET-UP: Israeli armour continues to pound targets in southern Lebanon yesterday as there was a glimmer of hope for a ceasefire

Load-Date: July 31, 2006

**Hezbollah and Israelis exchange fire;
Shells and rockets were fired across Lebanon's border. Israeli planes
attacked guerrilla posts.**

The Philadelphia Inquirer

MAY 15, 2005 Sunday BULLDOG EDITION

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

Found on Philly.com

Section: NATIONAL; Pg. A05

Length: 363 words

Byline: Sam F. Ghattas ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: BEIRUT, Lebanon

Body

Hezbollah and Israeli forces exchanged barrages of shells and rockets across the Lebanese border Friday, and Israeli warplanes destroyed guerrilla positions in the heaviest clash in months between the two sides.

The flare-up came amid political turbulence in Lebanon. **Hezbollah**'s ally, Syria, withdrew its troops from Lebanon last month, weakening Damascus' hold in the country. Meanwhile, **Hezbollah** has been seeking a greater political role.

The Israeli military accused **Hezbollah** of seeking to disturb the calm along the border and warned it would "not allow further provocations of any sort."

"Lebanon is obliged by the U.N. not to allow **Hezbollah** or other terror organizations to act," Maj. Gen. Benny Gantz, Israel's chief of the northern command, told reporters. "And as I said, if we have to respond, we will respond."

Hezbollah's Al-Manar television said the group's barrage was in retaliation for Israeli attacks on Lebanese territory, including a hit on civilian houses in the village of Kfar Chouba.

"The Islamic Resistance warns the Zionist enemy that any attack on civilians will be met with the appropriate response," the statement said.

In the clash, **Hezbollah** fighters fired a volley of shells and rockets at Israeli positions in the disputed border area of Chebaa Farms. Israeli forces fired artillery at Kfar Chouba. Each side said the other began firing first.

Witnesses counted at least 45 Israeli shells, and Israel said the barrage hit a **Hezbollah** position.

Hezbollah and Israelis exchange fire; Shells and rockets were fired across Lebanon 's border. Israeli planes attacked guerrilla posts.

Warplanes and helicopter gunships then struck three more guerrilla posts, the Israeli military said. An Israeli tank also fired at a Hezbollah observation post near the village of Rmeish, witnesses said.

No Israeli casualties or damage were reported, an Israeli military spokesman said. There was no immediate word on casualties on the Lebanese side.

It was the heaviest clash between Israel and Hezbollah since January, when Hezbollah guerrillas blew up an Israeli bulldozer operating in Chebaa Farms and Israeli warplanes retaliated with strikes that wounded two Lebanese women.

Hezbollah is under international pressure to disarm, with a U.N. resolution demanding militias in Lebanon give up their weapons.

Graphic

PHOTO;

MOHAMMAD ZAATARI, Associated Press

An Israeli military base along the border with Lebanon, seen from Abbat Tomb, near Houla, southern Lebanon. The Israeli army retaliated against an artillery barrage by Lebanese guerillas.

Load-Date: September 13, 2005

Mideast skies rain death, destruction: RELENTLESS TOLL: Civilian casualties mount as Israel, Hezbollah trade missiles, rocket fire

The Vancouver Province (British Columbia)

July 16, 2006 Sunday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A6

Length: 488 words

Byline: News Services

Dateline: BEIRUT

Body

BEIRUT -- Israeli planes blistered the Lebanese capital's southern suburbs with bombs in the early-morning darkness today -- as Israeli politicians vowed to hunt and kill Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah.

"We will wipe him out at the first opportunity . . . He had better pray to Allah," warned Israeli cabinet minister Zeev Boim.

Nasrallah's movement, which controls the southern strip of Lebanon bordering Israel, prompted the attack when it captured two Israeli soldiers and killed eight others in an attack on July 12. Yesterday, it vowed to launch an "open war" on the southern country.

Hezbollah rockets struck deep into Israel yesterday, wounding eight people in Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee and 15 others across northern Israel.

In response, Israel tightened its noose around a reeling Lebanon last night, striking Hezbollah strongholds, bombing central Beirut for the first time and pounding seaports and a key bridge.

Dense columns of smoke could be seen rising from south of the city this morning, and many buildings were razed.

Israeli shelling has already hit roads leading to an international airport south of Beirut and to border points leading into Syria, which has offered to help Lebanon cope with Israeli attacks.

A half-dozen thunderous explosions shook southern Beirut, where Hezbollah has its headquarters and where much of Israel's intensifying air assault has been aimed since cross-border hostilities erupted Wednesday. The air strikes have killed at least 35 civilians, including 15 children.

Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora repeated his demands for an immediate UN-backed ceasefire yesterday. He denounced Israel for turning his country into a "disaster zone" and appealed for foreign aid.

Israel has said the way out would be for Lebanon to implement a UN resolution demanding Hezbollah be disarmed.

Mideast skies rain death, destruction: **RELENTLESS TOLL**: Civilian casualties mount as Israel , Hezbollah trade missiles, rocket fire

The Beirut government, led by an anti-Syrian coalition, lacks the unity and firepower to itself disarm **Hezbollah**, the only Lebanese faction to keep its guns after the 1975-90 civil war.

Israeli tanks and armoured personnel carriers also entered northern Gaza late last night, Palestinian residents said.

The Israeli military later denied the charge.

But it did accuse elite Iranian troops of helping **Hezbollah** fire a sophisticated radar-guided missile at an Israeli ship, describing an apparent surprise blow by militants who had until now been using only low-technology weapons.

Iran denied it has any troops in Lebanon, and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad compared the behaviour of Israel in launching an offensive against Lebanon to that of Nazi Germany.

Canada joined European and Arab nations and the U.S. in moving to evacuate expatriates and tourists from Lebanon, where a reported 10,000 Canadian citizens have contacted the Canadian Embassy.

Canada's Foreign Affairs website warned yesterday against all travel to Lebanon and advised Canadians in the country to stay indoors and not to travel.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Hassan Nasrallah 'open war' on Israel; Colour

Photo: Agence France-Presse; Distraught Lebanese woman hops off plane that brought her from Damascus in Syria to a military base near Madrid.;

Colour Photo: Agence France-Presse; Bodies of 18 civilians, including nine children, killed when missiles struck vehicles near Shamaa lie outside a hospital in Tyre. Other civilians died in an Israeli helicopter gunship attack.;

Colour Photo: The Associated Press; Israelis examine a house hit by a barrage of rockets fired by **Hezbollah** guerrillas in Safed, northern Israel, yesterday. The guerrillas have rockets that can reach up to 70 kilometres.;

Colour Photo: The Associated Press; An Israeli man views wreckage of a house hit by a **Hezbollah**-fired rocket in the northern Israeli town of Carmiel yesterday. **Hezbollah** warned that the guerrillas could strike Tel Aviv.;

Colour Photo: Agence France-Presse; Smoke rises after yesterday's Israeli raid near Bahman Hospital in Haret Hreik in the southern suburb of Beirut, **Hezbollah**'s stronghold. Israel continued bombing across Lebanon with no apparent hope for a halt to the attacks.;

Colour Photo: The Associated Press; Damaged car is abandoned on a destroyed bridge after it was struck by an Israeli missile on the outskirts of the southern Lebanon city of Tyre yesterday.;

Colour Photo: Agence France-Presse; Water pipes lie in ruins in a street in the southern Beirut suburb of Dahiyeh Junubiya yesterday as Israel continued to bombard the **Hezbollah** stronghold for the fourth consecutive day.;

Colour Photo: The Associated Press; UN peacekeepers cover bodies of Lebanese killed when Israeli warplanes targeted their convoy fleeing on the main road near the southern border village of Ter Harfa, Lebanon, yesterday. The dead included **women** and children.

Load-Date: July 16, 2006

Mideast skies rain death, destruction: RELENTLESS TOLL: Civilian casualties mount as Israel , Hezbollah
trade missiles, rocket fire

End of Document

Hezbollah declares election sweep; Officials claim they won all 23 seats in a south Lebanon region bordering Israel

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

June 6, 2005 Monday

Copyright 2005 Woodward Communications, Inc.

Section: National/World; Pg. a8

Length: 855 words

Byline: ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: BINT JBEIL, Lebanon

Body

Hezbollah and its Shiite allies claimed a massive victory in southern Lebanon in Sunday's second stage of national elections, a vote the militant group hopes will prove its strength and send a message of defiance to the United States.

Hundreds of **Hezbollah** supporters drove through the streets of Beirut waving the group's yellow flag and the green flag of Amal in celebration. In Beirut's predominantly Shiite southern suburbs, people lit up the sky with fireworks.

Four hours after polling stations closed, **Hezbollah**'s deputy leader, Sheik Naim Kassem, and election ally Nabih Berri, of the Shiite Muslim Amal movement, said they had won all 23 seats in this region bordering Israel. Official results aren't expected until Monday.

"It has become clear that all members of the Resistance, Liberation and Development Ticket have won in (southern Lebanon's) two regions," Kassim told reporters. "The south has declared through this vote its clear stance in supporting this track."

He said that in one constituency, with more than half the votes counted, **Hezbollah** official Mohammed Raad was leading with 69,207 votes against his closest rival, Elias Abu Rizk, with 7,000 votes. In the another, with more than a third of votes counted, Berri was leading with 35,560 while his closest opponent, Riad Asaad had 5,304 votes, Kassim said.

Berri thanked the people for "renewing the confidence in the ticket that all its members have won."

The elections, divided by region and spread over four consecutive Sundays, began last week in the capital Beirut where the dominant issue was the February assassination of former premier Rafik Hariri. His killing triggered massive street protests at home and international outrage abroad that eventually forced Syria to pull its army out of Lebanon, ending three decades of military domination.

"All the south came out today to send a clear message to the Americans that they embrace the resistance (**Hezbollah**'s) weapons and that they are independent in their decision and they are not subservient to international resolutions," Sheik Nabil Kaouk, **Hezbollah**'s commander in southern Lebanon, told reporters shortly after voting began in Sunday's second phase of four-stage parliamentary elections.

Hezbollah declares election sweep; Officials claim they won all 23 seats in a south Lebanon region bordering Israel

The United States, which labels Hezbollah a terrorist organization, wants the guerrilla group to abandon its weapons in line with last year's U.N. Security Council Resolution 1559. Hezbollah has refused to disarm, a position backed by Lebanese authorities.

Voter turnout was noticeably heavy in Shiite areas and lower in Christian and Sunni Muslim districts, according to preliminary estimates by candidates' campaigns and local television stations. Amal and Hezbollah campaigners estimated voter turnout at about 45 percent.

One reason for the lack of interest by some of the 665,000 eligible voters is that six of the 23 seats were won uncontested before the balloting even began because there were no major challengers.

Those citizens who did vote expressed strong support for Hezbollah, the guerrilla group that fought Israel during an 18-year occupation. Israel occupied south Lebanon from 1982-2000.

"We should show our support for the resistance and those who were martyred for the sake of liberating this country," a smiling Kamel Hamka, 77, said as he walked out of a polling station in Bint Jbeil, a Shiite town a few miles from the Israeli border.

Outside a polling station in the town's center, veiled young women Hezbollah activists distributed candidate lists and cars blared guerrilla songs and speeches from loudspeakers to encourage voters.

"The people's participation in the elections is a vote for the resistance and its weapons," said Hassan Fadlallah, a Hezbollah candidate allied with Amal.

Hezbollah expects strong voter support will give it greater political influence to confront international pressure to disarm now that its Syrian backers have withdrawn from the country.

The elections, which are scheduled for two more Sundays in other regions, follow the assassination last week of an anti-Syrian journalist and continuing calls by the opposition for President Emile Lahoud's resignation. The anti-Syrian opposition hopes the elections will end Damascus' control of the legislature.

In last Sunday's polls in Beirut, anti-Syrian opposition candidates took most of the capital's 19 parliamentary seats.

But the vote in the predominantly Shiite south is centered on Hezbollah and its weapons.

Hezbollah, backed by both Syria and Iran, is fielding 14 candidates across Lebanon, hoping to build on the nine seats it already holds in the 128-member legislature. It has already won a seat in Beirut.

While the balloting in southern Lebanon was peaceful, the first major violence of the elections broke out in central Lebanon, where Druse supporters of opposition leader Walid Jumblatt and rival Talal Arsan clashed. Seven people were wounded in the gunfire in the mountain resort of Sofar before troops intervened and separated the two sides, the official National News Agency reported. The region votes next Sunday.

The Lebanese army said it had detained 20 people involved in the clashes in Sofar.

Load-Date: June 6, 2005

Empty Silence, Occasional Rocket Blasts, and Anger in a Bombed-Out Hezbollah Town

The New York Times

July 26, 2006 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 10; HOSTILITIES IN THE MIDEAST: MILITIA STRONGHOLD

Length: 1103 words

Byline: By SABRINA TAVERNISE

Dateline: NABATIYE, Lebanon, July 25

Body

A leaking water pipe was the only sound in the smashed central square of this otherwise silent town in southern Lebanon. The people were gone. Cars were nowhere in sight. An arc of Hezbollah flags fluttered gracefully in the wind.

The bang, when it does come, is terrifying. Shortly before noon, under the glare of the hot sun, doctors standing in the parking lot of Ragheh Hareb Hospital ducked at the crack of an Israeli missile as it struck a building on a nearby hill. Thick white smoke curled up into the air. A similar blast killed six people in two houses on Tuesday morning, according to doctors at two hospitals where the bodies were taken.

Across the south, towns and villages have been emptied of their inhabitants, leaving eerie scenes of ghostly desolation like that in Nabatiye, eight miles north of the Israeli border. Stores are locked. Windows near bombing sites are gone. In some cases, the power is out. Hospitals are still functioning but are low on everything: fuel for generators, dialysis filters, antibiotics. Basements have become shelters for the elderly, the young and the disabled.

The Lebanese who remain listen carefully for planes. The sound slices through the silence, and missiles fly from so far up that they are invisible to people on the ground.

"Maybe tomorrow they'll hit here," said Ahmed Abu Zaid, an orthopedic surgeon who said he had stayed at the hospital to help, while his family moved north to safety.

It was not just his anger speaking. Like many things in this town -- whose main street was adorned with images of Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, the Hezbollah leader (there is even a Nasrallah auto repair shop), and Shiite religious figures -- the hospital seemed to have its loyalties. Men whispered and darkly scrutinized press badges. Names and numbers were carefully recorded. Journalists were asked to leave. Men wore black shirts and rode motor scooters, both Hezbollah trademarks.

One of the most devastated areas in the heart of downtown was the site of a Hezbollah bank, now destroyed. It gave out small loans, said Imad Ashail, a 71-year-old who calls prayers in a mosque and was there during the first few days of the war when the town center was hardest hit.

Empty Silence, Occasional Rocket Blasts, and Anger in a Bombed-Out Hezbollah Town

"Whoever needed money, they came here," Mr. Ashail said, pointing with a weathered hand wrapped in a string of prayer beads toward where the bank had stood. Nearby, the top four floors of an apartment building had collapsed into a shape that looked like a listing layer cake.

"Bank Emdad," he said. "It was Hezbollah's. So they bombed it."

Five people had been killed in the apartment building, he said.

The targets were often puzzling. Monday night's bombing hit a house next door to that of Shirin Hamza, a 21-year-old Palestinian. Her mother, father and brother were killed when the walls collapsed around them from the force of the blast, and she was wounded. A doctor at Gondour Hospital, where Ms. Hamza was being treated, said her father had sold coffee. It was unclear if the neighbors had Hezbollah affiliations.

Ms. Hamza, sitting upright in her hospital bed, spoke in sad bursts, telling the story of how she was buried by walls and furniture.

"I began screaming, but no one was hearing me," she said. Her sister entered the hospital room. They embraced for more than a minute.

Doctors brought journalists to her room, but took pains to steer the conversation away from the topic of Hezbollah and the military details of the war.

"No political questions, O.K.?" said Dr. Jamal Allau.

Dr. Allau, who spoke fluent Russian after years of medical school in Ukraine, said people in the town had been surprised at the bombing of a gas station and parking garage, whose crumpled remains were visible through the window near Ms. Hamza's hospital bed. Another thing he said he could not explain was the nature of some of the wounds. The skin, he said, dissolved like wet paper when he began to stitch. He did not, however, show any such wounds.

Intermittently through the afternoon, artillery fire boomed nearby. One resident said it was coming from Kafr Kila, a Lebanese village near the Israeli border. Nabatiye and the surrounding areas have been hit dozens of times in the past days alone. In the hardest hit towns, like Jibchit and Duair, doctors said the mere movement of a vehicle could draw missile fire.

But the villages are mostly empty now, and Dr. Allau's hospital was crowded more with displaced people than patients, it appeared. (It was not clear whether Hezbollah fighters were being treated there, and doctors did not allow free access to the hospital rooms.)

In the hospital basement, a thin, elderly man sat on a couch slowly chewing a piece of flatbread. Children lay sprawled on the tiled floor. A man propped up on the floor against a couch said he could not leave because he could not move without a wheelchair. He asked to be helped to locate relatives.

In all, about 100 people, mostly women and children, were living there. At night, Dr. Allau said, the basement fills up with 300 to 400 people.

"We are smiling, but inside our hearts are bleeding," Dr. Allau said. "Go show our problems to the world. Why are they blaming us? Politics, O.K., but we are ordinary people."

Small pockets of families who were unable to leave were scattered throughout the town. In a small grain storage room a few blocks from the center, a family of five and a neighbor were sharing a lunch of red beans, okra and rice. They said they did not leave because the road was too dangerous.

Lying on mats, they talked of life, which had improved dramatically in the past two days because the electricity had suddenly, inexplicably, come back on, after more than a week of darkness. They had long run out of candles and had been spending the evenings in the dark. A teapot bubbled on a small Sterno-powered burner.

Empty Silence, Occasional Rocket Blasts, and Anger in a Bombed-Out Hezbollah Town

The mother, Zainab Dia, a 40-year-old with thick glasses in a housecoat, asked Mr. Ashail, the prayer caller, how best to pray to ask God to stop the violence.

"I want to ask God to make things calm," she said.

Mr. Ashail gave her a set of instructions, which included praying twice in rapid succession. He left the building and motioned to his right. A mosque with a green top and a flag sat a few houses down the hill. It is a **Hezbollah** mosque, he volunteered.

Suddenly, two men in T-shirts walked up to Mr. Ashail and began questioning him. Who were the visitors, the men wanted to know. Press badges were scrutinized again.

As they walked away, Mr. Ashail shrugged.

"He has the right," he said of one of the men. "He's **Hezbollah** here."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo: A deserted butcher shop in Nabatiye, which is nearly a ghost town. (Photo by Joao Silva for The New York Times)

Load-Date: July 26, 2006

End of Document

Hezbollah, Hamas illustrate power at ballot box; Voters reward groups with strong Islamic ties

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

June 7, 2005 Tuesday

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Section: Other; Pg. a5

Length: 722 words

Byline: ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: CAIRO, Egypt

Body

To much of the West, **Hezbollah** is an Islamic militant group known for its weapons and attacks on Israel. But for many voters in southern Lebanon, it's the group that provides the schools, the health clinics and a healthy dose of national pride.

Hezbollah's success Monday in the first Lebanese vote free of Syrian domination and the growing strength of Hamas in Palestinian elections signal that as democracy spreads in the Middle East, those with strong Islamic ties are likely to do well.

The question is, how much should that worry the West?

Is the prominence of Islamic parties - not just in the Lebanese south and in Palestinian towns, but also across Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Egypt - a sign of support for ideas like denying **women** rights and a turn toward militancy?

Or does it simply show the natural evolution of groups that, because of their longtime opposition to autocratic regimes and their strong social service networks, are now the natural heirs to political power?

Getting the radicals to run - that is, drawing them into a normal political process - might be the best way to get them to turn away from militancy, said Saad Eddin Ibrahim, an Egyptian-American scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington.

He points to the example of Turkey, where an Islamic-rooted party proved relatively moderate once in power. The worst thing the West can do is keep religious groups out, making them "martyrs" who gain support without proving their governing skills, he says.

Reza Aslan, a scholar at the University of California-Santa Barbara say it's inevitable that Islamic groups will do well in societies that are deeply traditional and where majorities are Muslim.

In Iraq, the Shiite-based party now in power has said it wants to make Islam the foundation of the new constitution, but has shown no signs it will try to create an Iranian-style theocracy, Aslan said.

As part of its push for democracy in the Middle East, the Bush administration has indicated it supports the idea of Islamic parties' participation in Egyptian elections.

Hezbollah, Hamas illustrate power at ballot box; Voters reward groups with strong Islamic ties

Nevertheless, there are still strong fears about the idea of Islamists hostile to the West and Israel taking power.

"If **Hezbollah** was only a political party, we in Israel wouldn't be as concerned as we are," said Israel's Foreign Ministry spokesman, Mark Regev, noting that the group remains heavily armed.

There is no doubt that many Arabs support Islamist parties simply because they are perceived as anti-American, said Diaa Rashwan, a Cairo-based expert on Islamic groups. Their popularity "has increased because America makes them look like its enemies," he said.

Yet, there also are autocratic governments willing to make that argument simply to retain power.

Egypt's ruling Mubarak regime insists the country's most powerful opposition group - the religious Muslim Brotherhood - can never become a political party. The country's prime minister told U.S. officials recently that the group may pretend to support democracy and be moderate in public sessions, but reverts to calling for strict Islamic adherence before true believers.

Critics say Mubarak's regime makes that argument simply because it would lose to the Muslim Brotherhood in open elections.

In a similar vein, Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas called off upcoming parliamentary elections earlier this month, a move widely seen as giving his Fatah party time to fend off a challenge from Hamas. Hamas already had won a number of key local elections.

Hezbollah's situation is not as strong, yet there is no denying its support in at least southern parts of Lebanon.

Going into Lebanon's staggered elections, it had nine seats in the outgoing 128-seat legislature. Overall, after the victories in the south, the group is expected to win 11 seats, and also have one allied legislator in the south and two in the east.

Hezbollah itself has toyed with toning down its radicalism - insisting on keeping its arms as a buffer against Israel, but also seeking international support as a player in the country's politics.

Nsecretary Scott McClellan said Monday the United States regards **Hezbollah** as a terror group that should be disarmed.

No one, says Ibrahim, should expect **Hezbollah** or Hamas "to turn into Western-style democratic parties overnight."

Sally Buzbee is the Chief of Middle East news for The Associated Press, based in Cairo.

Load-Date: June 8, 2005

Middle East crisis: Israeli city shaken by Hizbullah rocket attack: Eight die, many injured in strike on Haifa rail depot Safety fears close schools, shops and factories

The Guardian - Final Edition

July 17, 2006 Monday

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Section: GUARDIAN HOME PAGES; Pg. 4

Length: 650 words

Byline: Rory McCarthy, Haifa

Body

The rocket came out of the morning sky and tore a gaping hole in the train depot's corrugated roof, directly above track number three. Windows in the trains on either side were shattered and on the ground ran broad stains of blood. Dozens of reddening surgical gloves lay where they had been discarded in a rush by the medics.

The rocket struck shortly after 9am yesterday on what was a working day, when there were already 30 maintenance staff at their jobs in the Israel Railways yard at Hof Shemen, in northern Haifa. Police said a siren sounded, as they have sounded in towns across northern Israel for the past five days, giving a one-minute warning of an impending strike.

It is doubtful the men even heard the sound above the noise of their machines and when the rocket struck, eight of them were killed where they stood - the most deadly strike on Israel in five days of conflict. Another six were seriously injured and up to 20 others treated by ambulance crews who were quickly on the scene.

Tony Karam heard the explosion from his fourth-floor apartment across the road and his mother and sister-in-law hid under the kitchen table. But he ran out to the train yard. "I heard the sound and I knew immediately it was a rocket. I ran here and saw the bodies lying there on the ground, all in their working clothes. It was unbelievable, a disaster," said Mr Karam, 48.

"A doctor was checking the bodies, going from one to another. One of the men was still alive. It wasn't easy to look at. The doctor checked him and just said: 'Number three.'"

A minute or two behind the ambulance crews were the men from the Zaka organisation, who volunteer to carefully collect the body parts of the dead and remove them for proper burial.

"That sound of the rocket was so powerful. It was a sound we haven't heard in Haifa," Mr Karam said. A few minutes later another siren sounded and the small crowd that had gathered at the police tape near the scene of the morning's explosion fled for cover into a nearby office.

For all the 350 or so rockets fired by **Hizbullah** from southern Lebanon into northern Israel in the past five days, the damage has been far less than that inflicted on the Lebanese population over the border. The killing of the rail workers brought the civilian death toll to 12, including a grandmother and her grandchild who were killed on Friday.

Middle East crisis: Israeli city shaken by Hizbullah rocket attack: Eight die, many injured in strike on Haifa rail depot Safety fears close schools, shops and

Eight soldiers and four navy sailors have been killed since Wednesday, and there are the two being held by Hizbullah.

The other significance of yesterday's rocket at the railway yard was the fact that it was in Haifa, whose population of 270,000 makes it Israel's third-largest city and, at 30km from the Lebanese border, one of the southernmost targets to be hit. The Israeli government has announced a special order for the north to allow the

security forces to impose new restrictions to avert further casualties.

"The police as well as the Israeli Defence Forces gave specific orders to the citizens of Israel to go inside and stay inside security areas and safe zones," said inspector Micky Rosenfeld, a police spokesman. Shops, factories and schools have been closed. Even Tel Aviv, further down the coast, has been put on alert.

But as the sirens continued to sound, a small group of women stood outside the entrance to the train depot to lodge a small protest against the fighting. Yana Knoboba, 25, a psychology student from Haifa University, sat on the pavement holding a banner that read in Hebrew: "War will not bring peace."

"We don't want a greater war in the Middle East. We want Israel to negotiate to bring back our soldiers and to stop the re-occupation of Gaza," she said.

It is not a commonly held opinion in Israel's northern areas, where most people have said in recent days that they support their government's aggressive strikes on Lebanon. "It isn't about showing strength," she said. "I think strength is making peace, not war."

Load-Date: July 17, 2006

End of Document

Hezbollah claims regional victory: Second of four Lebanese elections. Voter turnout heavy in Shiite areas; group hopes to grow its political influence

The Gazette (Montreal)

June 6, 2005 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A16

Length: 526 words

Byline: HUSSEIN DAKROUB, AP

Dateline: BINT JBEIL, Lebanon

Body

Hezbollah and its Shiite allies claimed a massive victory in southern Lebanon in yesterday's second stage of national elections, a vote the militant group hopes will prove its strength and send a message of defiance to the United States.

Hundreds of **Hezbollah** supporters drove through the streets of Beirut waving the group's yellow flag and the green flag of Amal in celebration. In Beirut's predominantly Shiite southern suburbs, people up lit the sky with fireworks.

Four hours after polling stations closed, **Hezbollah's** deputy leader, Sheik Naim Kassem, and election ally Nabih Berri of the Shiite Amal movement, said they had won all 23 seats in this region bordering Israel. Official results aren't expected until today.

"It has become clear that all members of the Resistance, Liberation and Development Ticket have won in (southern Lebanon's) two regions," Kassem told reporters. "The south has declared through this vote its clear stance in supporting this track."

He said that in one constituency, with more than half the votes counted, **Hezbollah** official Mohammed Raad was leading with 69,207 votes against his closest rival, Elias Abu Rizk, with 7,000 votes. In the another, with more than one-third of votes counted, Berri was leading 35,560-5,304 over his closest opponent, Riad Asaad, Kassem said.

Berri thanked the people for "renewing the confidence in the ticket that all its members have won."

The elections, divided by region and spread over four consecutive Sundays, began last week in the capital Beirut, where the dominant issue was the February assassination of former prime minister Rafik Hariri. His killing triggered massive street protests at home and international outrage abroad that eventually forced Syria to pull its army out of Lebanon, ending three decades of military domination.

"All the south came out today to send a clear message to the Americans that they embrace the resistance (**Hezbollah's**) weapons and that they are independent in their decision and they are not subservient to international resolutions," Sheik Nabil Kaouk, **Hezbollah's** commander in southern Lebanon, said shortly after voting began.

Hezbollah claims regional victory: Second of four Lebanese elections. Voter turnout heavy in Shiite areas; group hopes to grow its political influence

The United States, which labels Hezbollah a terrorist organization, wants the guerrilla group to abandon its weapons in line with last year's United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559. Hezbollah has refused to disarm, a position backed by Lebanese authorities.

Voter turnout was noticeably heavy in Shiite areas and lower in Christian and Sunni districts, according to preliminary estimates by candidates' campaigns and local television stations. Amal and Hezbollah campaigners estimated voter turnout at about 45 per cent.

One reason for the lack of interest by some of the 665,000 eligible voters is that six of the 23 seats were uncontested.

Hezbollah expects strong voter support will give it greater political influence to confront international pressure to disarm now that its Syrian backers have withdrawn from the country.

The first major violence of the elections broke out in central Lebanon, where Druse supporters of opposition leader Walid Jumblatt and rival Talal Arsan clashed. That region votes Sunday.

Graphic

Colour Photo: DARKO BANDIC, AP; Lebanese women watch from their balcony as Hezbollah supporters pass by in Nabattiyeh, southern Lebanon, yesterday. Hezbollah, which fought Israel during an 18-year occupation, hopes to gain legitimacy through this month's elections.

Load-Date: June 6, 2005

Counter-rally dwarfs protests against Syria: Organized by Hezbollah: In Beirut, thousands show up to denounce U.S.

National Post (f/k/a The Financial Post) (Canada)

March 9, 2005 Wednesday

Toronto / Late Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. A14

Length: 662 words

Byline: Evan Osnos, Knight Ridder Newspapers

Dateline: BEIRUT

Body

BEIRUT - In a startling display of political strength, hundreds of thousands of Lebanese followers of the Syrian-backed group **Hezbollah** converged on Beirut yesterday to express their gratitude to Syria and angrily denounce the United States and Israel.

The demonstration dwarfed a series of anti-Syria rallies it was designed to counter and provided a sobering illustration of Lebanon's religious and political rivalries. After weeks of mounting pressure on Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, the outpouring of Lebanese support is likely to strengthen his hand as he weighs international calls to withdraw thousands of troops from Lebanon.

Hezbollah leaders and protesters scolded the demonstrators at earlier rallies for "insulting" Syria and taunted U.S. President George W. Bush and other Western leaders for hailing those protests as representative of Lebanese popular sentiment.

"To America and President Bush ... you're wrong in your calculations about Lebanon," **Hezbollah**'s spiritual leader, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, shouted to a fervent but peaceful crowd estimated to be as large as half a million people.

"I ask our compatriots in Lebanon or those observing us from abroad: Are these hundreds of thousands of people all puppets?" Sheikh Nasrallah asked from a balcony overlooking Riad Solh Square. "Is this entire crowd agents for the Syrians?"

The masses overcrowded a downtown plaza and filled acres of surrounding streets, swaying and chanting for hours. Men shinnied up trees and lampposts to wave the Lebanese flag and get a better glimpse of their leader. One banner billowing above the crowd succinctly captured the contrast to the previous weeks of anti-Syria protests: "Surprise."

Ismael Assiyali, a 72-year-old who attended the rally, belittled the earlier demonstrators.

"They are a speck in the sea," said Mr. Assiyali, who said he made the 90-minute trip to Beirut to honour a son who died fighting for **Hezbollah** against Israeli forces.

Counter-rally dwarfs protests against Syria : Organized by Hezbollah: In Beirut, thousands show up to denounce U.S.

Hezbollah, Arabic for "Party of God," is an Islamic resistance movement that grew out of Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon and has evolved into a major voice in Lebanese politics and society. Backed by weapons, money and guidance from Iran and Syria, it is an avowed enemy of Israel and the United States and seeks to create a Muslim fundamentalist state modelled on Iran.

Its leaders are concerned that a Syrian pullout could deprive them of their key patron and protector in Lebanese politics. They vowed to stage further rallies in coming days, opening an uncertain new phase in the Lebanese political drama that in three weeks has toppled a Syrian-backed government and forced the ongoing pullback of Syrian troops.

In contrast to the predominantly urban Christians, Druze and Sunni Muslims who have been rallying for an end to Syrian domination under the slogan "Independence 2005," **Hezbollah**'s mostly Shiite Muslim followers streamed in on rickety buses from rural stretches of southern and eastern Lebanon.

Where other protests have been a showcase for Beirut's appetite for Western fashion, this crowd was replete with **women** in traditional headscarves, overwhelmingly drawn from the 1.2 million Lebanese Shiites who make up a plurality of the country's four million people.

Even as yesterday's demonstration unfolded, Mr. Bush reiterated his demand for a full and immediate Syrian withdrawal, telling an audience in Washington: "Any who doubt the appeal of freedom in the Middle East can look to Lebanon, where the Lebanese people are demanding a free and independent nation." He said similar demands are likely to spread.

But for protesters like 35-year-old Wissam Mahmoud, **Hezbollah**'s appeal has only grown with U.S. and European pressure.

"Defending every last piece of Lebanese soil is our responsibility," he said. "We don't want any interference of any kind. We don't want America or France interfering in our affairs. We want co-operation between all the religious groups in Lebanon."

Lebanon's many mansions, A18

Graphic

Colour Photo: Sharif Karim, Reuters; A Lebanese demonstrator marches in a **Hezbollah**-organized protest yesterday.

Load-Date: March 9, 2005

Hezbollah fires new rockets: New weapon can strike deep in Israel. Southern Lebanese villages pounded, but Israelis pull back from Gaza incursion

The Gazette (Montreal)

July 29, 2006 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A4

Length: 600 words

Byline: KATHY GANNON, AP

Dateline: TYRE, Lebanon

Body

Hezbollah launched a new kind of rocket yesterday that made its deepest strike into Israel yet, while Israeli warplanes and artillery blasted apartment buildings and roads, gunning for guerrillas.

Lebanese officials said about 12 civilians died in the day's fighting; Israel said it killed 26 militants, raising to about 230 the total number killed in the campaign.

The United Nations decided to remove 50 observers from the Israeli-Lebanon border, locating them instead at better-protected posts with 2,000 lightly armed UN peacekeepers. The move comes days after Israeli bombs hit a UN observer station, killing a Canadian observer and three others.

In the south, rescue workers dug through the rubble of bombed houses, looking for bodies. Israel deployed a Patriot interceptor missile battery north of Tel Aviv, believing the area could be in range of **Hezbollah's** barrages.

Late yesterday, the Israeli army said it killed 26 **Hezbollah** guerrillas in fighting for the Shiite town of Bint Jbail. The army did not report Israeli casualties, but Israel Radio said six soldiers were wounded.

Hezbollah has verified 35 guerrilla casualties.

Hezbollah said its guerrillas attacked Israeli troops on a ridge overlooking Bint Jbail and in Maroun al-Ras, and nearby villages that Israeli troops overran last weekend. The guerrillas said five Israeli soldiers were wounded.

Bint Jbail had the largest Shiite community along the border; it was known as the "capital of the resistance" during Israel's 1982-2000 occupation because of its support for the **Hezbollah**.

Hezbollah said they used a new rocket for the first time, the Khaibar-1 - named after the site of a historic battle between Islam's Prophet Muhammad and Jewish tribes in the Arabian peninsula - to strike the Israeli town of Afula.

"With this, the Islamic Resistance begins a new stage of fighting, challenge and confrontation with a strong determination and full belief in God's victory," **Hezbollah** said in a statement.

Five of the rockets crashed into empty fields outside Afula, causing no injuries.

Hezbollah fires new rockets: New weapon can strike deep in Israel . Southern Lebanese villages pounded, but Israelis pull back from Gaza incursion

Israel said the rockets have four times the power and range of Katyusha rockets, making them able to hit Tel Aviv's northern outskirts.

Hundreds of Katyushas have hit northern Israel in the current fighting, including 96 yesterday, one of which hit a hospital.

Also yesterday, Israeli tanks and troops pulled back to the Israel-Gaza border after an unusually deadly incursion that killed 30 Palestinians over three days. The army said the withdrawal was temporary.

In southern Lebanon, Israeli missile strikes and artillery rained down around towns and roads targeting rocket sites and buildings believed connected to Hezbollah but wreaking destruction in populated areas.

One air strike flattened a house in the village of Hadatha, and six people inside were believed dead or wounded, the Lebanese state news agency reported.

Missiles destroyed three buildings in the village of Kfar Jouz near the market town of Nabatiyeh. A Jordanian was killed in a nearby house, and the blasts collapsed a shelter, killing a Lebanese husband and wife.

Three women were killed in strikes on their homes in other southern villages.

An explosion, believed to be from Israeli artillery, hit a convoy evacuating villagers from Rmeish, slightly wounding a driver and a Lebanese cameraman for German TV news.

At least 445 people have been killed in Lebanon in the fighting, most of them civilians, according to a Health Ministry count.

On the Israeli side, 33 soldiers have died in fighting, and Hezbollah rocket attacks on northern Israel have killed 19 civilians, the Israeli army said.

Graphic

Photo: HASSAN AMMAR, AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE/GETTY IMAGES; Caught in the Crossfire: A Lebanese woman cries after the convoy in which she was riding was caught yesterday in a clash between Hezbollah fighters and Israeli forces at Alma al-Shaab in southern Lebanon. The 50-vehicle convoy, led by the Lebanese Red Cross, was transporting sick and elderly evacuees from the border village of Rmeish.; Graphic/Diagram: (See hard copy for graphic)

Load-Date: July 29, 2006

**Hezbollah claims win in 2d round of votes in Lebanon;
Results are due today. The guerrilla group fought Israel's 18-year occupation
of south Lebanon.**

The Philadelphia Inquirer

JUNE 6, 2005 Monday CITY-D EDITION

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

Found on Philly.com

Section: NATIONAL; Pg. A03

Length: 496 words

Byline: Hussein Dakroub ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: BINT JBEIL, Lebanon

Body

Hezbollah and its Shiite allies claimed victory yesterday in Lebanon's second stage of parliamentary elections, a vote the group hopes will prove its strength and send a message of defiance to the United States.

Hundreds of **Hezbollah** supporters drove through the streets of Beirut waving the group's yellow flag in celebration. In Beirut's predominantly Shiite southern suburbs, fireworks lit the sky.

Four hours after polling stations in south Lebanon closed, **Hezbollah** and a key ally, the Amal movement, claimed they had won all 23 seats in the region bordering Israel. Official results were due today.

The elections, which are set for two more Sundays in other regions, follow the assassination last week of an anti-Syrian journalist and calls by the opposition for the resignation of President Emile Lahoud, an ally of Syria. The anti-Syrian opposition hopes the elections will end Damascus' control of the legislature.

In voting on May 29 in Beirut, anti-Syrian opposition candidates took most of the capital's 19 parliamentary seats.

Yesterday, the pro-Syria **Hezbollah** claimed victory in south Lebanon. "The south has declared through this vote its clear stance," said Sheikh Naim Kassem, **Hezbollah**'s deputy leader.

The United States, which labels **Hezbollah** a terrorist organization, wants the guerrilla group to abandon its weapons in line with last year's U.N. Security Council Resolution 1559. **Hezbollah** has refused to disarm.

Voter turnout was heavy in Shiite Muslim areas and lower in Christian and Sunni Muslim districts, according to estimates by candidates' campaigns and local TV stations. Amal and **Hezbollah** campaigners estimated turnout at 45 percent.

Hezbollah claims win in 2d round of votes in Lebanon ; Results are due today. The guerrilla group fought Israel's 18-year occupation of south Lebanon .

One reason for the lack of interest by some of the 665,000 eligible voters was that six of the 23 seats were uncontested. Those six candidates were from the Hezbollah-Amal coalition.

Some voters expressed strong support for Hezbollah, which fought Israel during its 18-year occupation of south Lebanon. Israel withdrew in 2000.

"We should show our support for the resistance and those who were martyred for the sake of liberating this country," a smiling Kamel Hamka, 77, said as he walked out of a polling station in Bint Jbeil, a Shiite town a few miles from the Israeli border.

Outside a polling station in the town's center, veiled young women distributed Hezbollah candidate lists, and cars blared guerrilla songs and speeches from loudspeakers to encourage voters.

Hezbollah hopes strong voter support will give it greater political influence to confront international pressure to disarm now that its Syrian backers have withdrawn from the country.

"All the south came out today to send a clear message to the Americans that they embrace the resistance weapons and that they are independent in their decision and they are not subservient to international resolutions," said Sheikh Nabil Kaouk, Hezbollah's commander in southern Lebanon.

Voting continues next Sunday and concludes June 19 for the 128-member parliament.

Graphic

PHOTO;

MOHAMMAD ZAATARI, Associated Press

Lebanese women who support Hezbollah ring up their cell phones outside a polling station in Deir Kanoun an-Nahr in southern Lebanon, where voters expressed strong support for the guerrilla group.

Load-Date: September 14, 2005

Tide of Arab opinion turning to Hezbollah; Top leaders, scrambling for distance from Washington, change their tone

The International Herald Tribune

July 29, 2006 Saturday

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Length: 1163 words

Byline: Neil MacFarquhar

Dateline: DAMASCUS

Body

Mona el-Naggar contributed reporting from Cairo, and Suha Maayeh from Amman.

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At the onset of the Lebanese crisis, Arab governments, starting with Saudi Arabia, slammed **Hezbollah** for recklessly provoking a war, providing what the United States and Israel took as a wink and a nod to continue the fight.

Now, with hundreds of Lebanese dead and **Hezbollah** holding out against the vaunted Israeli military for 15 days, the tide of public opinion across the Arab world is surging behind the organization, transforming the Shiite group's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, into a folk hero and forcing a change in official statements.

The Saudi royal family and King Abdullah II of Jordan, who were initially more worried about the rising power of Shiite Iran, **Hezbollah**'s main sponsor, are scrambling to distance themselves from Washington.

An outpouring of newspaper columns, cartoons, blogs and public poetry readings have showered praise on **Hezbollah** while attacking the United States and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice for trumpeting U.S. plans for a "new Middle East" that they say has led only to violence and repression.

Even Al Qaeda, run by violent Sunni Muslim extremists normally hostile to all Shiites, has gotten into the act, with its deputy leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, releasing a taped message saying that through its fighting in Iraq, his organization was also trying to liberate Palestine.

Mouin Rabbani, a senior Middle East analyst in Amman with the independent International Crisis Group, said, "The Arab-Israeli conflict remains the most potent issue in this part of the world."

Distinctive changes in tone are audible throughout the Sunni world.

This week, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt emphasized his attempts to arrange a cease-fire to protect all sects in Lebanon, while the Jordanian king announced that his country was dispatching medical teams "for the victims of Israeli aggression." Both countries have peace treaties with Israel.

Tide of Arab opinion turning to Hezbollah Top leaders, scrambling for distance from Washington, change their tone

The Saudi royal court has issued a dire warning that its 2002 peace plan offering Israel full recognition by all Arab states in exchange for returning to the borders that predated the 1967 Arab-Israeli war could well perish.

"If the peace option is rejected due to the Israeli arrogance," it said, "then only the war option remains, and no one knows the repercussions befalling the region, including wars and conflict that will spare no one, including those whose military power is now tempting them to play with fire."

The Saudis were putting the West on notice that they would not exert pressure on anyone in the Arab world until Washington did something to halt the destruction of Lebanon, Saudi commentators said.

U.S. officials say that while the Arab leaders need to take a harder line publicly for domestic political reasons, what matters more is what they tell the United States in private, which the Americans still see as a wink and a nod.

There are evident concerns among Arab governments that a victory for Hezbollah and it has already achieved something of a victory by holding out this long would further nourish the Islamist tide engulfing the region and challenge their authority.

Hence their first priority is to cool simmering public opinion.

But perhaps not since President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt made his emotional outpourings about Arab unity in the 1960s, before the Arab defeat in the 1967 war, has the public been so electrified by a confrontation with Israel, played out repeatedly on satellite television stations with horrific images from Lebanon of wounded children and distraught women fleeing their homes.

Egypt's opposition press has had a field day comparing Nasrallah to Nasser, while demonstrators waved pictures of both.

An editorial in the weekly Al Dustur by Ibrahim Issa, who faces a lengthy jail sentence for his previous criticism of Mubarak, compared current Arab leaders to the medieval princes who let the Crusaders chip away at Muslim lands until they controlled them all.

After attending an intellectual rally in Cairo for Lebanon, the Egyptian poet Ahmed Fouad Negm wrote a column describing how he had watched a companion buy 20 posters of Nasrallah.

"People are praying for him as they walk in the street, because we were made to feel oppressed, weak and handicapped," Negm said in an interview. "I asked the man who sweeps the street under my building what he thought, and he said: 'Uncle Ahmed, he has awakened the dead man inside me! May God make him triumphant!'"

In comparison, Rice's brief visit to the region sparked widespread criticism of her cold demeanor and her choice of words, particularly a statement that the bloodshed represented the birth pangs of a "new Middle East."

That catchphrase was much used by Shimon Peres, the veteran Israeli leader who was a principal negotiator of the 1993 Oslo Accords, which ultimately failed to lead to the Palestinian state they envisaged.

A cartoon by Emad Hajjaj in Jordan labeled "The New Middle East" showed an Israeli tank sitting on a broken apartment house in the shape of the Arab world.

Fawaz al-Trabalsi, a columnist in the Lebanese daily As Safir, suggested that the real new thing in the Middle East was the ability of one group to challenge Israel militarily.

Perhaps nothing underscored Hezbollah's rising stock more than the sudden appearance of a tape from the Qaeda leadership attempting to grab some of the limelight.

Al Jazeera satellite television broadcast a tape from Zawahiri. Large panels behind him showed a picture of the exploding World Trade Center in New York as well as portraits of two Egyptian Qaeda members, Muhammad Atef,

Tide of Arab opinion turning to Hezbollah Top leaders, scrambling for distance from Washington, change their tone

a Qaeda commander who was killed by an American airstrike in Afghanistan, and Mohamed Atta, the lead hijacker on Sept. 11, 2001. He described the two as fighters supporting the Palestinians.

Zawahiri tried to argue that the fight against U.S. forces in Iraq paralleled what Hezbollah was doing, though he did not mention the organization by name.

Zawahiri also adopted some of the language of Hezbollah and Shiite Muslims in general. Previously in Iraq, Al Qaeda has labeled Shiite Muslims as infidels and claimed responsibility for some of the bloodier assaults on Shiite neighborhoods there.

But by taking on Israel, Hezbollah had instantly eclipsed Al Qaeda, analysts said. "Everyone will be asking, 'Where is Al Qaeda now?'" said Adel al-Toraifi, a Saudi columnist and expert on Sunni extremists.

Rabbani of the International Crisis Group said Hezbollah's ability to withstand the Israeli assault and to continue to lob missiles well into Israel exposed the weaknesses of Arab governments with far greater resources than Hezbollah.

"Public opinion says that if they are getting more on the battlefield than you are at the negotiating table, and you have so many more means at your disposal, then what the hell are you doing?" Rabbani said. "In comparison with the small embattled guerrilla movement, the Arab states seem to be standing idly by twiddling their thumbs."

Load-Date: July 30, 2006

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Iran restates intention to defend Syria in the event of any attack by Israel

The Irish Times

July 18, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 10

Length: 629 words

Body

MIDDLE EAST: A complex matrix of motives and interests lies behind the relationships between Iran, Syria and the Hizbullah, writes Michael Jansen

Iran and Syria agreed yesterday that a ceasefire and prisoner exchange would be "an acceptable and fair" way to end Israel's offensive against Lebanon.

This recipe, put forward by Iranian foreign minister Manouchehr Mottaki following a meeting in Damascus with Syrian president Bashar al-Assad, reflects the stance of the Lebanese Shia Hizbullah movement.

All three parties want a three-way ceasefire involving Hizbullah, the Palestinian Hamas movement, and Israel. Hizbullah and Hamas, which hold three Israeli soldiers, seek to swap them for Palestinian female and elderly prisoners and three Lebanese detainees.

Israel has rejected any deal.

Mr Mottaki reaffirmed Tehran's pledge to defend Syria if attacked by Israel, which claims Tehran and Damascus are behind the Palestinian and Lebanese operations to seize Israeli soldiers. Syria and Iran, who became allies in 1980 during the Iran-Iraq war, have denied involvement and insist Hizbullah is an independent organisation.

Iran served as mid-wife at the birth of Hizbullah during Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon. Tehran's Republican Guards trained and armed Hizbullah fighters, and Tehran has subsequently supplied funds and weaponry. Syria has facilitated the flow of money and arms to the group. Over the years, it gained a large degree of independence by raising funds from overseas Lebanese Shias and buying weapons on the international black market.

While Iran and Syria can influence Hizbullah, neither can dictate its actions. There is no indication that Hizbullah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah told Damascus or Tehran that he intended to capture Israeli troops at a time Israel was engaged in military operations in Gaza. Shaikh Nasrallah had proclaimed this intention many times.

It can be argued the destructive Israeli campaign in Lebanon does not suit either Damascus or Tehran. While seeking to keep up political pressure on Israel and US forces in Iraq, Tehran does not want a conflagration in Lebanon, Gaza or Iraq.

Iran's interest in Iraq is the same as that of the US: an end to sectarian warfare, Shia ascendancy, and reconstruction of the country. Since Iran has stated its readiness to talk about the package of incentives offered by Europe and the US as the price for suspension of nuclear programmes, Tehran does not really want the current explosion of hostilities to derail negotiations.

Iran restates intention to defend Syria in the event of any attack by Israel

Syria has never wanted any regional player to be in a position to drag it into conflict with Israel at a time and place not of Damascus's choosing. This is why Syria drove the Palestinian Liberation Organisation out of northern Lebanon in 1983.

Syrian spokesmen counter the charge that Damascus manipulates Hizbullah by saying it has had little leverage over the movement since withdrawing Syrian troops from Lebanon in 2005.

It can also be contended that a limited clash might serve the interests of Syria and Iran because they want to torpedo Israeli premier Ehud Olmert's unilateral policy of setting Israel's border in the West Bank, thereby finishing off negotiations on territorial settlements with the Arabs.

Iran and Syria seek a revival of the peace process on a regional basis with the aim of securing Israeli evacuation of Palestinian territory and the Syrian Golan.

If they encouraged Hizbullah to act with this objective in mind, both leaderships seriously misread the intentions of Israel.

Israeli analysts say Mr Olmert is determined to use the two-front offensive to re-establish Israel's deterrent power and secure Hizbullah's pull-back from its northern border as a prelude to annexing portions of the West Bank, all of east Jerusalem and the Golan.

Load-Date: July 26, 2006

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Middle East crisis: 'Is Hizbullah here? Only children here.' City mourns air strike dead: Israeli attacks on Lebanon port hit canal near Palestinian refugee camp

The Guardian - Final Edition

July 18, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: GUARDIAN HOME PAGES; Pg. 4

Length: 805 words

Byline: Clancy Chassay, Tyre

Body

Twelve-year-old Nour lay heavily bandaged and fighting for her life in a hospital in the southern Lebanese city of Tyre. She is one of many children killed and injured in Israeli air strikes on this Mediterranean port in past days.

"We are praying for her," said Fatima, a laboratory technician doubling as a nurse at Jabal Amal hospital, which is overloaded with the victims of the air strikes. Ali, the doctor treating Nour, said he did not know whether she would survive her injuries. "She has large burns all over her body, she is losing a lot of fluids. She probably won't live; her life is now in God's hands."

More ambulances streamed into the hospital and doctors hurried to treat the victims of the latest bombing. Whatever the Israelis' intended target, the bomb fell on a small water canal next to the Qasmia refugee camp, home to about 500 Palestinians. Its victims were 11 children taking an afternoon swim in the canal.

The first blast left a crater nearly four metres deep, burying many of the swimmers deep under the orange earth. Seven of the children were injured, three critically. Three others have not been found.

The scene was littered with small plastic sandals, several caked in blood. Ismael, the father of one of the children, sat on the edge of the crater, his head in his hands weeping. "Children! Children!" he roared through his tears, "Children here! My son here." He stood and looked down into the crater: "Is Hizbullah here? Only children here," he said, referring to the militant Islamist group that kidnapped two Israeli soldiers and which Israel says it is targeting in the wave of attacks.

Another man staggered around behind Ismael, also unable to control his grief.

The children were taken to the intensive care unit, many caked in earth, having been buried deep in the ground. The victims of the blast joined scores of injured from previous attacks across the south of the country.

Ahmed Mrouwe, the hospital's director, said more than 200 wounded people had been brought into the hospital - one of three in the area. "We have received 196 wounded and 25 dead; the majority of them are children and women."

Middle East crisis: 'Is Hizbullah here? Only children here.' City mourns air strike dead: Israeli attacks on Lebanon port hit canal near Palestinian refugee cam....

It was the one of the bloodiest days so far in Lebanon, with 41 dead. In Sidon, 25 miles south of Beirut, an Israeli air strike on a road bridge hit two vehicles, killing 10 civilians and wounding at least seven, medical sources told Reuters.

They said both vehicles had been crossing the Rmeileh bridge, heading from the south towards Beirut. Leaflets dropped from Israeli planes have been urging residents in Hizbullah-controlled areas of the south to leave.

Nine of the dead were in one vehicle. A woman died in the other vehicle and six members of her family were wounded.

Canada said seven of its nationals had been killed in an Israeli strike while holidaying in the southern Lebanese village of Aitaroun. It was targeted again overnight with six killed, according to local television reports.

Early morning attacks left two men dead in the port of Beirut, and eight Lebanese soldiers were killed in a rocket attack on an army position near Tripoli in the north of the country.

An annex of the hospital in Tyre had been bombed the day before. The attack came as doctors were tending to victims of a strike on a 12-storey residential building, which also housed the civil defence offices, in Tyre. That attack left 21 dead, including several children. Dr Mrouwe said nine people in one family had been killed; only the father had survived.

At the site of the strike, rubble lay strewn hundreds of metres from the building. The face of the building had been ripped off, revealing the insides of homes. Furniture dangled out over the charred wreckage of a cargo truck flipped on its side by the force of the blast.

Huge chunks of cement bricks lay scattered between dozens of crumpled cars. One resident, Mohammed, said he had seen the blast from his house nearby. Amal, his sister's friend, had been killed in the attack; she had just turned five.

At the hospital, small children were grouped in clusters throughout its corri dors, many displaced by the strikes on their homes. In one room, a 50-year-old woman lay motionless in her hospital bed, burns covering much of her body. She had narrowly survived the attack on the building. She did not know it yet, but her son had died in the operating theatre earlier that morning.

Asked how it compared to 1996 when Israel launched an attack on the south, killing scores of civilians, Dr Mrouwe said: "It's incomparable, incomparable. In 1996 the majority (of casualties) were fighters. This time we have yet to receive any fighters."

Drones circled overhead almost continuously throughout the day, interrupted by distant roar of fighter planes above.

Dr Mrouwe said: "We only want one of the human rights, we don't need democracy - we just want to live."

Load-Date: July 18, 2006

Poll shows anger at Israeli actions

The Irish Times

July 29, 2006 Saturday

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Section: WORLD; Middle East Crisis; Pg. 10

Length: 601 words

Byline: Michael Jansen in Beirut

Body

Many if not most Lebanese were initially critical of the Shia Hizbullah movement for provoking the wrath of Israel by seizing two of its soldiers on June 12th. But the director of the Beirut Centre for Research and Information, Abdo Saad, notes: "The public mood changed once people realised Israel is going only for soft targets like bridges, roads, civilian homes, ambulances, vans and cars. Ninety-five per cent of Lebanese casualties are civilians."

According to the centre's survey of opinion in all Lebanon's communities, most Lebanese support Hizbullah and condemn Israel for its attack in response to the capture of the soldiers.

Seventy per cent approve of the operation to seize the soldiers to secure the release of Lebanese held in Israeli jails for more than 20 years. Fifty-five per cent of Christians favour Hizbullah's action, although this community has been largely critical of the movement. Indeed, right-wing elements in the Maronite Christian community co-operated with Israel during its 22-year occupation of south Lebanon and during the 1982 offensive which carried the Israeli army into Beirut.

Eighty-seven per cent of respondents support Hizbullah in its confrontation with Israel.

Sixty-three per cent do not believe Israel can defeat Hizbullah and 90 per cent do not believe the US is an honest broker. However, 35 per cent think the US and Israel will impose their conditions on Lebanon in exchange for a ceasefire, while 57 per cent say the US and Israel will not succeed in such an endeavour.

The fact that Hizbullah has managed to halt Israel's ground offensive, in spite of Israel's overwhelming military superiority, has also contributed to this change of opinion. "This is the first time Israel is not fighting its war on Arab territory," says Mr Saad. "Hizbullah is hitting Israeli towns and villages."

He adds that many people realise the "Israelis and the US miscalculated. Hizbullah was fully prepared for an Israeli offensive, although it may not have expected it to be launched in retaliation for the soldiers' capture. The Israelis did not expect [Hizbullah's] rockets to reach Haifa or its fighters to hold their ground in the villages and towns of the south.

"This poll shows there is national support for the resistance across all sects," says Mr Saad. "The results of the poll have been widely broadcast by both Arab and foreign television and radio stations."

Israel's escalating campaign has produced a groundswell of Lebanese patriotic feeling and exacerbated anti-US and anti-Israeli feeling in Lebanon and the wider Arab and Muslim worlds. Most Lebanese and other Arabs blame

Poll shows anger at Israeli actions

the US, which is seen as "giving Israel a green light" and preventing the leaders meeting in Rome on Wednesday of imposing an immediate ceasefire.

Voices in the corridor outside Mr Saad's third-floor office in a building on Hamra Street, the main thoroughfare of west Beirut, heralded the arrival of several families of refugees. Men carrying boxes, children bearing blankets, and women with babies in their arms were moving into the next-door flat. A handsome woman in a headscarf said she had come from the market town of Nabatieh, which has been pounded by Israeli artillery rounds and missiles since the outset of the conflict.

Most of its inhabitants are Shias who have benefited from Hizbullah schools, clinics and welfare programmes. While they bear the brunt of Israel's retaliation against Hizbullah, they continue to back the movement.

"Now people of all communities are sending money and other help for the refugees," Mr Saad says. "The Lebanese feel they are in this war together."

Load-Date: July 29, 2006

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Comment & Debate: Middle East crisis: the view from both sides: Is this a clash between a nation under threat and a terrorist group, or a bid to crush legitimate resistance to occupation and aggression?: This is a fight for our survival

The Guardian - Final Edition

July 25, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: GUARDIAN COMMENT AND DEBATE PAGES ; Pg. 28

Length: 797 words

Byline: Isaac Herzog, Israeli government

Body

Some may wonder how, as a man of the left and Israel's peace camp, I can at the same time be a member of a government now fighting a war in Lebanon. The answer is the same one that Clement Attlee or even Harold Wilson would have given: when your very existence is under threat, you have the right to defend yourself, and the responsibility to your people to defend their security. Let's be clear: **Hizbullah** is a terrorist organisation. This is not a political issue, it is not an ideological issue; it is a matter of survival. That is why I and the vast majority of the Israeli population support this military response.

Israel today is facing a sustained onslaught from one of the world's most dangerous and effective terrorist organisations. In the past few days, 1,000 rockets and 1,200 mortar rounds have been hurled across the border by **Hizbullah** at hospitals, schools and homes. Their intention is the killing and maiming of Israelis in general.

Israel is fighting back. Israel's use of force is entirely proportionate to the extent of the threat that **Hizbullah** poses. A third of our people are in immediate danger of **Hizbullah** missiles and are sheltering for fear of their lives. The whole of the north of our country has in effect been shut down. International law recognises the right to respond to the extent of a threat, and Israel has therefore acted within international law.

Our goals are clear. Israel was forced to enter this conflict after an unprovoked attack by **Hizbullah** terrorists across the border, in which three soldiers were killed, and two kidnapped. The attack, one of many in recent years, was made possible because of an abnormal political situation in Lebanon. Since May 2000 the southern part of that country has effectively been hijacked by a terrorist organisation. **Hizbullah** controls the border, and administers every aspect of life for the residents of southern Lebanon. The organisation is armed, trained and kept afloat by foreign powers - Iran and Syria are at the forefront.

This terrorist organisation openly desires the destruction of Israel. Its leader, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, is an anti-semitic, and is one of the most cynical leaders in the region. He uses Lebanon as a launch pad to pursue his own agenda with a wilful disregard of the hardship and pain he has brought on his fellow countrymen and **women** in Lebanon.

This situation is unacceptable. It will not continue. Israel's goal, first and foremost, is to ensure that, when our operations end, **Hizbullah** no longer controls the border with Israel, and may not reignite fighting at its whim. This is

Comment & Debate: Middle East crisis: the view from both sides: Is this a clash between a nation under threat and a terrorist group, or a bid to crush legitimat....

why a simple ceasefire, as attractive as it sounds, is not enough. It would allow Hizbullah, as it has done for six years, to rest, regroup, replenish supplies, and then start the fighting all over again.

The goal of ending Hizbullah's capacity for aggression can be achieved in a number of ways. From our point of view, the obvious solution would be the deployment by the Lebanese army of its forces throughout the entirety of Lebanese territory. This is in accordance with the norms of life in sovereign countries. It is also required by Lebanon's obligations according to UN resolution 1559. We are told, however, that the Lebanese army is weak and small, and contains within its own ranks a considerable number of Hizbullah sympathisers.

So be it. Clearly, it is imperative that the international community endeavours to help the Lebanese government to reach a situation where it is able to effectively police its territory, and prevent it from being seized by armed organisations in the pay of foreign states.

The international community has already proved that with solid, unified support it helped Lebanon rid itself of Syrian occupation. The same international will must now be garnered to rid Lebanon of Hizbullah. For the interim period, however, Israel could accept the deployment of a sizeable, effective international force along the border.

Hopefully, the Israeli action of recent days has disabused Hizbullah and its backers of the notion that Israel is a "paper tiger", lacking the will to act in its citizens' defence. If this lesson has not been absorbed, and the aggression recommences, Israel will be prepared, if necessary, to mobilise once again.

It is to be hoped that arrangements of this type, along with the immediate return of the kidnapped soldiers, will now be enforced upon Hizbullah. The lives and dignity of the people of both Lebanon and northern Israel have for too long been forfeit to the whims of a terror group in the pay of a neighbouring dictatorship. It is time for this situation to end. Hizbullah's immoral and illegal behaviour must end so a new era may dawn on the region.

Isaac Herzog is minister of tourism and a member of Israel's security cabinet

Load-Date: July 25, 2006

Party of God has no regrets

The Irish Times

July 28, 2006 Friday

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Section: WORLD; Under the Crescent; Pg. 12

Length: 2311 words

Body

The faces of Islam: **Hizbullah** is not just a political party with guns - it is a hugely popular element of Lebanese society, a member of its leadership tells Mary Fitzgerald

Ali Fayyad apologises for arriving more than 45 minutes late. "It is difficult to move around at the moment," he explains, glancing about furtively. "We have to be careful." His face, grizzled with three-day-old stubble, looks tired and his forehead is furrowed with permanent lines so deep that at first sight they look like scars.

Short and stocky, he is dressed unassumingly in khakis and short-sleeved cream shirt. He puts two mobile phones down on the table and orders an espresso.

Fayyad has good reason to be careful these days. A senior member of the **Hizbullah** leadership, this middle-aged university professor is considered one of the movement's most prominent thinkers. His office in the southern suburbs of Beirut is now a pile of rubble and the organisation he grew up with is locked in deadly battle with an old adversary, the twists and turns of which will decide its very future.

Hizbullah is many things to many people. To its millions of supporters among Lebanon's downtrodden Shia population, it is a resistance movement, a benevolent welfare network, and the hugely popular political party that finally gave them a voice in national government.

To its critics, however, it is a dangerous terrorist entity, a puppet of Tehran and Damascus, a band of radical Islamists to be viewed with suspicion and distrust.

Since its creation under Iranian patronage in response to the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, **Hizbullah** has evolved in many respects from the organisation linked to attacks such as the 1983 suicide bombing of a US Marine bases in Beirut and held responsible for the spate of hostage taking during the civil war. It is now one of Lebanon's main political players, with a strong presence in parliament and a minister in the cabinet.

Yet it is still difficult to define. That same formidable political movement is also a private army that effectively controls southern Lebanon as a "state within a state" and is now blamed by many for dragging the country into an unwanted war. Before this crisis, some wondered how **Hizbullah** would complete the leap from armed resistance to mainstream political party, others were sceptical that it ever intended to do so.

In Lebanon **Hizbullah**'s standing has never been clear cut. It runs hospitals, schools, orphanages and welfare services in deprived areas where its provision of water, electricity and other facilities often surpasses that of the government.

Party of God has no regrets

Outside its Shia base, the movement earned respect from many in Lebanon's other religious factions for driving Israel out of the south in 2000, ending an 18-year occupation. The Lebanese government has regularly declared **Hizbullah** a legitimate national resistance movement, most recently prime minister Fouad Siniora, an anti-Syria Sunni politician, described it as such. **Hizbullah** can also confound expectations in the interests of political expediency - leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah raised eyebrows earlier this year when he formed an unlikely alliance with Michel Aoun, a right-wing Christian and former Lebanese army general.

"Ask any Lebanese of any religious or political background and they will tell you that **Hizbullah** is one of the biggest and most popular political parties in the country," says Fayyad. "It is not just a party with guns. It is a hugely popular part of Lebanese society and combines religious belief and pragmatic reality in a very successful way. How can Israel get rid of something like that?" Its name, which means Party of God in Arabic, is inspired by a verse in the Koran: "And whoever takes Allah and his Messenger and those who believe for a guardian, then surely the party of Allah [God] are they that shall be triumphant."

While **Hizbullah**'s ideology and iconography are steeped in the traditions of Shia Islam, many see it as less a fully-fledged Islamist political organisation like Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood.

"The religious aspect is the lowest rung on the ladder," says Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, a Lebanese academic who has written a book on **Hizbullah**. "It is first and foremost a resistance movement, second a political movement and only third would I define it a religious organisation. Yes, its ideology in the intellectual realm is religious but on the ground, politically and militarily, there's nothing religious."

"For **Hizbullah** Islam is more of an identity, motivation and will than it is a political programme. It doesn't seek to Islamicise society and has never, while in government, called for anything remotely Islamic. More than anything it could be compared to a leftist secular party committed to social justice."

Conceived three years after the Iranian Revolution ushered in the world's first experiment in political Islam, **Hizbullah** initially dreamt of transforming Lebanon into an Islamic republic like that of Iran, a goal later abandoned as unrealistic.

"Lebanon is a multireligious, multicultural society so it is not applicable to enforce a religious state here," says Ali Fayyad, who describes his organisation as "more modern" than Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood. "Creating a religious state without the agreement of the people is senseless. That is why we adapt the democratic political way. The goal is to have a fair political system. That is our core philosophy."

Long before the current crisis erupted following **Hizbullah**'s capture of two Israeli soldiers in a cross-border raid, the organisation's disarmament had dominated national debate in Lebanon, reaching its highest pitch after Syria's troop withdrawal last year. **Hizbullah** has dragged its heels on the issue, refusing to comply with UN Resolution 1559, which calls for the dismantling and disarming of its militia.

Ali Fayyad says **Hizbullah** will give up its guns when Lebanon can defend itself, particularly against what he calls the Israeli threat. "Our weapons will stay only as long as there are defence issues. When the Lebanese government can defend itself, then there will be no need for **Hizbullah**."

"We know logic demands that a country's government alone should have weapons but how can the Lebanese government defend itself against Israel? Lebanon doesn't have the capacity to defend the Israeli army. There is an imbalance between the two countries and their capabilities."

Fayyad outlines the four outstanding issues **Hizbullah** wants addressed: the release of Lebanese prisoners held in Israel; the handing back of the disputed Shebaa Farms area, a tiny patch of land under Israeli control and bordered by Israel, Lebanon and Syria; an end to Israeli cross-border incursions; and information on the location of Israeli landmines scattered in southern Lebanon since 1982.

"When **Hizbullah** captured the two soldiers we wanted to close the first issue," he says. "If Israel had agreed to exchange the captured soldiers with our prisoners, the Shebaa farms issue would be next. If the international

Party of God has no regrets

community had succeeded in making Israel withdraw from Shebaa, the remaining issue would be Israeli penetration of our borders. If we reached this stage, **Hizbullah** would be ready to agree with the Lebanese government a strategic way of defence - that is resolving the weapons issue.

"The government has always given the resistance the right to defend the south and get back our land. Even prime minister Siniora gave that right."

But many in Lebanon, in government and among the general public, are angry with **Hizbullah** for acting unilaterally when it stole across the Israeli border to seize the soldiers. They see this as proof that the presence within Lebanon of a militia that operates independently without government control can only bring instability to the country.

Fayyad's response is hardly convincing.

"The resistance cannot inform the government that it is going to capture something or someone at a particular time," he retorts. "It is impossible because those are military secrets. You cannot discuss something like that with 30 government ministers when each one has his own political beliefs."

Was **Hizbullah** surprised by the Israeli response to its actions this time round?

"No one expected this furious reaction of destruction and killing. Our goal was to capture those soldiers to secure the release of the Lebanese prisoners in Israel."

Does **Hizbullah** regret its actions, in light of what Lebanon has been plunged into these past weeks? "We feel a lot of pain due to the death and damage caused to the country, but we never regret the resistance or its actions. It has done a lot for this country and hopefully it will succeed now. Israel had this attack prepared some time ago, they had a scenario agreed with the Americans and applying it was just a matter of time." Critics of **Hizbullah** believe Iran and Syria are never far behind when it comes to the group's manoeuvrings, providing financial and military support to bolster their own interests in the region.

The largesse from Tehran is believed to amount to some \$100 million yearly in the form of cash, goods and weapons, including an estimated 13,000 rockets and missiles.

"We don't hide our friendship with Iran and Syria and we acknowledge that we have intersecting aims and goals," says Fayyad. "We all have problems with Israel and the US but we are not just obeying or following Syria and Iran. We don't take orders from them. We are an independent Lebanese party and movement. If we share interests and goals with Syria and Iran, it doesn't mean we work for them. Is it OK that the US and Europe is behind Israel, but if we have support from Iran and Syria it's a big deal?"

Fayyad is vague when it comes to defining the exact nature of that support and will not be drawn on the details.

"The primary support is political, moral and social. Much of the Iranian support is towards rebuilding people's lives after the destruction of war. One thing I can say is we don't have financial problems." Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad caused outrage earlier this year when he called for Israel to be "wiped off the map," and **Hizbullah's** leader has indulged in equally fiery pronouncements, once vowing to finish off "the entire cancerous Zionist project".

When Israel pulled out of Lebanon six years ago, Nasrallah declared: "We have liberated the south. Next we'll liberate Jerusalem." The organisation has faced criticism for couching its rhetoric regarding Israel in anti-Semitic language and imagery.

Ali Fayyad picks his words carefully when asked about the organisation's view of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. "We believe the geography of Palestine cannot allow for two states because one of the two will not be able to live. It is a small piece of land and its natural resources are limited. That's why we believe the only choice is to have one country, the historical one Palestine."

Does that mean the dismantling of the state of Israel? Fayyad's response is mealy-mouthed. "The answer isn't yes or no. It is more about having one country with all the citizens together, a country that is democratic, equal and not

based on racism like the Israeli state today. We would call it Palestine." Fayyad smiles when asked about how Hizbullah has been affected by more than two weeks of Israeli bombardment and, in recent days, a ground offensive.

"Militarily, it hasn't affected Hizbullah much. The military structure of Hizbullah is still active, capable and strong. It can still send missiles and it is capable of resisting the Israeli army even though we don't have airplanes, we don't have tanks. The Lebanese people, however, have suffered too much."

Jan Egeland, the UN's humanitarian chief, this week accused Hizbullah fighters of contributing to the rising toll of civilian casualties by "cowardly blending in" among ordinary Lebanese. "I heard they were proud because they lost very few fighters and that it was the civilians bearing the brunt of this. I don't think anyone should be proud of having many more children and women dead than armed men," Egeland said.

Fayyad is dismissive. "Who told him this? The Israelis? Hizbullah always does its best to avoid civilian areas. If you know the geography and nature of southern Lebanon, you know that there are no gaps between places, everything is close. That makes the conditions of battle difficult. Hizbullah tries as much as it can to be away from the citizens. Israel has destroyed the southern suburbs of Beirut."

Was Hizbullah firing rockets from southern Beirut? He reiterates Hizbullah's positions on a possible resolution of the crisis - it rejects proposals to deploy an international force in the zone north of the Israeli border with Lebanon and will only enter negotiations if Israel calls a ceasefire. Israel, for its part, has rejected calls for a ceasefire, insisting the two captured soldiers are released first.

"The only way to solve the problem is for Israel to stop the fighting without any conditions and then we move to indirect negotiations to trade the prisoners. The other issues will be looked at too but we won't give an opinion on those issues under fire," Fayyad says, acknowledging that a ceasefire appears to be a long way off.

"Nothing inspires the idea that this battle may be over soon. Will it expand and others come into the war? I don't know but I know there is more and more possibility of that happening. The pressure in the region is higher than ever. People are amazed and shocked that a whole country can be destroyed just because of two soldiers.

"And now the US is talking about a new Middle East. It is a strategic mistake for the US, and Israel is bringing many problems on itself. There is no doubt it will lead to more violence in the region."

Mary Fitzgerald is the inaugural Douglas Gageby fellow at The Irish Times. "The Faces of Islam" appears every Friday. maryfitzgerald@irish-times.ie

Load-Date: July 28, 2006

Hezbollah's on air but not everywhere

St. Petersburg Times (Florida)

May 31, 2005 Tuesday 0 South Pinellas Edition

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Section: NATIONAL; Pg. 1A; Newspaper

Length: 1205 words

Byline: SUSAN TAYLOR MARTIN

Dateline: BEIRUT, Lebanon

Body

Al-Manar TV, run by the militant group Hezbollah, leaves little doubt about where it stands.

It calls Israel the "Zionist enemy."

President Bush is "stupid and crazy."

The United States is "waging war against Islam."

With its gruesome footage and supercharged rhetoric, the Beirut-based network has long been a bane of Israel and its allies. In December they got partial revenge - French authorities banned Al-Manar from TV there and the United States declared it a terrorist organization in a move that has knocked it off the airwaves in many other parts of the world.

"It's not a question of freedom of speech," a State Department spokesman said. "It's a question of incitement of violence."

To others, it's a clear case of censorship.

"It shows the duality of American society - on the one hand you want democracy and openness and on the other you're trying to suppress views you don't like," says Abdallah Bouhabib, Lebanon's former ambassador to the United States. "I don't watch it but I don't want the government telling me I can't watch it."

Arabic for "the beacon," Al-Manar says it does what most Western media do not - shed light on what's really happening in the Middle East. In Al-Manar's view, that is U.S.-supported Israeli aggression against Palestinians.

"We cover the Palestinian issue not because they are Palestinians but because we sense their torture and suffering," says Ibrahim Farhat, the public relations and advertising manager. "We focus on the crisis and problems in the region, and this is what Arabs and Muslims care about."

Founded in 1991, Al-Manar operates out of a heavily-guarded building in a poor Muslim area of south Beirut. Armed men check vehicles for bombs; visitors must go through a metal detector and leave their passports or other ID at the front desk.

Hezbollah's on air but not everywhere

In the well-equipped newsroom, staffers work under monitors showing dozens of channels, including CNN, BBC and Al-Jazeera, the leading Arab satellite network.

Like its competitors, Al-Manar offers a range of cultural, educational and sports programming. Though the network has an anti-American slant, it features U.S. teams that are wildly popular in the Mideast - among them, the Chicago Bulls and the Miami Heat.

"We have many programs that are not political," says Mona Nouredine, a recent college graduate. She hosts a Sunday show, Under 20, which fields questions from Arab youth about health, jobs and relationships.

It is Al-Manar's news programs, though, that cause the controversy.

"Al-Manar is the propaganda arm of a recognized terrorist organization," says Avi Jorisch, a senior fellow at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies in Washington, D.C. "It is terror television 24 hours a day, seven days a week."

In his book Beacon of Hatred, Jorisch criticizes the network for some things that arguably are no worse than what is seen or heard in the West. While Al-Manar says Bush is "stupid," an aide to a former Canadian prime minister once called the president a "moron."

More troubling are what Jorisch calls "persistent messages of incitement and glorification of violence."

Al-Manar, he says, was the first network to broadcast a report that 4,000 Israelis were told to stay home from the World Trade Center on Sept. 11. Though false, the story gave rise to a rumor still widely believed throughout the Muslim world: Jews and Israel were responsible for the 9/11 attacks.

When violence flares, Al-Manar newscasts are filled with grisly footage of Israeli strikes against Palestinians. Some of it is shot by Al-Manar's own crews in Gaza and the West Bank; other scenes are pulled off Israeli TV, which Al-Manar constantly monitors.

In one case, Jorisch says, a Palestinian woman who had watched Al-Manar "incessantly" blew herself up outside a Jerusalem supermarket in 2002, killing two Israelis. The network denies it encourages suicide bombings.

"Palestinians have enough suffering to do such an act - they are not going to wait to see Al-Manar to go blow themselves up for a righteous cause," says Tamara Mattar, who writes the daily English-language newscast.

"The main instigator is Israel and the Israeli occupation, not Al-Manar and other parties in the region."

Mattar says Al-Manar's reporting is objective, though she acknowledges she gets the "Israeli point of view" only by quoting other news agencies. Because it is an arm of Hezbollah, Al-Manar does not recognize the Jewish state, and refuses to interview Israeli officials or anyone who supports Israeli policies.

"There is no problem with Jews because they are Jews - we respect the Jewish religion and the Jewish people. Our problem is with Israeli policy in Palestine," Farhat says. He notes that a crew recently flew to Britain to interview a Jewish professor, albeit one critical of Israel.

French authorities, though, found enough anti-Semitism in Al-Manar's programming that in December they banned the network. Among other things, they noted that it had run a 30-part series during Ramadan 2003 called The Diaspora, which depicted the killing of a Christian child and the use of its blood to make matzoh, and that it had accused Jews of spreading AIDS around the world.

A few weeks later, the State Department put Al-Manar on its Terrorist Exclusion List, prompting satellite TV systems to yank it off the air in much of North America, Europe, Africa and Asia.

Al-Manar says the actions have cut into its audience, once estimated at 10-million to 15-million viewers. It also lost revenue when Pepsi, Western Union and other U.S. companies pulled their ads.

Hezbollah's on air but not everywhere

The terrorist designation has even affected the network's Internet site, manartv.com.

"Companies that do hosting for us are getting afraid of the consequences by the U.S.," says Webmaster Mohammed Obeid. When users in the United States tried to call up the site one recent day, they got a notice that the domain name was for sale. (The site was accessible later in the week.)

Despite the setbacks, Al-Manar retains a staff of more than 250, between 30 and 40 percent of them women. Two of the anchors are female; unlike their glamorous counterparts on Al-Jazeera, they wear head scarves that reflect Hezbollah's conservatism.

The network has crews in most Mideast countries including Iraq. After the 2003 invasion, Jorisch says, Al-Manar incited violence against U.S. troops by "inflammatory" programming. One example: images of death and destruction followed by a graphic that said "Freedom: the American Way."

The network, though, continued to operate uninterrupted, even as authorities banned Al-Jazeera and closed the newspaper of radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, sparking a Shiite uprising that lasted for months.

Farhat, the public relations manager, finds it ironic that Western countries promoting democratic values would squelch dissent.

"Unfortunately, the West is not accepting the Arab point of view and they are trying to lessen the areas in which Arab media are working. If an Arab station is transmitting something that is not consistent with Western values, then we can say Western stations are not presenting values consistent with our Arab values."

Susan Taylor Martin can be contacted at susan@sptimes.com

ON THE WEB

The station's Web site, <http://www.manartv.com> , is sometimes unavailable.

Graphic

PHOTO, SUSAN TAYLOR MARTIN; Mona Noureddine hosts an Al-Manar show called Under 20. It fields questions from Arab youth about health, jobs and relationships.

Load-Date: May 31, 2005

World has lost moral bearings in Israel crisis

The Irish Times

July 31, 2006 Monday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 9

Length: 745 words

Byline: Charles Krauthammer

Body

Opinion: What other country, when attacked in an unprovoked aggression across a recognised international frontier, is then put on a countdown clock by the world, given a limited time window in which to fight back, regardless of whether it has restored its own security?

What other country sustains 1,500 indiscriminate rocket attacks into its cities - every one designed to kill, maim and terrorise civilians - and is then vilified by the world when it tries to destroy the enemy's infrastructure and strongholds with precision-guided munitions that sometimes have the unintended but unavoidable consequence of collateral civilian death and suffering?

Hearing the world pass judgment on the Israel-Hizbullah war as it unfolds is to live in an Orwellian moral universe. With a few significant exceptions (the leadership of the United States, Britain, Australia, Canada and a very few others), the world - governments, the media, UN bureaucrats - has completely lost its moral bearings.

The word that obviates all thinking and magically inverts victim into aggressor is "disproportionate", as in the universally decried "disproportionate Israeli response".

When the United States was attacked at Pearl Harbor, it did not respond with a parallel "proportionate" attack on a Japanese naval base. It launched a four-year campaign that killed millions of Japanese, reduced Tokyo, Hiroshima and Nagasaki to a cinder, and turned the Japanese home islands to rubble and ruin. Disproportionate? No. When one is wantonly attacked by an aggressor, one has every right - legal and moral - to carry the fight until the aggressor is disarmed and so disabled that it cannot threaten one's security again. That's what it took with Japan.

Britain was never invaded by Germany in the second World War. Did it respond to the blitz and V-1 and V-2 rockets with "proportionate" aerial bombardment of Germany? Of course not. Churchill orchestrated the greatest land invasion in history that flattened and utterly destroyed Germany, killing untold innocent German women and children in the process.

The perversity of today's international outcry lies in the fact that there is indeed a disproportion in this war, a radical moral asymmetry between Hizbullah and Israel: Hizbullah is deliberately trying to create civilian casualties on both sides while Israel is deliberately trying to minimise civilian casualties, also on both sides.

In perhaps the most blatant terror campaign from the air since the London blitz, Hizbullah is raining rockets on Israeli cities and villages. These rockets are packed with ball bearings that can penetrate automobiles and shred human flesh. They are meant to kill and maim. And they do.

World has lost moral bearings in Israel crisis

But it is a dual campaign. Israeli innocents must die in order for Israel to be terrorised. But Lebanese innocents must also die in order for Israel to be demonised, which is why **Hizbullah** hides its fighters, its rockets, its launchers, its entire infrastructure among civilians. Creating human shields is a war crime. It is also a **Hizbullah** speciality.

On Wednesday, CNN cameras showed destruction in Tyre. What does Israel have against Tyre and its inhabitants? Nothing. But the long-range **Hizbullah** rockets that have been raining terror on Haifa are based in Tyre.

What is Israel to do? Leave untouched the launch sites that are deliberately placed in built-up areas? Had Israel wanted to destroy Lebanese civilian infrastructure, it would have turned out the lights in Beirut in the first hour of the war, destroying the billion-dollar power grid and setting back Lebanon 20 years.

Israel's response to **Hizbullah** has been to use the most precise weaponry and targeting it can. It has no interest, no desire to kill Lebanese civilians. Does anyone imagine that it could not have levelled south Lebanon, to say nothing of Beirut? Instead, it has repeatedly dropped leaflets, issued warnings, sent messages by radio and even phone text to Lebanese villagers to evacuate so they would not be harmed.

Israel knows that these warnings give the **Hizbullah** fighters time to escape and regroup. The notification as to where the next attack is coming has allowed **Hizbullah** to set up elaborate ambushes. The result? Unexpectedly high Israeli infantry casualties. Moral scrupulousness paid in blood. Israeli soldiers die so Lebanese civilians will not, and who does the international community condemn for disregarding civilian life?

letters@charleskrauthammer.com ©The Washington Post Writers Group

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**NAVY GO IN; CARRIER TO EVACUATE BRITS FROM ISRAELI BLITZ 15
CHILDREN DIE AS JETS POUND VILLAGERS HEZBOLLAH MUST BE
REINED IN, SAYS BUSH**

Sunday Mirror

July 16, 2006 Sunday

0 Star Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 11

Length: 639 words

Byline: BY STEPHEN HAYWARD

Body

TWO Royal Navy warships were put on standby last night to help with the evacuation of thousands of British nationals trapped in war-torn Lebanon.

The aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious and HMS Bulwark - the Navy's newest assault ship - could be on their way as early as today, according to reports. There are 15,000 Brits trapped in Beirut.

As Israeli jets pounded Lebanese border villages yesterday, more than 20 people - including 15 children - were killed when their van was ripped apart as they tried to escape the deadliest attack yet in the escalating conflict.

Twelve more were killed in Beirut as Israeli air strikes against Lebanon-based **Hezbollah** guerrillas continued for a fourth day.

And in other key developments:

President Bush, speaking at the G8 meeting in St Petersburg, called on Syria to rein in the Iran-backed **Hezbollah**. Russia warned other nations could be drawn into the crisis and urged Israel to show restraint.

Israel claimed **Hezbollah** had missiles that could reach as far as 125 miles into the country, putting Jerusalem and Tel Aviv at risk.

Lebanon's PM Fouad Siniora demanded an immediate ceasefire backed by the UN and declared Lebanon was a "disaster zone".

The van carrying two Lebanese families was hit as they tried to escape from the border village of Marwaheen, near the southern port of Tyre, just hours after Israeli forces warned them by loudspeakers to leave.

NAVY GO IN CARRIER TO EVACUATE BRITS FROM ISRAELI BLITZ 15 CHILDREN DIE AS JETS POUND VILLAGERS HEZBOLLAH MUST BE REINED IN, SAYS BUSH

Dramatic photos showed a young child - perhaps six years old - lying dead near the wreckage of a blown-up vehicle after the midday attack.

One resident told al-Jazeera TV the victims had been hit after being refused shelter by UN forces. "Their bodies litter the road," said Akram Ghannam. Another said: "Where is the international justice when children, women, and the elderly are killed?"

In separate strikes, Israeli war-planes blasted the southern suburbs of Beirut, a Hezbollah stronghold, killing at least 12 and wounding 32.

Israel launched US-made Patriot missiles over the northern Israeli city of Haifa - just 25 miles from the border - to intercept rockets fired from Lebanon.

Israeli jets targeted petrol stations and fuel tanks on the coastal road linking Beirut to the south, along with ports in the capital and Lebanon's northern-most city of Tripoli. They also destroyed the Beirut office of a senior Hamas official, who escaped unhurt.

Hezbollah guerrillas fired dozens of rockets at northern Israel towns, including the resort of Tiberias, 25 miles from the border and their deepest strike so far into Israel, wounding several civilians.

In London, the Ministry of Defence and Foreign Office were working on plans for a possible evacuation of the Lebanese capital.

"We are advising British nationals to get ready to depart at short notice, if the situation changes," said a Foreign Office spokesman.

But the MoD refused to officially comment on the reports of Navy warships being drafted in. HMS Bulwark, with 500 Marines on board, will take two days to get to Lebanon from Spain, while HMS Illustrious is moored at Gibraltar.

The Israeli raids began on Wednesday after Hezbollah militants seized two Israeli soldiers. More than 70 Lebanese and four Israelis have been killed.

TONY Blair warned last night that "urgent action" was needed in the Middle East as he also arrived for the G8 summit in St Petersburg. "The implications are very serious," he said.

Street children in the city have been banished to remote camps while the summit takes place.

The authorities have clamped down on the city's "rogue elements" in an attempt to improve the country's image on the world stage.

OUR SHIPS

HMS Illustrious

Launched: 1981

Length: 194 metres

Speed: 28 knots (52 km/h)

Range: 5,000 nautical miles

Complement: 685 crew

HMS Bulwark

Launched: 2001

NAVY GO IN CARRIER TO EVACUATE BRITS FROM ISRAELI BLITZ 15 CHILDREN DIE AS JETS POUND
VILLAGERS HEZBOLLAH MUST BE REINED IN, SAYS BUSH

Length: 176 metres

Speed: 18 knots (33km/h)

Range: 7,000 nautical miles

Complement: 325 crew

COMMENT: Page 14

Graphic

The body of a young - Lebanese child lies near the wreckage of the van close to the border village of Marwaheen yesterday

Load-Date: July 16, 2006

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Half a million pro-Syrian Lebanese march in Beirut

The Irish Times

March 9, 2005

Copyright 2005 The Irish Times

Section: Front Page; Pg. 1

Length: 533 words

Byline: Lara Marlowe in Beirut

Body

Eyewitness: Half a million Lebanese Shia Muslims converged on downtown Beirut yesterday in an overwhelming show of force by the pro-Iranian, pro-Syrian **Hizbullah** movement.

In three weeks of anti-Syrian demonstrations, the Christian, Sunni and Druze opposition have never assembled such a huge crowd.

Superficially, the **Hizbullah** protest had much in common with the anti-Syrian demonstrations that preceded it.
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Hizbullah's secretary general, Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah, asked his followers to carry only the red, white and green Lebanese flag.

From a distance, the rivers of people who began pouring down Beirut's boulevards from late morning looked like those of the previous day. They sang the national anthem with the same fervour.

The Shia throngs even adopted the opposition's slogan: "Freedom. Sovereignty. Independence." Alluding to the assassination of the former prime minister Rafik Hariri, the Shia also flew a banner saying: "We want the truth."

But the same words mean different things to the Shia, who fear western intervention and believe Mr Hariri was assassinated by the US and Israel.

Before the denizens of the Shia southern suburbs set off on their five-kilometre journey, **Hizbullah** passed out portraits of the Syrian and Lebanese presidents. And **Hizbullah** hung a provocative banner from a downtown building saying "Thank you, Syria."

Most of the **women** wore long robes and headscarves. The men were poor and downtrodden, "the oppressed" in Shia parlance.

This demonstration had the feel of the Arab Middle East: **Hizbullah** security men sidling up to eaves-drop on interviews; people fearful of being quoted by name.

And though a small percentage were bused in from Syria, and despite allegations that some were paid to travel from the north, south and Bekaa Valley, this was no ordinary rent-a-mob.

Half a million pro- Syrian Lebanese march in Beirut

The Shia Muslims who accosted me, bursting with the desire to speak, are convinced that the expulsion of Syrian forces under UN Security Council Resolution 1559 will result in Israeli domination of Lebanon. Israel occupied parts of the country from 1978 until 2000.

The Lebanon that overflowed Riad Solh Square yesterday has a different history from what one Shia Muslim called "the Gucci revolution" on Martyrs' Square.

"We do not forget that when the Americans came, they shelled us with the battleship New Jersey. The Syrians never did that to us," said Fatima (40), a housewife.

The Christians on Martyrs' Square remember they were shelled by the Syrians in 1978 and in 1989.

Hizbullah held their demonstration just on the Muslim side of the 1975-1990 civil war demarcation line.

The Christian-dominated opposition convene several blocks away, on Martyrs' Square. Hundreds of Lebanese soldiers separated the two protest areas.

When Hassan Nasrallah addressed the Lebanese and Syrian people, as well as the presidents of France, the US and Israel, the cheers reverberated like crashing waves.

Meanwhile, a portrait of the slain prime minister, Mr Hariri, and banners proclaiming "Independence 05" and "Syrians Out" hung forlornly over the quiet Martyrs' Square. A cold wind blew down the empty esplanade to Beirut harbour.

"People knew not to come today," sighed a gendarme at the barricade.

Load-Date: March 9, 2005

Israelis to unleash 'bunker busters' in hunt for Nasrallah

The Irish Times

July 25, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: WORLD; Middle East Crisis; Pg. 11

Length: 462 words

Byline: Tom Clonan

Body

The Israeli Defence Forces' (IDF) pattern of air and ground attacks on civilian targets - including indiscriminate attacks on women and children in vehicles moving north, away from the border or in close proximity to known hospitals - suggests it has created a "free-fire" zone in southern Lebanon.

Meanwhile, Hizbullah's ability to operate appears undiminished. On the ground, Hizbullah fighters appear to have been able to make an orderly withdrawal from the border village of Maroun al-Ras following a much-publicised Israeli assault - carried out by an elite paratroop unit of the IDF. Hizbullah also continues to fire rockets into Israel, apparently at will.

In a renewed and concerted attempt to remove the leadership of Hizbullah, Israel has accelerated its programme to acquire 100 GBU-28 specialised "bunker-buster" bombs from the US. In an attempt to "decapitate" Hizbullah, Israel plans to kill Hassan Nasrallah using the US manufactured GBU-28 (Guided Bomb Unit 28). This laser-guided "smart" munition is especially designed to penetrate and destroy "hard and deeply buried targets" (HDBTs) or underground bunkers of the type that Nasrallah and his Hizbullah leadership are believed to be sheltering in - somewhere in Beirut.

The GBU-28 missile weighs more than 1000kg and can be fired by Israeli F-16 fighter jets. It has a warhead consisting of 300kg of Tritonal high explosives detonated by the "super penetrator" BLU-113 hard target smart fuse (HTSF). In layman's terms, the HTSF allows the missile to "burrow" through 10 metres of reinforced steel and concrete or 100 metres of packed earth to detonate deep within a "missile-proof" or buried enemy structure.

The Tritonal high explosive charge is shaped to detonate and create a high-pressure explosive wave that can navigate subterranean shelters and their complexes of tunnels and ante-chambers, shattering, burning and killing all inside.

Despite such frightening technology, the successful deployment of this weapon relies on good, hard, timely intelligence and the laser or GPS identification of the correct target. In Beirut's tangle of back streets, alleyways and bomb-damaged rubble it will be difficult to correctly identify Nasrallah's bunker. If the IDF - in this densely populated urban environment - mistakenly hits a building filled with innocent civilians, the consequences would be unthinkable.

Despite the shock and awe implied in the military designations "bunker buster" or "super penetrator", the imminent attempt to kill Nasrallah with a GBU-28 resembles more a hunt for a needle in a haystack than a precise surgical strike. This would appear all the more so in the context of an indiscriminate and inconclusive IDF air and ground campaign.

Israelis to unleash 'bunker busters' in hunt for Nasrallah

Tom Clonan is The Irish Times' security analyst.

Load-Date: July 26, 2006

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Israeli army in Lebanon raid

Guardian.com

July 17, 2006

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theguardian

Length: 911 words

Highlight: Blair calls for international force Latest Israeli strikes kill at least 2340 British nationals evacuated

Body

Israeli ground forces briefly entered southern Lebanon to attack **Hizbullah** bases on the border, an Israeli government spokesman said today.

The new Israeli offensive, the first use of Israeli ground troops in the fighting, came as the prime minister, Tony Blair, led calls for an international stabilisation force to be deployed in the area.

An Israeli army spokesman said the troops were withdrawn after the raid. "There was a very small incursion overnight to destroy a few **Hizbullah** positions immediately on the other side of the fence. That has been done," he said.

The Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, yesterday vowed a "far-reaching" response following a **Hizbullah** rocket attack on the port city of Haifa that killed eight civilians.

Mr Blair, speaking after private talks with the United Nations secretary general, Kofi Annan, said: "The only way we are going to have a cessation of violence is if we have an international force deployed into that area."

Speaking to reporters in St Petersburg, where he is attending the final day of the G8 summit, Mr Blair said international troops could "stop the bombardment" of Israel with **Hizbullah** missiles. The Finnish foreign minister, Erkki Tuomioja, whose country holds the revolving EU presidency, said in Brussels that the EU or UN may deploy such a force to end the conflict. A small UN contingent has been in the area for many years.

Israel said it was too early to talk about a new deployment of troops under UN or EU auspices. "I don't think we're at that stage yet," said an Israeli government spokeswoman. "We're at the stage where we want to be sure that **Hizbullah** is not deployed at our northern border."

Israeli fighters continued to bomb Lebanon today after warplanes extended the bombing to the north of the country. The attacks follow a missile strike on the Israeli port city of Haifa that killed eight railway workers.

Planes and artillery struck 60 targets overnight. An army base was hit in Tripoli, Lebanon's second largest city, killing at least nine Lebanese soldiers, and at least 16 civilians were killed after an Israeli bomb flattened a building in the southern town of Tyre.

Israeli army in Lebanon raid

At least 140 Lebanese civilians have been killed since the violence broke out last week following Hizbullah's capture of two Israeli soldiers. At least 12 Israeli civilians have died in the Hizbullah rocket attacks on Israel, as well as 12 Israeli soldiers and sailors.

Israel's Channel 10 television station reported today that Israel's military was threatening to destroy Lebanon's electricity grid if the rocket attacks did not stop. The southernmost strike hit a village outside Nazareth overnight, 33 miles from the Lebanese border.

About 40 British nationals, mainly women, children and those needing medical care, were evacuated from Beirut early this morning by Royal Air Force Chinook helicopters to be taken to Cyprus.

Two Royal Navy ships are on their way to Lebanon and there are plans for a possible larger evacuation of British nationals. Some 4,000 British families are registered in Lebanon.

In a message to stranded Britons, the Foreign Office said people should "stay put, exercise caution, keep in touch with the embassy and heed local advice" and listen to English language broadcasts.

A cruise ship chartered by France was due to arrive at Beirut's port later today to begin evacuations of French nationals and other European citizens. Russia sent a plane to Jordan this morning to start evacuating its citizens from the region, while the UN was also considering evacuation plans for its staff.

In France, the French president's office said that Dominique de Villepin, the French prime minister, was travelling to Beirut today to meet the Lebanese prime minister, Fuad Saniora, and express the "support and solidarity of the French people in this trial".

Mr Saniora today described Israel's offensive as "terrorism" that would foster extremism in the region.

It is expected that the US secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, will soon make a visit to the region. In a private conversation about the crisis with Mr Blair at the G8, the US president, George Bush, was overheard saying "I think Condi is going to go pretty soon".

Yesterday, leaders at the G8 put the onus on Hizbullah, which is backed by Syria and Iran, ending the conflict by freeing the two Israeli troops and stopping the attacks on Israel with rockets.

One Israeli newspaper said today that the offensive had so far destroyed a quarter of Hizbullah's fighting capabilities. It has forced hundreds of thousands of Lebanese to flee, with residents of southern Lebanon going to Beirut or the eastern Bekaa valley, while some of the capital's residents have moved to homes on the hills to the east.

The fighting in Lebanon last week opened a second front for Israel. In Gaza, where Israeli believes one of its soldiers is being held by Hamas-linked militants, Israeli jets were in action, largely destroying the empty Palestinian foreign ministry, and severely damaging about 50 flats nearby.

In the West Bank today, Palestinian militants killed an Israeli soldier and wounded six others when they set off a bomb near troops in Nablus. Meanwhile, police in Jerusalem said they arrested a Palestinian with a large bag containing explosives.

Israel has been attacking Gaza since June 28, three days after Hamas-linked militants tunnelled under the border and attacked an Israeli army post at a Gaza crossing, killing two soldiers and capturing a third.

Load-Date: July 17, 2006

40 dead in Lebanon strikes

Guardian.com

July 17, 2006

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theguardian

Length: 763 words

Highlight: More Hizbullah rockets hit Haifa Blair leads calls for UN peace force 40 British nationals evacuated

Body

More than 40 people were killed in Lebanon today as tit-for-tat strikes between Israeli forces and Hizbullah militia continued during the worst fighting the region has seen in nearly a quarter of a century.

In the deadliest attack, 10 civilians were killed and at least seven wounded when an Israeli air strike hit two cars travelling from south Lebanon towards the capital.

A building collapsed in Haifa, Israel's third largest city, after it was targeted in a Hizbullah rocket attack. Initial reports said two people were injured and there were fears people could be trapped in the rubble.

Hundreds of rockets have hit northern Israel in recent days, reaching as far as 33 miles south of the border. The fighting across the border has been the worst since Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982. Israeli attacks in Lebanon have killed 203 people, all but 13 of them civilians, while 24 Israelis have died, including 12 civilians hit in rocket attacks.

Tony Blair today called for an international peace keeping force after private talks with the United Nations secretary general, Kofi Annan, at the G8 summit in St Petersburg. "The only way we are going to have a cessation of violence is if we have an international force deployed into that area," the prime minister told reporters.

Israel said it was too early to talk about a new deployment of troops under UN or EU auspices. The Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, tonight said he would agree to halt fighting if the two captured soldiers were returned and Hizbullah withdrew from the border region.

He told the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, that the country was "facing a moment of national truth".

"We are not looking for war or direct conflict, but if necessary we will not be frightened by it," he told MPs.

The Israeli army today announced it had made an overnight raid into southern Lebanon to attack Hizbullah bases. It was the first time Israeli ground troops had been used in six days of conflict.

The raid came after the Mr Olmert, vowed a "far-reaching" response to a rocket attack yesterday on Haifa that killed eight Israeli railway workers.

40 dead in Lebanon strikes

Some analysts believe a major ground invasion of southern Lebanon is being considered by Israel in order to wipe out Hizbullah's capacity to fire missiles over the border. One Israeli newspaper said today that the offensive had so far destroyed a quarter of Hizbullah's fighting capabilities.

As the conflict continued, thousands of foreign citizens were evacuated from Beirut. France, which has more than 20,000 citizens in Lebanon, chartered a Greek ferry to pick up 1,200 French citizens and other Europeans. About 850 of the 5,000 Swedes living in Lebanon have been evacuated, largely to the city of Aleppo in northern Syria. An Italian ship carrying nearly 400 evacuees was expected in the Cypriot port of Larnaca this evening.

US officials said a chartered ferry would arrive in Beirut tomorrow under naval escort to evacuate American citizens. About 40 British nationals, mainly women, children and those needing medical care, were evacuated from the city early this morning. Another 40 were expected to be airlifted out this evening.

Two Royal Navy ships are on their way to Lebanon and there are plans for a possible larger evacuation of British nationals. Some 4,000 British families are registered in Lebanon.

The French prime minister, Dominique de Villepin, today arrived in Beirut to show solidarity with his Lebanese counterpart and it is expected that the US secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, will soon make a visit to the region. In a private conversation about the crisis with Mr Blair at the G8, the US president, George Bush, was overheard saying, "I think Condi is going to go pretty soon".

Yesterday, leaders at the G8 put the onus on Hizbullah, which is backed by Syria and Iran, to end the conflict by freeing the two Israeli troops and stopping the attacks on Israel with rockets. Fuad Saniora, the Lebanese prime minister, today described Israel's offensive as "terrorism" that would foster extremism in the region.

The Israeli offensive has forced hundreds of thousands of Lebanese to flee, with residents of southern Lebanon going to Beirut or the eastern Bekaa valley, while some of the capital's residents have moved to homes on the hills to the east.

Fighting in Lebanon last week opened a second front for Israel. Israeli jets were today also in action in Gaza, where Israel believes one of its soldiers is being held by Hamas-linked militants. Air raids largely destroyed the empty Palestinian foreign ministry and severely damaged about 50 flats nearby.

Load-Date: July 17, 2006

Debate on the crisis in the Middle East

The Irish Times

July 26, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: LETTERS; Pg. 15

Length: 1273 words

Body

A Chara, - Could anything possibly illustrate the chaotic disaster that is American foreign policy better than Condoleezza Rice's offer of funding to Lebanon to rebuild that shattered country, while the destruction continues to be wreaked courtesy of US financial aid for the Israeli war machine, and US political support for the campaign?

Every additional day that Israel blows up innocent civilians in Lebanon and Gaza, obliterating any distinction between itself as a supposedly democratic state and terrorist organisations such as Hizbullah, thousands more Arabs are radicalised, becoming violently anti-Israel and anti-American.

Does anyone seriously believe any more that the election of George Bush has made the world a safer place? - Is mise,

DAVID CARROLL, Castle Gate, Dublin 2.

Madam, - As an Israeli citizen living in Ireland, I deplore the IDF destruction of civilian life and infrastructure as I condemn the unprovoked Hizbullah rocket attacks on Israeli civilians. But I feel compelled to respond to the increasingly repetitive "What if the British had bombed us?" scenarios in your Letters page, the latest from Senator David Norris: "If such actions are justified, so would have been the flattening of Dublin, Dundalk and Drogheda by the British air force in response to the London, Brighton and Birmingham bombings by the Provos".

Hizbullah questions not just the right of the Israeli state to exist but fundamentally shares the political objective of its military sponsor Iran that the Jewish state should, in the words of its President Mahmoud Ahmad-inejad last October, be "wiped off the face of the earth". Hizbullah is closely allied to militant jihadists who believe that all Israeli citizens worldwide (presumably Jewish) are legitimate targets for murder in this goal.

The IRA was never so foolish, arrogant or genocidal in its intentions to question the right of existence of either the UK or indeed its citizens themselves.

The Irish-British, Hizbullah-Israeli comparisons are spurious and faintly ludicrous. A little knowledge is indeed a dangerous thing; and to crudely try to extrapolate detailed local knowledge of British-Irish history to every political scenario being played out in the Middle East is both intellectually crass and embarrassingly parochial. - Yours, etc,

MOTTI RUIMY, Benburb Street, Dublin 7.

Madam, - Every day for the past week or more, innocent Israeli and Lebanese people have been killed intentionally. Our Government thankfully got all Irish citizens out of the war zone to safety. But millions of men, women and children have been left behind to bear the agony of waiting for a bomb that might kill or maim them.

Debate on the crisis in the Middle East

The ones that have most chance of bringing an end to the carnage, the US government, have speeded up the delivery of precision-guided bombs to Israel - bombs that will be used to kill more Lebanese civilians. They have stated publicly many times that it is too early to try to broker a ceasefire - which means they are satisfied to see more civilian lives being destroyed. That means they will get more orders for bombs, and their own citizens can assist in the genocide by manufacturing the bombs.

If the US or the Israeli air force asked our Government to allow them to use Shannon Airport for the transportation of these bombs, would it say no? I would sincerely hope so, but I cannot be sure of it, given our shameful support of the US war machine to date.

It is time our leaders took a stand to stop the killing in Israel and Lebanon. The Irish Government claims to have a healthy relationship with the Americans. It should use it. It should tell them that we do not support their unwillingness to bring about peace. And then our Minister for Foreign Affairs could start using his diplomatic skills and resources to bring about a change of attitude.

As for Hizbullah, our Army has had years of experience dealing with them on the ground. There are possibilities which can be explored to get them to stop their destructive and shameful attacks on Israel.

The world needs neutral, honest brokers at this time. Ireland could and should be one. But right now we are supporting a senseless, destructive war that contravenes international treaties, human rights norms and moral imperatives.

I urge our Minister for Foreign Affairs to do all in his power to get all sides in the latest Middle East crisis to stop attacks that are likely to lead to loss of civilian life. I also urge him to ensure that the Irish people are not providing direct or indirect support to the Israeli air force or army (including the production and transportation of bombs). And I ask him to do everything in his power to bring about an immediate ceasefire.

We cannot continue to support the suffering we see on our newspapers through our inaction. Ethically, morally - even financially - it cannot be justified. - Yours, etc,

JOHN LANNON, Raheen, Ballyneety, Co Limerick.

Madam, - That was an awful letter on Monday from Senator David Norris (a supposedly erstwhile good friend), in which he joined the band of critics of Israel without any attempt to see its side of the picture (July 24th). Fortunately, there was a very good letter from Rob Weatherill in which he performed that task.

If the people of Israel are not allowed to fight the forces of their enemies, aimed at destroying them, are they to go quietly to the death chambers as once happened in Europe? I think not. David Norris "hammers" Israel for daring to fight against Hizbullah and makes the most sickening and shameful suggestion that Lebanese villagers are being urged by Israel to flee from their homes to escape the fighting and are then deliberately bombed from the air.

He also refers to the Hizbullah firing of rockets at Israel's cities and innocent civilians as "antics", as if this were a bit of fooling around by children which should be ignored.

His apparent belief, shared with the British foreign ministry's representative and others, is that Hizbullah forces are all gathered in the open in one place so that Israel has no need to embroil civilians in its actions. I hate to see innocents being killed or wounded in any fighting but does Senator Norris not realise that Hizbullah fighters are designedly embedded in places where they are surrounded by Lebanese civilians whose lot is indeed a harsh one? - Yours, etc,

MAURICE ABRAHAMSON, Tara Cove, Ballymoney, Co Wexford.

Madam, - Whereas Senator Norris is free to defend himself as he chooses with regard to the current conflict in the Lebanon, there is no one who could describe the attacks on Israel and the killing of civilians by Hizbullah as "antics" unless they have a seriously distorted view of the conflict.

Debate on the crisis in the Middle East

Here's one TCD graduate who won't be voting for the good Senator in future. - Yours, etc,

ULTAN Ó BROIN, Dublin 8.

Madam, - These days I remember, with discomfort, travelling around Lebanon in the autumn of 2002. The faith of the people of Southern Lebanon in the Irish really struck us. I remember in particular being given directions by locals to the site of the wedding feast of Cana; they insisted one of their children to travel with us to show the way. In the end the authenticity of the site was open to question, but not the decency and openness of the people.

What has happened to those children? What will happen over the next week as the Israeli ground offensive razes all before it? I noticed one of our Cork politicians condemn the disproportion of the Israeli campaign during the week - it appeared as a small article in a local freesheet. As for the body politic on the whole, the rest is silence. - Yours, etc,

ELIZABETH O'CONNELL, Monkstown, Co Cork.

Load-Date: July 26, 2006

Events recall run-up to war of 1967

The Irish Times

July 15, 2006 Saturday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 9

Length: 893 words

Byline: Brian Whitaker Wendell Steavenson in Beirut, Rory McCarthy in Nahariya, Conal Urquhart in Jerusalem and Oliver Burkeman in New York

Body

MIDDLE EAST: The three Syrian guest-workers arrived before dawn yesterday, as they did every morning, to set up their coffee stall beneath the flyover, hoping to catch the breakfast trade from early risers in the southern suburbs of Beirut. That was when the bomb blew them away, along with a large section of the road above their heads. Nobody seemed to remember their names.

Kaseem Moqdad, who lives nearby, had woken in darkness to the sound of jets overhead. By the time the overpass was bombed he was out in the street in a crowd of people, looking up at the sky. In addition to those killed, he said, 20 people were injured by flying glass and rubble.

A former corporal in the British Royal Fusiliers, Mr Moqdad had been back in his native Lebanon for only a year and a half, and Israel's assault on its capital left him with a sense of torn loyalties. "I don't like Hizbullah and I don't hate Hizbullah," he said, in an accent that was half Lebanese, half north London. "We have to fix why people get mad, and we're not treating the cause . . . you do get angry with the West. The Israelis don't see that they kill children and women and innocent people."

The Israeli rockets and bombs that struck southern Beirut yesterday appear to have hit their intended targets, mainly roads. One landed in the middle of a crossroads, blasting a huge crater and thrusting twisted underground pipework up into the air.

Most of the roads in question, though, are yards away from shops and homes. In the Shia neighbourhoods where the damage was worst some residents sought to salvage what they could, while others just gaped, looking shellshocked.

A mass exodus from the capital, mainly of young families, was gathering pace, but the options for escape from Lebanon were evaporating. Three days of Israeli attacks have left the capital's airport bombed and shut down, its sea routes blockaded by warships, and the main highway into Syria impassable. Air attacks have left 53 people dead so far, as part of an Israeli campaign to win the release of two soldiers captured by Hizbullah militants in cross-border raids on Wednesday. Hizbullah's counter-assault continued yesterday, with dozens of rockets reaching into northern Israel, and deep into the Israeli psyche.

On both sides of the border the crisis that has engulfed the region in recent days has fuelled a powerful sense of déjà vu. For the Beirut residents who spent the day frantically hoarding food, candles, batteries and petrol, the

Events recall run-up to war of 1967

atmosphere recalled the nation's 15-year civil war, and the 18-year Israeli occupation they thought had ended forever in 2000. For some in Israel the closer historical parallel was with the run-up to the war of 1967.

For most of the day roads across northern Israel were empty, most people apparently obeying official instructions to stay inside. Many of the houses and apartment blocks have underground bunkers.

In mid-afternoon, in the almost-deserted centre of Nahariya in northern Israel, a **Hizbullah** rocket landed in the middle of a normally busy avenue, shattering windows in a shopping centre.

"We will continue suffering like this until the military makes them stop," said David Shevli (32), who had closed his grocery store on Thursday and spent yesterday fielding calls on his mobile from worried friends.

Israel is still reeling from the double assault on its military prestige by separate attacks from **Hizbullah** and Hamas, which captured an Israeli soldier a month ago. Not only was the strongest army in the Middle East taken by surprise, but its assailants managed, through capturing soldiers, to prolong the pain.

Most Israelis could ignore the rocket attacks on Sderot and the farming communities that surround the Gaza strip. The bombardment of northern Israel, home to around 300,000 people, is physically much farther from Tel Aviv than is Sderot, but psychologically much closer. Most Israelis have visited Haifa, or holidayed in Galilee.

While there is little criticism in the media or on the street of Israel's attacks across the border, under the surface there are fears that Lebanon, which dominated Israeli politics from 1982 to 2000, could again become a graveyard for its soldiers.

The international response to the situation in Lebanon has been broadly condemnatory of Israel, but the US has given cautious backing to the attacks, and the issue seems likely to dominate the G8 summit in St Petersburg, starting today. In New York the UN Security Council was also expected to discuss the emergency, following an appeal from Lebanon's prime minister, Fouad Sinoria, for the world body to intervene.

But the immediate and longer term impact of the crisis will be measured inside Lebanon, where, unlike Israel, **Hizbullah** cannot be dismissed simply as a terrorist organisation. It is part of the national political fabric.

If Israel's aim is to drive a wedge between **Hizbullah** and the rest of Lebanon there are signs it may not be succeeding. Israel's attempt to hold the Lebanese government responsible has also caused resentment.

Whatever the logic of the attack, it was playing itself out with painful repercussions yesterday in, among other places, the now inaccessible Lebanese coastal village of Doueir. A family with 10 children died just outside the village when missiles hit their home on Thursday night, a civil defence supervisor said. - (Guardian Service)

Load-Date: July 26, 2006

Israeli army raids Lebanon

Guardian.com

July 17, 2006

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theguardian

Length: 944 words

Highlight: /B Blair leads calls for UN peace force/B More Hizbullah rockets hit Haifa/B 40 British nationals evacuated

Body

Israeli troops made a brief raid into southern Lebanon overnight to attack Hizbullah bases on the border, the Israeli government revealed today.

News of Israel's ground offensive came as the prime minister, Tony Blair, led calls for an international stabilisation force to be deployed in the area as the only way to stop the violence.

The overnight raid marked the first time Israeli ground troops had been used in six days of conflict with Hizbullah that began after the militant group kidnapped two Israeli troops.

Some analysts believe a major ground invasion of southern Lebanon is being considered by Israel, which wants to remove Hizbullah's capacity to fire missiles over the border. One Israeli newspaper said today that Israel's offensive had so far destroyed a quarter of Hizbullah's fighting capabilities.

An Israeli army spokesman said the troops used overnight were quickly withdrawn. "There was a very small incursion overnight to destroy a few Hizbullah positions immediately on the other side of the fence. That has been done," he said.

The raid came after the Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, vowed a "far-reaching" response to a rocket attack yesterday on the northern Israeli city of Haifa that killed eight Israeli railway workers.

There were more Hizbullah rocket attacks on Haifa today, and reports that a building had collapsed. Initial reports said two people were injured and there were fears people could be trapped in the rubble. Hundreds of rockets have hit northern Israel in recent days, reaching as far as 33 miles south of the border.

Israeli jets continued to pound targets in Lebanon today, extending its air raids into the north of the country. At least 23 Lebanese were killed in the latest attacks, reports said.

At least 140 Lebanese civilians have been killed since the violence broke out last week. At least 12 Israeli civilians have died in the rocket attacks, as well as 12 Israeli soldiers and sailors.

Mr Blair called for an international peace keeping force after private talks with the United Nations secretary general, Kofi Annan.

Israeli army raids Lebanon

Speaking to reporters in St Petersburg, where he is attending the final day of the G8 summit, Mr Blair said: "The only way we are going to have a cessation of violence is if we have an international force deployed into that area."

A small UN contingent has been in the area for many years.

Israel said it was too early to talk about a new deployment of troops under UN or EU auspices. "I don't think we're at that stage yet," said an Israeli government spokeswoman. "We're at the stage where we want to be sure that Hizbullah is not deployed at our northern border."

Lebanese television claimed that an Israeli F-16 was shot down overnight, and showed footage of falling burning debris, but the Israeli military denied it had lost a plane.

Israel's Channel 10 television station reported today that Israel's military was threatening to destroy Lebanon's electricity grid if the rocket attacks did not stop.

About 40 British nationals, mainly women, children and those needing medical care, were evacuated from Beirut early this morning by Royal Air Force Chinook helicopters to be taken to Cyprus.

Two Royal Navy ships are on their way to Lebanon and there are plans for a possible larger evacuation of British nationals. Some 4,000 British families are registered in Lebanon.

In a message to stranded Britons, the Foreign Office said people should "stay put, exercise caution, keep in touch with the embassy and heed local advice" and listen to English language broadcasts.

A cruise ship chartered by France was due to arrive at Beirut's port later today to begin evacuations of French nationals and other European citizens. Russia sent a plane to Jordan this morning to start evacuating its citizens from the region, while the UN was also considering evacuation plans for its staff.

In France, the French president's office said that Dominique de Villepin, the French prime minister, was travelling to Beirut today to meet the Lebanese prime minister, Fuad Saniora, and express the "support and solidarity of the French people in this trial".

Mr Saniora today described Israel's offensive as "terrorism" that would foster extremism in the region.

It is expected that the US secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, will soon make a visit to the region. In a private conversation about the crisis with Mr Blair at the G8, the US president, George Bush, was overheard saying, "I think Condi is going to go pretty soon".

Yesterday, leaders at the G8 put the onus on Hizbullah, which is backed by Syria and Iran, to end the conflict by freeing the two Israeli troops and stopping the attacks on Israel with rockets.

The Israeli offensive has forced hundreds of thousands of Lebanese to flee, with residents of southern Lebanon going to Beirut or the eastern Bekaa valley, while some of the capital's residents have moved to homes on the hills to the east.

The fighting in Lebanon last week opened a second front for Israel. Israeli jets were also in action in Gaza, where Israel believes one of its soldiers is being held by Hamas-linked militants. Air raids largely destroyed the empty Palestinian foreign ministry and severely damaged about 50 flats nearby.

In the West Bank today, Palestinian militants killed an Israeli soldier and wounded six others when they set off a bomb near troops in Nablus. Meanwhile, police in Jerusalem said they arrested a Palestinian with a large bag containing explosives.

Israel has been attacking Gaza since June 28, three days after Hamas-linked militants tunnelled under the border and attacked an Israeli army post at a Gaza crossing, killing two soldiers and capturing a third.

Israeli army raids Lebanon

Load-Date: July 17, 2006

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Hamas and Big Bird feature at Iranian book fair

The Irish Times

May 13, 2005

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Section: World; Other World Stories; Pg. 12

Length: 679 words

Body

Letter from Tehran Ramita Navai The traffic around north Tehran is worse than usual. Hundreds of battered Hillman Hunters, blacked-out jeeps and souped-up Peugeots are locked bumper to bumper, pointlessly hooting their horns. But for once, this strange tangle of cars is crawling towards the same destination - Tehran's annual international book fair is the hottest event in town.

Foreign books in the Islamic Republic are expensive and rare. Iranians travel from towns and villages across the country to buy, or just browse through books from around the world, on offer at government subsidised prices.

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The English-language book hall is one of the most popular. The small stalls are besieged with crowds and there is a scrum to get to the books. But amid this melee, opposite the Oxford University Press stand is an incongruous sight - a computer beams horrific war images to a soundtrack of machine-gun fire and above hangs a poster of Palestine. This is Hamas, the militant Palestinian organisation, and it is the only stall with no customers.

"We are here because all Muslim brothers want to help fight until the last Israeli has been kicked out of Israel," says 23-year old Mohammad, a Hamas volunteer worker.

Unfortunately for Mohammad, the Muslim brothers of north Tehran are more interested in the Design and Architecture stand, where a group of girls have descended in a wave of skin-tight jeans, bubble-gum pink headscarves and lashings of make-up. The book fair is not only about buying books and Tehran's youth are out in full force.

"We have to grab every opportunity we can to meet girls," says 21-year-old Arash, ostensibly flicking through a coffee table book on Le Corbusier.

But it was not always like this - last year the Hamas stand was packed.

"The organisers made a mistake this year - we should actually be in the Arabic hall as most of our books are in Arabic. By the time we found out we'd been put here they told us it was too late to change, there was no more space left," says Mohammad.

Although they have sold fewer books this year, Mohammad says that T-shirts of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, Hamas's late spiritual leader, have been flying off the shelves, as have replica suicide bomber headbands.

"But our bestsellers have been a poster of a woman suicide bomber and a book on women's role in the intifada and one on women suicide bombers - a very popular theme this year," says Mohammad.

Hamas and Big Bird feature at Iranian book fair

Just around the corner, business has also been slow for Islamic Jihad. Their piece de resistance - a CD-Rom called "Martyrdom-Seeking Operators" - has been facing stiff competition from Sesame Street's Big Bird next door.

But there is more action at the impressive camouflage-decked stand of the Lebanese Shia organisation, **Hizbullah**, with its minimalist banners and shining glass cabinets packed with grenades and rusty machine guns.

A **Hizbullah** representative is on hand to guide visitors through the mock war zone, past the gigantic posters of rocket launchers - "the Israelis are scared to bits of those babies" - towards its gleaming white bookshelves, with books on agricultural projects. "This is part of an image change. We want to let people know that **Hizbullah** isn't all about war, you know. We build hospitals and help communities."

As part of its rebranding, **Hizbullah** has expanded into the world of multimedia. Website addresses are emblazoned on flags and they even have computer games to lure the children: "Resistance Boy: The Boy from Quds (Jerusalem)", where the object is to shoot down Israeli missiles and planes.

Hizbullah says that interest has been high, even from the middle class kids who head straight to the English-language hall in search of Western culture.

"The name **Hizbullah** can put people off a bit, but when they see the booth, they want to come and have a look and find out more."

But Arash and his friends are not impressed.

"I've got my own problems to deal with. I didn't come here for politics," he says.

"I came for books." And with that he winks, tucks an Albert Camus under his arm and is off, trailing a new pack of girls.

Load-Date: May 13, 2005

Blair calls for UN force in Lebanon

Guardian.com

July 17, 2006

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theguardian

Length: 851 words

Highlight: Latest Israeli strikes kill at least 23 40 British nationals evacuated French prime minister to visit Beirut

Body

Tony Blair today led calls for an international stabilisation force to be deployed in southern Lebanon to halt the conflict between Israel and Lebanese Hizbullah militants.

The prime minister, speaking after private talks with the United Nations secretary-general, Kofi Annan, said: "The only way we are going to have a cessation of violence is if we have an international force deployed into that area."

The Finnish foreign minister, Erkki Tuomioja, whose country holds the revolving EU presidency, said in Brussels that the EU or UN may deploy such a force to end the conflict. A small UN contingent has been in the area for many years.

However, Israel said it was too early to talk about a new international military force being deployed in southern Lebanon to monitor the border area once hostilities with Hizbullah guerrillas ceased.

Asked about a new international military presence, the Israeli government spokeswoman Miri Eisin said: "I don't think we're at that stage yet. We're at the stage where we want to be sure that Hizbullah is not deployed at our northern border."

Some analysts believe that a major ground invasion of southern Lebanon is being considered by Israel.

Israeli fighters continued to bomb Lebanon today after warplanes extended the bombing to the north of the country overnight.

Planes and artillery struck 60 targets overnight, Israel said, and there were reports that at least 23 people had been killed in Lebanon in that strike.

At least 140 Lebanese civilians have died since the violence broke out last week after Hizbullah kidnapped two Israeli soldiers. At least 12 Israeli civilians have died in Hizbullah rocket attacks on Israel, as well as 12 Israeli soldiers and sailors.

Evacuation

About 40 British nationals, mainly women, children and those needing medical care, were evacuated from Beirut early this morning by Royal Air Force Chinook helicopters and taken to Cyprus.

Blair calls for UN force in Lebanon

Two Royal Navy ships were on their way to Lebanon and there were plans for a possible larger evacuation of British nationals. Some 4,000 British families are registered in Lebanon.

In a message to Britons stranded in Lebanon, the Foreign Office said people should "stay put, exercise caution, keep in touch with the embassy and heed local advice" and listen to English language broadcasts.

In other developments today, the French president's office said that Dominique de Villepin, the French prime minister, was travelling to Beirut today to meet the Lebanese government and express "support and solidarity of the French people in this trial".

A cruise ship and a ferry chartered by France were due to arrive in the Lebanese capital later today to begin evacuations of French nationals and other European citizens to Cyprus.

Mr Blair, speaking to reporters in St Petersburg where he is attending the final day of the G8 summit, described the situation in the Middle East as "very, very serious".

Mr Annan appealed to Israel to abide by international law and spare civilian lives and infrastructure. He also said the UN was considering evacuation plans for UN dependents from Lebanon.

Responding to Mr Blair's proposal, Isaac Herzog, Israel's tourism minister and a security cabinet member, said his country would consider all ideas from the international community. "We welcome any positive idea from the G8 or the international community," he told BBC Radio 4's Today programme.

He said any "mechanism for future co-existence" should be based on existing UN resolutions and would have to put an end to rocket attacks on Israel.

Yesterday, leaders at the G8 put the onus on Hizbullah, which is backed by Syria and Iran, to end the conflict by freeing the two Israeli soldiers and stopping the rocket attacks on Israel.

Strikes

Last night, Hizbullah rockets hit a village outside Nazareth, 33 miles from the Lebanese border and the southern-most target hit so far. Overnight, Israeli warplanes again pounded parts of the Lebanese capital.

Firefighters put out a large blaze in Beirut's port, where two people were killed when missiles hit a parking area next to the harbour. Israeli jets also hit a gas storage tank in the northern Beirut neighbourhood of Dawra.

Army bases were hit last night in Tripoli, Lebanon's second-largest city, killing at least nine Lebanese soldiers. At least 16 civilians were killed after an Israeli bomb flattened a building in the southern town of Tyre.

The Israeli offensive has forced hundreds of thousands of Lebanese to flee, with residents of southern Lebanon going to Beirut or the eastern Bekaa valley, while some of the capital's residents have moved to homes on the hills to the east.

Israeli jets were also in action overnight in Gaza, destroying the Palestinian foreign ministry, severely damaging about 50 flats.

Israeli aircraft fired at least five missiles at Palestinian militants during battles in northern Gaza early today, Palestinian security officials said.

Israel has been attacking Gaza since June 28, three days after Hamas-linked militants tunnelled under the border and attacked an Israeli army post at a Gaza crossing, killing two soldiers and capturing a third.

Blair calls for UN force in Lebanon

End of Document

Middle East crisis: Profile: Charismatic leader who triggered crisis

The Guardian - Final Edition

July 22, 2006 Saturday

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Section: GUARDIAN HOME PAGES; Pg. 6

Length: 470 words

Byline: Jonathan Steele, Beirut

Body

Even his most severe Lebanese opponents recognise Sheikh Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, the undisputed leader of the Shia movement **Hizbullah**, as the country's most charismatic politician. A clear and lively speaker who switches from classical Arabic to modern slang with ease, he more than any other Lebanese has the

power of war and peace.

He launched the latest crisis by authorising his militia to seize two Israeli soldiers. He decided to send volleys of rockets into Israel, and he could help end the confrontation by accepting a ceasefire and releasing the soldiers.

Unusually for a religious leader, Sheikh Nasrallah also fulfils the role of political supremo and military commander. The perception of Nasrallah is that he is in the war room, taking the decisions, says Basher Haider, a professor of philosophy at the American University in Beirut.

Sheikh Nasrallah is not shy of being photographed carrying a gun, though always held triumphantly above his head. His eldest son was killed by the Israelis and he publicly handed a rifle to his next son to carry on the struggle. **Hizbullah** (the party of God) is more

than just a political party. It is a movement with a strong welfare chapter that helps poor Shias in the southern suburbs of Beirut and southern Lebanon. It is the least corrupt of all Lebanese parties, very efficient, and in close contact with the people they serve, Professor Haider says.

Born in Bourji Hammoud, east of Beirut, Sheikh Nasrallah was 15 when civil war forced the family back to their ancestral village in southern Lebanon. He studied at a Qur'anic seminary in the holy Iraqi city of Najaf, but left under pressure from Saddam Hussein's police in 1978. He joined **Hizbullah** during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and went back to his religious studies in Iran in 1989. He is believed to have been influenced by the fact that clerics led the anti-western revolution in Iran in 1979.

While an earlier generation was attracted to the secular pan-Arabism of Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Nasrallah felt that Islamism was the best way of uniting Arabs in the struggle against Israeli and US dominance. He took over the **Hizbullah** leadership in 1992 at 32 when its founder was assassinated by Israel. He helped build it into a force that led Israel to withdraw from southern Lebanon in 2000 after two decades of occupation.

Despite his years of religious studies, Sheikh Nasrallah does not exert his authority through writing books. Some Lebanese describe his motivation as more nationalist than religious. Even in the movement's stronghold in southern

Middle East crisis: Profile: Charismatic leader who triggered crisis

Beirut he does not push an Islamist dresscode or agenda. Many women go out unveiled, and, although no alcohol shops or bars are permitted, residents who drink at home with friends are not hassled.

He is married and has three surviving children.

Load-Date: July 22, 2006

End of Document

The silent minority

Guardian.com

July 28, 2006

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theguardian

Length: 979 words

Highlight: Overwhelming public support for attacks on *Hizbullah* has muted Israeli protests against the war in Lebanon, reports Ian Black from Jerusalem

Body

Condoleezza Rice hardly noticed the small demonstration outside the Jerusalem hotel, when she arrived from Beirut for her meeting with Ehud Olmert.

The US secretary of state probably didn't even hear the slogans as her cavalcade swept up to a side entrance under heavy security. "Go home Condi," they chanted. "War is terrorism with a bigger budget," read one neatly written placard. The handful of Israeli anti-war activists were almost outnumbered by policemen but their voices are in any case being drowned out by overwhelming public support for the fight against *Hizbullah* in Lebanon.

There is plenty of voluble criticism in this ever fractious country about the way the war is being conducted, but heavy losses in one fierce battle on Wednesday - nine soldiers killed - have hardened the national mood.

Last weekend, 2,500 demonstrators turned out in Tel Aviv, but many were Israeli Arabs and radical left-wingers far from the political mainstream. A smaller demonstration in Haifa on Tuesday had to be postponed because air raid sirens wailed to warn of incoming missiles and protesters scattered to the shelters. Overall there is no traction to the anti-war movement.

"The left has been completely marginalised," said the veteran leftist and peace activist Chaim Baram. "It's never been as bad. It is true that no sovereign state could stand rocket attacks like these. But they are only a nuisance and the response is disproportionate, destroying infrastructure and killing children. The difference of quantity is a difference of quality."

Plenty of doves and liberals worry too about the proportionality of Israel's offensive against Lebanon, while acknowledging that *Hizbullah*'s leader, Hassan Nasrallah, and his Iranian ally are dangerous and fanatical enemies. But there has been fierce condemnation of those who have spoken out forcefully against Ehud Olmert's government. Support from the US, happy to see Israel take on Tehran's militant protege, as well as hurting Syria, has given the prime minister unusual freedom of manoeuvre. "Screw them all," snarled one young Israeli who was watching the demonstrators as Ms Rice disappeared into the hotel. "Let's kill Nasrallah and then we can all go home." The contrast with the last war in Lebanon could hardly be greater. Back in 1982 Israel saw the biggest peace rallies in its history, with many thousands opposing Menachem Begin's "war of choice" and turning out in even larger numbers when Christian militiamen massacred Palestinians in Beirut, while Israeli troops stood by.

The silent minority

Protests have been muted because the Hizbullah raid that began this latest round on July 12 is seen as a deliberately provocative act of aggression by an extremist Islamist organisation that ignores Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon six years ago, as certified by the UN.

Israel does still occupy a small area called the Shebaa Farms, on the disputed border between Lebanon and Syria. But it has signalled it will evacuate the area as part of an overall settlement with Lebanon.

It is correct too, that Hizbullah's rockets are not an existential threat. But foreign observers would be wrong to underestimate the pressure on Olmert's untried coalition government because of worries about maintaining deterrence, difficulties with civilian morale in the north and the damage to the economy, at what should be the height of the tourist season. Criticism of the scale and ferocity of Israel's response has been limited too because much of the left was already demoralised by the stagnation in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process since Ariel Sharon's unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the victory of the Islamist movement Hamas in the Palestinian elections.

Gaza has now been under siege for months, with violence reaching new heights since the abduction of a young soldier and heavy-handed Israeli attempts to stop the firing of Qassam rockets across the border. With attention now focused on Lebanon, over 100 Palestinians have been killed in Israeli raids in the last few days alone. But even those Israelis with clear-cut views about the Palestinian issues find themselves confused by the current conflict.

"I am a man of the left and I want peace, but this is a very strange war," said the Jerusalem academic Eli Shaltiel. "Hizbullah and (Iran's president) Ahmedinejad want to kill me just because I am a Jew. I despise them. On the other we are destroying half of Lebanon. Did we really have to turn 750,000 people into refugees? Maybe it could have been done otherwise?"

Zohara Antebi, the founder of a women's organisation that demanded Israel's pullout from Lebanon in 2000, is concerned about proportionality but not about the principle of hitting back.

"War is a tragedy," Ms Antebi said on one of the many TV chat shows where this crisis is being endlessly discussed. "I can only hope that this ends quickly. People on the right say I am unpatriotic because I want to pull back from the West Bank into our own borders. But we do have to be strong inside those borders." Israeli public opinion can be volatile in wartime, and a change of mood cannot be ruled out if the fighting goes on for much longer and there are more losses without a clear blow to Hizbullah.

"People know this is not going well," said the historian and Ha'aretz commentator Tom Segev. "Israelis like wars that we win." But Condi Rice is unlikely to find many more demonstrators waiting for her when she returns to Jerusalem over the weekend. US secretaries of state are used to encountering protests in Jerusalem. After the 1973 war Henry Kissinger was booed by Jewish settlers carrying black umbrellas - the reference was to Neville Chamberlain and Munich- to signal contempt for "appeasing" Israel's Arab enemies by pressure for withdrawals from conquered territory.

This time is different because - for the moment at least - America is cheering Israel on.

Load-Date: July 28, 2006

Shannon airport case acquittals

The Irish Times

July 28, 2006 Friday

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Section: LETTERS; Pg. 17

Length: 672 words

Body

Madam, - The acquittal of five people accused of causing unlawful damage to a US military plane at Shannon Airport in February 2003 has serious implications (The Irish Times, July 26th). If the jury did find in favour of the defendants on the basis that this politically-motivated vandalism was an attempt to save lives - "lawful excuse" - than a dangerous precedent may have been set.

France has a long tradition of supplying despotic Arab regimes with conventional weaponry and military expertise, most recently in the case of Saudi Arabia, whose Crown Prince Sultan bin Abdul Aziz met President Jacques Chirac in Paris last Friday to sign a lucrative "defence co-operation agreement". Saudi Arabia has been cited repeatedly for human rights violations. It is a country where homosexuality is punishable by death, where women are denied the most basic freedoms and petty thieves are liable to have their hands amputated. It is reasonable to assume that some of the material the French will supply to Riyadh will be used to bolster the grip of the ruling royal family at the expense of political prisoners languishing in Saudi jails.

Can I take it then, that the next time a French military jet transits through Dublin airport, I can breach the perimeter fence and attack it with a hammer, enjoying the full protection of Irish law? This action would surely serve to highlight French complicity in Saudi repression, attracting the glare of unwelcome publicity that might contribute to an eventual change of policy from the Elysée Palace; lives could be saved.

I suspect my actions would not, however, win the approval of an Irish jury. Under the new dispensation it would appear that only America and Israel can be held to such exacting standards.

Irish media coverage of the conflagration in the Middle East confirms this. Israel is vilified for defending herself, while America is berated for failing to intervene.

The role of other nations in this tragedy has excited less comment. I am thinking mainly of Iran, a theocracy in which free speech is non-existent and journalists have in the recent past been executed for daring to challenge the mullahs.

Since 1979 Iran has been exporting death and destruction around the world in the name of Islamic revolution, using its proxies - Hizbullah being merely the latest. Iran's rulers have used every conceivable tactic to distract and divert the West while they build a nuclear bomb. On the day Iran was referred to the UN Security Council for refusing to resume negotiations over suspending its nuclear programme, Hizbullah launched its incursion into Israel. Iran's agenda was neatly articulated by Ayatollah Ali Khameni when he spoke a fortnight ago of Israel being "an infectious tumour for the entire Islamic world".

Shannon airport case acquittals

When a frivolous, gullible and biased Irish media elects to ignore the obvious and harp on about Guantánamo Bay and President Bush's atrocious locution, the elephant in the living-room is ignored in favour of the mouse behind the skirting board.

Hassan Nasrallah, Hizbullah's leader, said last weekend that "Hizbullah is not fighting a battle for Hizbullah, or even for Lebanon. We are now fighting a battle for the Islamic nation". Is anybody in Ireland listening? - Yours, etc,

PHILIP DONNELLY, Lower Hodgestown, Donadea, Naas, Co Kildare.

Madam, - The Government has spent a lot of money sending us questionnaires about active citizenship. This week we had a perfect demonstration of active citizenship from the Dublin jury which found that the Ploughshares Five had a "lawful excuse" for decommissioning a US warplane at Shannon. These truly active citizens have told the government that there is no lawful excuse for the use of Shannon as a stopover to slaughter, whether in Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, the Lebanon, or (eventually) Iran and Syria.

Let us therefore see some active citizenship from the Government itself, by the restoration of a civilian airport to legitimate civil uses. - Yours, etc,

JOHN ARDEN, MARGARETTA D'ARCY, St Bridget's Place Lower, Galway.

Load-Date: July 28, 2006

In Lebanon, UN force overwhelmed

Christian Science Monitor

July 20, 2006, Thursday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 6

Length: 643 words

Byline: Nicholas Blanford Correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: TYRE, LEBANON

Highlight: Evacuating casualties of Israeli air strikes is a priority for UNIFIL.

Body

The escalating civilian death toll in south Lebanon from Israeli airstrikes and artillery bombardments, and the inability to evacuate casualties, is causing mounting alarm to United Nations peacekeepers who have found themselves almost powerless to assist.

"This is the absolute priority for us," says Milos Strugar, senior adviser to the UN peacekeeping force in south Lebanon, known by its acronym as UNIFIL. The 2,000-strong peacekeeping force has been deployed in Lebanon since 1978, a buffer between Israel and Hizbullah and previously Palestinian militants. "It is really getting very, very bad. It's unbelievable."

The dead from Israeli airstrikes are left under the rubble of their former homes and with roads made impassable by gaping bomb craters, many of the wounded are dying untreated in beleaguered villages.

"I think all the casualties that can't reach us will die," says an exhausted Ahmad Mrowe, director of the Jabel Amel hospital in this southern Lebanese port city.

He said that one casualty that arrived in the morning had been ferried by eight different cars from the village of Siddiqine, each one driving from one bomb crater to the next. It took them eight hours to cover a distance that normally can be driven in 20 minutes.

Israeli airstrikes on Lebanon killed 56 civilians and a Hizbullah fighter Wednesday, the deadliest toll of the eight-day-old war. Tuesday night saw the heaviest concentration of rockets fired into Israel since the conflict began. A UNIFIL officer estimated that some 150 rockets had crossed the border.

Israeli troops, accompanied by bulldozers and tanks, staged three small incursions along the western sector of the border to destroy Hizbullah positions. They were attacked by Hizbullah fighters and there were reports that four Israeli soldiers were killed when a tank was destroyed by a missile.

At the Jabel Amel hospital were four women and one young man who arrived after their car had been targeted by an Israeli jet on a road near Bourgheliyeh, a village off the coastal road four miles north of Tyre. "Two bombs fell next to each other 15 meters in front of the car," says a shaken Jihad Daoud, as he anxiously watches his relatives being treated.

In Lebanon , UN force overwhelmed

Dr. Mrowe, the hospital director, says that although they were running out of some medicines, the hospital was sufficiently equipped to continue treating patients for another 15 days. "But we only have enough food and drinking water to last another five or six days," he says. "We will stay anyway. We'll never leave. This hospital is like our village."

UNIFIL also is running perilously short on supplies. It was unable to send out any armored convoys Wednesday because of the intensity of the shelling and air raids in the vicinity of Tyre.

Although UNIFIL is in constant contact with the Israeli military, informing them of the movement of their convoys, they have not been spared from the onslaught. Two civilian staff members from Nigeria were assumed killed in an Israeli raid on Horsh, near Tyre. UNIFIL is declining to confirm their deaths until their bodies can be recovered. Two peacekeepers have been wounded. Wednesday, three Israeli artillery shells landed in a UNIFIL compound in Maroun al-Ras and their headquarters in Naqoura. No one was injured.

"We are caught right in the crossfire," Mr. Strugar says.

A series of quick loud bangs just east of the Rest House hotel sent refugees scurrying for cover. But the explosions were outgoing rockets fired by Hizbullah. Shortly afterward, the Arabic satellite TV channels watched by many refugees cramming the hotel announced that Haifa, 33 miles south of where the rockets were fired, had been struck again.

"Let them suffer as we are suffering," said one man out loud to mutters of agreement from his companions.

* Wire material was used in this story.

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Load-Date: July 19, 2006

Guardian Weekly: The scale of Lebanon's human crisis emerges: UN launches emergency appeal and asks Israel for safe passage

Guardian Weekly
July 28, 2006 Friday

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TheGuardianWeekly

Section: Pg. 1

Length: 766 words

Byline: Brian Whitaker in Beirut

Body

The people of Lebanon are facing their "hour of greatest need", the UN said on Monday as it launched an emergency appeal for \$150m to help an estimated 800,000 civilians whose lives have been disrupted by Israeli bombing of Lebanon.

The relief plan would focus on providing food, water, healthcare and other essential services, Jan Egeland, the UN emergency relief coordinator, said. The situation in Lebanon is "very bad, and deteriorating by the day", he said.

Last Sunday he described the bombing of south Beirut as "a violation of humanitarian law". On Monday he had harsh words for Hizbullah as well, rebuking the Shia group for cravenly using civilians as human shields: "Hizbullah must stop this cowardly blending . . . among women and children."

A UN report accompanying the appeal highlighted the scale of the devastation during 12 days of warfare, saying, for example:

The ongoing [Israeli] military operation has caused enormous damage to residential areas and key civilian infrastructure such as power plants, seaports and fuel depots.

Hundreds of bridges and virtually all road networks have been systematically destroyed, leaving entire communities in the south inaccessible.

Skyrocketing prices for basic goods (eg the price of sugar has risen by 600% and cooking gas by 400%) further deplete the coping mechanisms of the Lebanese.

The longer the hostilities last, the more dramatic the humanitarian situation will become. Food, water, health, fuel, and other basic needs will increase; so will the number of internally displaced persons.

In addition to the list, Mr Egeland said there were 1,000 people living in a school that had only six toilets. He warned that fuel was becoming critical in many areas and power failures would affect water supplies and sewage, bringing increased health risks. Calling for an immediate ceasefire, he said: "Only cessation of hostilities can really make it safe for us [to deliver aid]." Failing that, the UN was hoping to arrange a "notification scheme" that would allow safe passage for humanitarian goods.

Guardian Weekly: The scale of Lebanon 's human crisis emerges: UN launches emergency appeal and asks Israel for safe passage

The UN already had 100 trucks contracted or on their way to deliver aid within Lebanon, Mr Egeland said. The UN was working on details with the Israeli military, he said.

The UN is asking Israel for safe passage through three Lebanese ports - Beirut, Tripoli, in the north, and Tyre, in the south. It has also asked Israel to grant safe passage for convoys from Syria. "We are hopeful that in the course of this week you will see a real difference on the ground. By next week we will have a major operation really started," he said.

The White House said on Monday that President Bush had ordered helicopters and ships to Lebanon to give humanitarian aid. "Humanitarian supplies will start arriving in Lebanon tomorrow by helicopter and by ship," said White House spokesman Tony Snow. "We are working with Israel and Lebanon to open up humanitarian corridors."

While Israeli missiles continue to strike vehicles full of desperate refugees fleeing their villages in south Lebanon, Israel is also accused of targeting homes and office buildings used only by civilians.

Researchers for Human Rights Watch, the New York-based non-governmental organisation, say they have compiled details on the deaths of more than a quarter of the roughly 400 Lebanese killed so far by Israeli air strikes. "They're hitting civilians time and time again," Peter Bouckaert, a Human Rights Watch investigator, said. "The Israelis seem to make no discrimination between military and civilian targets."

Last Sunday night Israeli rockets struck two clearly marked Red Cross ambulances. Six ambulance workers were wounded and three generations of the Fawaz family, who had already suffered minor injuries, were left fighting for their lives. The Lebanese Red Cross, in south Lebanon run entirely by volunteers, announced it would end rescue missions unless Israel guaranteed their safety.

Meanwhile, **Hizbullah** rockets continue to be aimed at the northern Israeli city of Haifa. Last Sunday two people were killed and about 50 injured. More than 1,600 rockets have hit northern Israel since the conflict began two weeks ago. So far 17 civilians have been killed, most in Haifa.

Despite the Israeli bombing and shelling, **Hizbullah** still appears able to fire its Katyusha rockets, however inaccurately. Israeli commanders estimate **Hizbullah** began the conflict with at least 10,000 Katyushas and some longer-range missiles, which do not appear to have been fired.

Comment, pages 3-6

Middle East crisis, pages 9-10

Voters' message for Blair, page 15

A beautiful friendship, Review, page 17

Load-Date: August 16, 2006

DEATH AT QANA: The world reacts

The Irish Times
July 31, 2006 Monday

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Section: WORLD; Qana Bombing; Pg. 8

Length: 787 words

Body

The following are a selection of comments made yesterday in the aftermath of the Israeli attack on Qana:

Lebanese prime minister Fouad Siniora: "There is no place on this sad morning for any discussion other than an immediate and unconditional ceasefire as well as an international investigation into the Israeli massacres in Lebanon ... The persistence of Israel in its heinous crimes against our civilians will not break the will of the Lebanese people."

Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert: "I would like to express my deep sorrow at the death of innocent civilians . . . [but] we will not blink in front of Hizbullah and we will not stop the offensive despite the difficult circumstances."

US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice: "I think it is time to get to a ceasefire . . . We actually have to try and put one in place . . . We have to try and do our work well so that there will not be more and more and more incidents over many, many more years."

French president Jacques Chirac: "France condemns this unjustified action, which demonstrates more than ever the need for an immediate ceasefire, without which there will only be other such incidents."

Hizbullah statement: "This horrific massacre [at Qana] will not go without a response."

Jordan's King Abdullah: "This criminal aggression is an ugly crime that has been committed by the Israeli forces in the city of Qana that is a gross violation of all international statutes."

British foreign secretary Margaret Beckett: "It is absolutely dreadful, it is quite appalling. Undoubtedly today's events will make things worse, at least in the short term . . . We have repeatedly urged Israel to act proportionately."

EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana: "I have talked to the prime minister of Lebanon . . . I have expressed to him my profound dismay and deep sorrow at the attack and the death of innocent civilians in Qana. Nothing can justify that."

Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak: "The Arab Republic of Egypt expresses its profound alarm and its condemnation of the irresponsible Israeli bombing of the Lebanese village of Qana, which resulted in innocent casualties, mostly women and children."

Syrian president Bashar al-Assad: "The massacre committed by Israel in Qana this morning shows the barbarity of this aggressive entity. It constitutes state terrorism committed in front of the eyes and the ears of the world."

DEATH AT QANA: The world reacts

Arab League secretary-general Amr Moussa: "The attacks that Israeli forces are launching, targeting civilians and the Lebanese infrastructure, are another confirmation of Israeli aggressive intentions."

Senior Hamas lawmaker Mushir al-Masri: "In the face of this open war against the Arab and Muslim nations, all options are open, including striking [at] the depth of the Zionist entity."

Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi: "The Qana bombing is the outcome of [US secretary of state Condoleezza] Rice's trip to the region. Some American officials should be put on trial for the crimes in Lebanon."

Pope Benedict: "In the name of God, I call on all those responsible for this spiral of violence so that weapons are immediately laid down on all sides."

International Crisis Group analyst Nicholas Pelham: "Major Israeli assaults on Lebanon have ended following a major killing of civilians. [The bombing] makes the pressure for an immediate ceasefire that much greater. But an immediate ceasefire would make it more difficult to negotiate the entry of international forces because the pressure will be on Israel rather than Hizbullah."

UN secretary-general Kofi Annan: "No one disputes Israel's right to defend itself, but by its manner of doing so it has caused, and is causing, death and suffering on a wholly unacceptable scale . . . The most urgent need is to bring the fighting to a halt without further delay . . ."

US ambassador to the UN, John Bolton (speaking outside the UN Security Council chamber): "It says something about the morality and respect for human life of Hizbullah that they would use innocent civilians as shields . . . But that is why as well, in Israel's exercise of its legitimate right to self-defence, they have to take into account this barbaric practice that Hizbullah has and exercise the utmost restraint so that Lebanese civilians are spared the brunt of this conflict."

British UN ambassador Emyr Jones Parry: "It reinforces the need for the violence to end now. That will be achievable through a Security Council resolution which should embody an immediate cessation of hostilities and set out the political basis for resolving this crisis on a longer-term basis . . . There is no reason why such a resolution should not be introduced into the council very quickly and adopted as a matter of urgency."

Load-Date: July 31, 2006

Q & A: Lebanon's elections

Christian Science Monitor (Boston, MA)

June 6, 2005, Monday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 06

Length: 976 words

Body

Nicholas Blanford, the Monitor's Beirut correspondent, answers questions about Lebanon's parliamentary elections, which have been taking place in five regions over four consecutive Sundays, beginning with Beirut on May 29. Sunday, the southern district voted, to be followed by the Bekaa Valley and Mount Lebanon on June 12 and northern Lebanon on June 19.

Why are these elections so important?

It's the first vote free from Syrian interference since the end of Lebanon's 1975-1990 conflict. Although Syrian troops first moved into Lebanon in 1976, Damascus took full control of Lebanon only at the end of the war in 1990. The first parliamentary polls in 20 years were held in 1992, and again in 1996 and 2000. However, each election was manipulated, and districts were drawn to ensure that Syria's Lebanese allies would be returned to power.

Now that Syrian troops and intelligence agents have left Lebanon because of the protests and international pressure following the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in February, the results of these elections will help define the direction the country takes in coming months.

How do voters choose candidates?

Voters are offered lists of candidates, which include female contenders. A prominent politician may decide to head his own list. He then selects a number of candidates to fill the various sectarian slots apportioned by law for his electoral district.

If Shiite Muslims form the majority in his electoral district, then Shiite candidates will form the majority on the list, followed by the next-largest religious sect, and so on.

By polling day, there could be, say, three competing lists in one electoral district. But voters do not have to approve any one list in its entirety. They can mix and match lists, marking off names on one list and replacing them with others. So, it's candidates that count, whether they are independents or members of a party.

How will the opposition fare?

The leading opposition parties are the Future Tide movement, led by Rafik's son, Saad Hariri, and the Democratic Gathering, led by Walid Jumblatt. They, along with various smaller allies, have much more support than their opponents, some of whom sided with Syria in the past, and some of whom are former allies in the opposition. In the first round of voting in Beirut on May 29, Hariri's list swept all 19 seats.

Q & A: Lebanon 's elections

Several prominent pro-Syrian figures have withdrawn from the electoral race, including Emile Lahoud Jr., the son of the Lebanese president. He says he quit in protest of the law under which the elections are being held. But the reality is that he and several other Syrian allies are no longer likely to be elected.

Mr. Hariri predicts that the opposition will win 80 to 90 of the 128 seats in parliament. Hariri is a leading contender to be the country's next prime minister.

How is the prime minister chosen?

Following the elections, the government will officially resign but remain in office while consultations begin for the nomination of a new prime minister and the formation of a new government. The prime minister is selected by the president after he holds consultations with members of parliament and hears their views.

The nominated prime minister then selects his cabinet in consultation with the president. Traditionally, Lebanon's president is a Maronite Christian, the prime minister is a Sunni Muslim, and the parliamentary speaker is a Shiite.

Will the election be fair?

Probably more so than in the past. There is considerable international interest in these elections. In addition to domestic electoral watchdogs, the United Nations and the European Union have sent observers to monitor the proceedings. They gave a clean endorsement to the first round of voting in Beirut.

The most important aspect of these elections is that they will be free from Syrian interference, even though the law under which they are being held was engineered by the Syrians in the 2000 polls.

What are the top issues?

Although there is no shortage of important issues to discuss - the poor state of the economy, redefining relations with Syria, disarming Hizbullah, economic and political reform - few candidates actually present proposals for tackling them.

During the run-up to elections, the media have tended to dwell on the infighting between politicians rather than the debate over important issues. That has left many Lebanese feeling jaded by the whole process.

After the tumultuous developments of the past few months, many Lebanese are complaining that nothing has really changed, with many of the same politicians continuing to squabble among each other over the distribution of power and influence.

What are Hizbullah's prospects?

The southern round of voting took place Sunday. Of the five districts, this one is easiest to predict. Hizbullah, the Shiite militant organization, has teamed up with its traditional rival, the Amal Movement, to produce an unbeatable alliance that will capture the Shiite vote and almost certainly sweep all 23 available seats. The Lebanese media have nicknamed the alliance "the bulldozer."

About 650,000 people are eligible to vote in the southern round, although turnout is expected to hover between 30 and 40 percent. The low turnout is due to six candidates securing their seats unopposed, a partial Christian boycott in protest at the electoral law, and a certain amount of apathy at the foregone results.

Still, Hizbullah is fielding 14 candidates, hoping to raise the number of its lawmakers from nine.

Hizbullah is under stiff international pressure to disband its military wing. And its disarmament will be one of the most pressing political issues for the next government. Hizbullah's television station, Al Manar, has said that the elections will serve as a referendum on the party's political positions.

Q & A: Lebanon 's elections

Load-Date: June 5, 2005

End of Document

***Opposition in Lebanon replies with huge rally;
All sects take part, 'counterbalancing' Hezbollah protest***

The International Herald Tribune

March 15, 2005 Tuesday

Copyright 2005 International Herald Tribune

Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 1068 words

Byline: Neil Macfarquhar

Dateline: BEIRUT:

Body

Hundreds of thousands of Lebanese jammed the center of Beirut on Monday, packing its central square and spilling out onto the surrounding roads in the largest demonstration to date demanding the withdrawal of all Syrian forces from the country.

Seemingly every available space around the heart of the city overflowed with people waving the red-and-white striped Lebanese flag in what was being billed as the largest demonstration in Lebanon's history. In the main mosque, still under construction, demonstrators even crammed the tiny balconies hundreds of feet up on the four minarets, balconies that the muezzin traditionally use to sing out the call to prayer.

A few daredevils inched their way along the huge construction crane out over the square to drape a Lebanese flag at the end.

The New York Times

"We don't want Syrian spies and secret police; we don't want any foreign intervention," said Noha Dahir, 18, a veiled Sunni student who came by bus from Tripoli. "Those Lebanese who want the Syrians to stay can go live in Syria. There are plenty of Lebanese here to fill the country."

The most notable element in the rally was that it represented all sects in the country.

"They can say that they represent a wide spectrum of Lebanese factions, including some Shiites, and they have been able to bring the Sunnis into the streets, which is not easy," Ghassan Salame, a former minister of culture and political science professor, said by telephone from Paris. "They have an upward momentum now after a week that was full of uncertainty."

There have been rallies in the city center every Monday since former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri was assassinated on Feb. 14, but organizers were determined to make this one especially large in response to the pro-Syrian march last Tuesday that filled the area with hundreds of thousands of mostly Shiite demonstrators.

"This will counterbalance last Tuesday, and now we can sit and talk," said Mazen al-Zain, 30, a financial analyst, noting that he himself was a member of an illustrious Shiite clan from southern Lebanon. "What is really important after today's gathering is that we all sit down at the same table."

Opposition in Lebanon replies with huge rally; All sects take part, 'counterbalancing' Hezbollah protest

Such a big turnout puts added pressure on Syria's government to announce a serious timetable for the withdrawal of its 14,000 troops and estimated 5,000 secret police officers in Lebanon.

Although President Bashar al-Assad of Syria has promised a withdrawal into the Bekaa Valley by the end of March and a further discussion with a joint Lebanese-Syrian commission in early April, there is still no indication of a timetable of a complete withdrawal.

A United Nations envoy, Terje Roed-Larsen, was due to report back to the UN secretary general, Kofi Annan, about the exact promises delivered by the Syrians in talks Saturday. The United States and other Western nations have said they want all Syrians out before new parliamentary elections tentatively scheduled for May.

With the UN fact-finding mission of senior police officers sent to Lebanon to assess the investigation into Hariri's assassination also heading back to New York to report to Annan, much of the focus on the issue is likely to shift to New York this week.

But participants in the march Monday were convinced that the size of the opposition to any Syrian presence meant that the withdrawal was only a matter of time.

"They are trying to prove they are still strong to their nation while they are retreating," said Samer Khoury, 32, a manager in the Virgin store overlooking Martyrs' Square, where the demonstrators gathered. The store's former parking lot is now the burial place for Hariri and the bodyguards who died with him.

The demonstration turned into an all-day affair, with marchers gathering in midmorning, hours before the official 3 p.m. start time, and the last speakers still going strong at 6 p.m. Banks and schools closed early and offices around the capital emptied, all swelling the crowds. The mob was so thick that numerous participants fainted, and ambulances slowly inched their way to them.

Marwan Hamade, the first speaker, who himself survived a car bomb in October, addressed some of his words to the slain prime minister.

"Your dream came true today and the horrendous crime failed," he said, before going on to repeat the opposition demand that all the leaders of the security services resign for their failure to protect Hariri. Given such organizations' close ties to Syria, of course, many Lebanese suspect that one or more of the secret services might have had a hand in the crime.

Bahiya Hariri, Hariri's sister, who is a member of Parliament, used her speech to reach out to both Hezbollah and its godparent Syria, which has long seen Lebanon as its last negotiating card to retrieve the occupied Golan Heights from Israel.

"We will stand by Syria until its land is liberated and it regains its sovereignty on the occupied Golan Heights," she said, prompting boos from the crowd. As for Hezbollah, she said, "We insist on building together with them the future of great Lebanon."

There were numerous calls for President Emile Lahoud to resign, and one sign read "The Anti-Swimming Revolution," a reference to Lahoud's penchant for spending hours each day at the pool.

Syria's forcing through a three-year extension to Lahoud's term last August was the opening shot in the tensions that culminated with Hariri's assassination and the current popular movement demanding that Syria withdraw.

Lahoud angered many here over the weekend by suggesting that the demonstrations should end because someone might throw a hand grenade, possibly setting off a renewed civil war. They were also angry that Lahoud reinstated Omar Karami as prime minister. Karami was forced to resign on Feb. 28 after a giant opposition protest. Still, the opposition has not pressed the demand that Lahoud resign, fearing a complete power vacuum at the top in the absence of a cabinet.

Opposition in Lebanon replies with huge rally; All sects take part, 'counterbalancing' Hezbollah protest

"We kicked him out the door and he came back through the window," said Marwan Kayrouz, 33, a real estate investor who, like many, dismissed the idea of a renewed civil war. "Who is going to fight who? All the factions are here."

Indeed, the mix of demonstrators was readily apparent in the mix of dress codes, from veiled women to horsemen in traditional Arab head scarves to women with bare midriffs and pierced navels. A few of the banners cemented the theme of unity by displaying both a cross and a crescent.

Load-Date: March 15, 2005

End of Document

Lebanese Sunnis join massive anti-Syrian protest

The Irish Times

March 15, 2005

Copyright 2005 The Irish Times

Section: World; Pg. 11

Length: 452 words

Body

Lebanon: Christians, Sunnis and Druze - veterans and first-timers - united in a common cause yesterday to ensure that their anti-Syrian rally in Beirut was the biggest and noisiest in Lebanon's history.

Martyrs' Square, which has been home to a camp of live-in protesters for the past four weeks, was overflowing with flag-waving masses demanding an international investigation into the assassination of former prime minister Rafik Hariri.

A month to the day after the explosion which blew apart his motorcade, many Sunni Muslims took to the streets for the first time with Druze and Christians. Mr Hariri was a Sunni.

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It was the Sunni Itani family's first protest. "We came here to commemorate the martyr Hariri's death," Mohammed Itani said.

It was clear yesterday that a Beirut protest last week by the Syrian-backed Shia Muslim **Hizbullah** group, which drew hundreds of thousands, had galvanised many people.

"We want to show them we are more than the others, **Hizbullah** and the pro-Syrians," Mr Itani said. "We want Syria out."

Sunnis are traditionally less politicised than Lebanon's other sects. But the murder of Mr Hariri angered the community. Scores of Sunni clerics turned up, distinctive in their white-and-red turbans. Many **women** wore headscarves.

The organisers claimed that a million people had joined the protest.

No independent estimate was available, but witnesses said that the rally looked even bigger than **Hizbullah**'s Beirut demonstration.

Men, **women** and children formed a vast sea of red and white - the opposition colours - as they thronged the square and surrounding streets. They fell silent for two minutes to commemorate Mr Hariri, a billionaire philanthropist.

"Hariri was not sectarian, he paid for the education of many people of all religions. He was a man of peace," Mohammed Qabbani said.

Lebanese Sunnis join massive anti- Syrian protest

Protesters climbed on to the domes and the minarets of the massive unfinished mosque Mr Hariri had financed, which has now become his resting place. They also lined the rooftops and flyovers.

Opposition MPs denounced Syria and the Lebanese leaders it backs from a stage. Many in the opposition blame Damascus for the murder of Mr Hariri.

Syria has denied any involvement and has started to pull its troops out of Lebanon over the past week as a result of huge Lebanese and global pressure.

"We have won this battle. The Syrians are leaving because of these people," Nabil Jurdi said, gesturing to the ocean of flags.

The crowd chanted "Syria out" and "Sovereignty, freedom, independence."

One placard read: "We want the truth: Who killed Hariri?" Another said: "May God curse your killers."

When the speeches ended, nets were opened to release hundreds of red-and-white balloons into the twilight.

Load-Date: March 15, 2005

End of Document

'Yo, Blair'

Guardian.com

July 18, 2006

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theguardian

Length: 1944 words

Highlight: Welcome to the Wrap, Guardian Unlimited's digest of the best of the day's papers.

Body

ISRAEL SEIZES ITS CHANCE

Ha'aretz, the moderate Israeli newspaper published in Tel Aviv, reports today that the Israeli offensive will end on Thursday and Friday and will be followed by Israeli demands for "disarmament arrangements" for Hizbullah.

There will be no return to the previous status quo in southern Lebanon because of fears Hizbullah would simply use a ceasefire to rebuild its capabilities, the newspaper says, citing political sources in Jerusalem.

Many of today's newspapers believe Israel is trying to do as much damage as possible to Hizbullah before international pressure to stop the bombing becomes too much. Last night, Ehud Olmert made a speech vowing to continue the offensive until the threat of Hizbullah was destroyed. "We will fight with all the strength we are capable of," the Israeli PM said.

The Times says the crucial moment will be when the US is unable to resist international pressure for the offensive to stop, and the Guardian notes that Israel always "fights its wars against the clock".

The Guardian criticises the failure of the "floundering" international community to call with a single voice for a halt to the Israeli bombing. It notes that criticism of the Israeli air strikes in an EU statement was diluted after pressure from Germany and Britain, Israel's strongest EU allies. This followed the earlier failure of leaders at the G8 summit to step in, the paper says. The Guardian's leader says: "Europe's voice has once again been muted and ineffective in responding to an international crisis."

Meanwhile, people continue to die. Yesterday more than 40 people in Lebanon were reported to have perished in the air strikes, including ten civilians travelling in cars which were hit on a bridge in southern Lebanon. The toll since Israel began its attack - after two Israeli troops were kidnapped by Hizbullah - is 210 dead in Lebanon and 29 dead in Israel.

Lebanon may be suffering most, but dozens of Hizbullah rockets continued to pour into northern Israel yesterday. Haifa was hit for a second consecutive day, leaving two people injured.

Meanwhile, in a move that seems to increase the prospect of a substantial incursion of Israeli ground troops at some stage, three Israeli tanks briefly crossed the border into Lebanon yesterday to attack Hizbullah bases.

'Yo, Blair'

As the Israeli missiles continue to fall, thousands of people are fleeing Lebanon and around 60 of the most vulnerable stranded Britons were airlifted from Beirut yesterday to Cyprus. The Telegraph gives prominence to foreign office minister Kim Howells's remark to MPs that the Royal Navy was preparing the "biggest evacuation since Dunkirk". There are at least 22,000 people of British or dual nationality in Lebanon.

The Telegraph reports that some Britons were angry yesterday at the way the evacuation was being handled while the "French applaud their rescuers".

Tony Blair and the French president, Jacques Chirac, both made statements yesterday calling for the insertion of more peacekeeping troops in southern Lebanon, but the US and Israel were cool on the idea. An Israeli government spokeswoman said it was "too soon" for talk of such a force.

The newspapers gleefully reproduce a transcript of a private conversation between Mr Blair and Mr Bush which was picked up by a microphone they did not realise was on during an informal moment at the G8 in St Petersburg.

Mr Bush and Mr Blair blame Iran and Syria for encouraging Hizbullah and single out Bashir Assad, the Syrian president, as the figure stoking violence in the region because he wants to block the introduction of democracy. Mr Bush hails Mr Blair with the words "Yo Blair!" and seems to be becoming ever more like his Dead Ringers alter ego, the Guardian's Jonathan Freedland writes.

Mr Bush says "they", which is thought to mean Russia, had to put pressure on Syria to "stop this shit". He also says that the US secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, will go to the region soon. The Guardian's leader notes that Madeleine Albright, one of Ms Rice's predecessors, was not alone in wondering why Ms Rice was not already there, with the suspicion that Israel is being given more time by the US to fulfill its military objectives first.

It is generally agreed that the conversation confirms Mr Blair's subordinate position in his relationship with Mr Bush, and some describe the exchange - particularly his casually dismissed offer to go to the region - as somewhat humiliating.

The Times agrees with Mr Bush that there will only be sustainable peace when Hizbullah's "guns are spiked ... That will require a diplomatic coalition of the willing, which must include Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, to pressure Syria into doing what makes sense for its own future."

- * Lebanon: the world looks on
- * Europe's muted voice
- * Ha'aretz: Israel will not let Hizbullah regain its firepower
- * Telegraph: 'Biggest evacuation since Dunkirk'
- * Times: Solution is far from the front line

NO MANSLAUGHTER CHARGES IN STOCKWELL SHOOTING

"WHAT A COP OUT" is the headline on the Sun's coverage of yesterday's announcement by the Crown Prosecution Service that there is insufficient evidence to prosecute the officers involved in shooting dead Jean Charles de Menezes.

"Seven bullets in the head but not one police officer on a murder charge", says the Daily Mail, which reports that the innocent Brazilian's family reacted with fury to the decision yesterday, which they described as "shameful". The family said they will continue their battle for police officers to face criminal charges.

The CPS said it would prosecute the Metropolitan police under health and safety laws for operational failings in planning and communication. The 27-year-old was mistaken for a terror suspect and shot dead at Stockwell tube station in south London on July 21 last year.

'Yo, Blair'

The label "health and safety" sounds farcical, the Guardian says, noting that police resentment over the decision to press the charge was echoed by the London mayor, Ken Livingstone. He suggested al-Qaida would not be "considering the implications for health and safety ... when they are planning their terrorist activities".

The Guardian says, however, that despite the difficult circumstances police were operating in following the July 7 attacks, "there can be no blank cheques for lethal force, and enough is known about the tragedy to suggest a case needs to be answered".

The paper agrees that murder charges would not have been appropriate as the prosecution would have to have proved that the officers knew Mr de Menezes was not a terrorist. But rather than making a charge relating to health and safety, the Guardian says "it would be better if a more obviously suitable charge existed, perhaps corporate manslaughter, which the government has dragged its feet in developing".

The papers agree that Sir Ian Blair, the Metropolitan police commissioner is still under pressure and might have to resign if it is found that there were systematic failures in the force. He also faces a second investigation by the Independent Police Complaints Commission into his actions in the aftermath of the shooting.

* Highly charged questions

* Sun: What a cop out

COOL IT

If there are photographs in the papers of women in bikinis in Suffolk - and there are plenty - then Britain's heatwave must be getting hotter. Confirmation can be found in the Mail's photograph of an elephant getting a refreshing bucket of water thrown over it. "Cool it Jumbo!"

The Daily Star has peerless coverage of the heatwave, devoting three pages, aWelcome to the Wrap, Guardian Unlimited's digest of the best of the day's papers.test day in 100 years".

But it is not all fun photographs in the Mail, which never misses an opportunity to give its readers health advice. Relegating coverage of the devastation in the Middle East to page 10, the Mail splash says: "Don't rub in suncream".

Experts say rubbing it in dramatically reduces its effectiveness. So now you know.

The Telegraph reports that the elderly and the young are being advised to stay indoors today and drink lots of water. The Met Office has warned hospitals and GPs to be braced for casualties from the heat.

* UK's 'hottest day ever' warning

* Mail: Warning over suncreams

DNA NAILS SHOE RAPIST

Many of the papers cover the case of "shoe rapist" James Lloyd, whose crimes were unsolved for 20 years until advances in DNA techniques made it possible to identify him as the culprit.

Lloyd, of south Yorkshire, who was married with two children, appeared to be a pillar of the community but was responsible for a string of horrific attacks on women in Rotherham and Barnsley, the Times says.

Hidden at his workplace were 100 pairs of stiletto shoes, some of them belonging to women attacked between 1983 and 1986. He kept shoes as fetishistic trophies from his victims, police believe.

Lloyd, 49, admitted four rapes at Sheffield crown court yesterday; detectives believe he may have been responsible for many more attacks. He was caught when DNA from his sister - taken in relation to a drink drive offence - was matched to DNA taken from victims of attacks in the 1980s.

'Yo, Blair'

* Times: Shoe rapist trapped by sister's DNA

DRAW AT LORD'S FRUSTRATES ENGLAND

England's cricketers drew with Pakistan at the first Test at Lord's yesterday.

The Express says England lacked a "killer punch". The paper's Colin Bateman says there was a "hint of shadow boxing" from both sides about the conflict, but that England will feel they have the advantage with Andrew Flintoff back at Old Trafford next week.

Meanwhile, the Guardian reports that there is mounting evidence of drug abuse in golf, and the sport's governing body was under pressure yesterday to start testing competitors at the Open.

In the furious furnace of Premiership transfer speculation, Man United striker Ruud Van Nistelrooy inches closer to Real Madrid, which the Mirror says will help provide a 40m fund for new players for Sir Alex Ferguson. The Star says United are in for Spain's Fernando Torres, the Mail says Dutch striker Dirk Kuyt is on his way to Liverpool, while the Sun reports that Chelsea are after Juventus ace Gianluca Zambrotta.

Many of the back pages also feature Chelsea boss Jose Mourinho's new cropped haircut - things are also getting hairy at Aston Villa, with manager David O'Leary's future looking in peril.

* Drug tests urged for Open golfers

* Mirror: Ruud escape plot

FLIPPING HECK

A couple who have just won a 1.3m Lotto jackpot have vowed to keep their low-paid jobs at McDonalds because they claim they love serving burgers.

Luke Pittard, 23, and his boss Emma Cox, 28, are photographed on the front of today's Mirror romantically biting into the same burger.

They say they will buy a house but do not plan to resign from their jobs at a branch of the fast food chain in Cardiff. The paper says they earn 12,000 and 1,000 respectively. Ms Cox says they plan to splash out on a holiday cruise, but adds: "Then it is back to McDonalds."

The Wrap, who also loves his job but would have been out the door like a flash, gives them three more months flipping burgers.

* Mirror: Big cheque and fries

COMING UP ON GUARDIAN UNLIMITED TODAY

A car bomb exploded today among a crowd of labourers near a major Shia shrine in southern Iraq, killing up to 59 people.

Royal Navy warships off the coast of Lebanon are preparing for what could be the biggest evacuation carried out by British forces since Dunkirk.

At least 327 people were killed yesterday by a tsunami in Indonesia. Some 160 people are missing.

NHS charges have been criticised as "a complete mess" by a powerful committee of MPs.

Casinos, betting shops and other forms of gambling can be advertised on TV under proposed new rules published today.

'Yo, Blair'

Load-Date: July 18, 2006

End of Document

Israelis shelter while rockets explode

The Irish Times

July 18, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 10

Length: 630 words

Byline: Conal Urquhart in Nahariya

Body

MIDDLE EAST: **Hizbullah** poured more than 50 rockets into northern Israel yesterday, hitting a house in Safed, another in Akko and a three-storey apartment block in Haifa, injuring 11 as it collapsed.

If, as the Israeli newspapers reported, **Hizbullah** was finding it difficult to fire its missiles, there was no sign of it in the target zone. The main reason for the low casualty rate was that Israelis obeyed instructions from the army and hunkered down in their homes and bomb shelters.

Throughout the north of Israel, from Haifa to Rosh Hanikra on the coast and from Nahariya inland to Safed, all activity had ceased. Holiday resorts, parks and beaches were empty. There were cars on the roads but 90 per cent were military or police vehicles, or civilian vehicles carrying soldiers or police.

The other reason for the low casualties was the inaccuracy of the missiles. Rockets landed in the region of Kiryat Shmona, Tiberius and many other northern towns without damaging roads or buildings.

Eilat, Israel's most southerly town, prepared to receive northern residents who may be forced to leave their homes. In Tel Aviv, the local council prepared for missile strikes following an army warning that **Hizbullah** possesses missiles capable of hitting the city.

Israel's main nuclear reactor at Dimona is believed to be out of the range of all **Hizbullah** missiles, but its secondary experimental reactor at Soreq is only 16km south of Tel Aviv.

Tension meanwhile remained high in the West Bank and Gaza. An Israeli soldier was killed when forces raided Nablus and five rockets were fired from Gaza at Israel, hitting the towns of Ashkelon and Sderot.

Israeli forces continued to operate in the north and south of Gaza and its aircraft continued to bomb the strip. Jets bombed the foreign ministry for a second time overnight although it was put beyond use by the first attack.

In Nahariya, a few kilometres from the Israel-Lebanon border, explosions could be heard in Lebanon. The town remained very quiet. Of the few people on the streets, the majority were pensioners.

Ariel Sharon (81) who, like the ailing former prime minister, rejected his Yiddish name and independently chose the same new Hebrew name, fought with the British eighth army in north Africa and Italy and said he was too old to change his routine regardless. "I wonder why there are not more people out on the street. There is quite a lot of destruction, but it appears to be on the other side of the border so, for the time being, we might as well take it easy," he said.

Israelis shelter while rockets explode

At sea, there were five Israeli ships ranged on the horizon and the sound of artillery echoed from Lebanon. Loudspeakers announced people could leave their bomb shelters between 10.30am and noon. Almost every Israeli home has a bomb shelter or access to one.

Few people took advantage of the short all-clear. Mordechai Peres (54) and Yaacov Turjeman (65) were sitting having coffee. "We are used to it. It happens every couple of years. We don't sleep in the bomb shelters although the children do," said Mr Turjeman. Mr Peres added: "I stay in the house for a bit then I come and have a coffee and then go back."

The one hive of activity in Nahariya is the Carlton Hotel, which has been taken over by journalists and the Israeli army. The soldiers are men from the Nahal regiment and women from the education corps. The men, whose regiment was set up to farm and fight, are there to support the civil authorities while the women have been sent to entertain children.

At the hotel bar, there is a single British couple eating chips as if they were in Marbella. Chris Bale, from Liverpool, said he was working on an engineering project in the area and his wife arrived to visit him on Friday. "I thought the whole thing would blow over very quickly," he said.

Load-Date: July 26, 2006

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Deal is short of full Syrian troop withdrawal

The Irish Times

March 8, 2005

Copyright 2005 The Irish Times

Section: World; Other World Stories; Pg. 10

Length: 941 words

Byline: Lara Marlowe in Beirut

Body

Middle East: The Syrian president Bashar al-Assad and the general whom he appointed president of Lebanon, Emile Lahoud, yesterday announced they had agreed on the withdrawal of all Syrian troops to the eastern Bekaa Valley by the end of March.

But the agreement, after a meeting of the "Syrian-Lebanese Higher Council" in Damascus, left vague the most important question - a complete withdrawal of all Syrian troops from Lebanon. It specified only that once the redeployment to the Bekaa is completed, "the governments of the two countries will decide on continuing the redeployment of the remaining Syrian forces".

The anti-Syrian opposition have scored two victories in as many weeks. On February 28th, they brought down the Karami government. Yesterday, they obtained the Syrian commitment to withdraw to the Bekaa.

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Yet for the demonstrators on Martyrs' Square, the wishy-washy statement and the handful of lorries seen carrying old mattresses and furniture over the mountains were not sufficient.

"We want them completely out of here. They can make promises and hang on," said Elias Noufaily (21), a Christian computer science student. "I'm afraid that's what will happen. They have the Lebanese government in their pockets."

"Freedom. Sovereignty. Independence," the crowd chanted as a human sea topped by sails of red, white and green Lebanese flags converged on the square, flanked by hundreds of Lebanese army troops armed with assault rifles and rockets.

Lebanon's "independence uprising" claimed its first wounded man on Sunday night, a Christian youth shot in the thigh by pro-Syrian troublemakers near Martyrs' Square. Opposition leaders fear that more than a dozen cars stolen from the streets of Beirut could be used as carbombs.

Lebanese police estimated yesterday's crowd at 150,000, as many as attended the funeral of the much-loved former prime minister Rafik Hariri on February 16th.

Sunni Muslims were there in force yesterday, to mark the third week after their leader's assassination. "We all pitched in to rent buses to come here," explained Sana'a Ghazal (43), a veiled Sunni Muslim woman from Sidon. Aziza Barnawi, an old woman with a wizened face, held a poster of Hariri to her chest. "He sent me a widow's pension every month. He paid for all my medicine," she said.

Deal is short of full Syrian troop withdrawal

The Sunni community were traditionally close to Syria, but the women from Sidon were adamant. "We want Syria to leave, and we want the truth about Hariri's assassination," Ms Ghazal said.

Maurice Baz (84), a Christian and the former president of the Lebanese appeals court, had come to the protest march with his wife Hayat (73). The couple brought their three children and their spouses. Their son Jamil flew from London, where he is the director of a German bank, for yesterday's demonstration.

Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah, the secretary general of the Shia Muslim movement Hizbullah, who has called for a pro-Syrian demonstration today, said: "The goal of the US and Israel is to spread chaos in Lebanon . . . to push certain Lebanese to clamour for international intervention."

There is no chaos - yet - but Mr Baz was already clamouring for intervention. "Without the West, we cannot make Syria leave," the ageing lawyer said. "We need a NATO army to control the situation. Ten thousand soldiers would be enough. Bush is popular in Lebanon. I am starting to like him." Mr Baz said he hoped it would rain on Hizbullah's demonstration today.

Most Lebanese believe the Shia Muslims will mobilise an even bigger crowd than the anti-Syrian throng who marched from Martyrs' Square to the site of Hariri's assassination and back yesterday.

"Lebanon is divided," Mr Baz admitted. "They claim we have sold out to Israel, but we have no contacts with Israel and we want good relations with Syria, if they would just leave."

The tent city that has sprung up around the statue of the martyrs executed by Ottoman Turkey has become the capital's most fashionable venue for young Christians. I found a group of Maronite men singing a song they had written. "Assad get off our backs. Your army is driving me crazy..." it began.

Claude Hajjar, a middle-aged Christian woman wearing military dog-tags, accosted me. "We want to send a message to Bashar," she said: "He has to leave right away." Ms Hajjar belongs to the Guardians of the Cedars group, which earned a reputation for atrocities against Palestinians in the 1970s. The group's leader, Etienne Sakr, lives in Israel.

The Hariri Baha School in Sidon bused in 50 ninth grade students. In their grey and green uniforms, the students congregated near Hariri's tomb, in the shadow of the huge Mohamed al-Amin mosque that Hariri was building. All wore black and white stickers demanding "The Truth".

"We are so afraid of division here," Mounir Dadda (14), said. Most of the teenagers had met Hariri. "He was our father, the backbone of the country," Mounir said.

Today's Hizbullah demonstration was on the minds of the protesters as they left Martyrs' Square. "I hope this beautiful image will not be damaged tomorrow," said Naim Chami (25), a Sunni law student. "I believe the Syrians have mandated Hizbullah to continue their work here. Hizbullah are the only pro-Syrian group with any popular legitimacy."

Chami said he'd wanted to leave Lebanon when he learned of Hariri's death, but had been inspired by the "true nationalism" that has emerged in three weeks of protests on Martyrs' Square.

"Lebanon represents an idea of progress in the Middle East. We have the highest number of university graduates, and we must show the other Arabs how to build democracy. Lebanon can no longer be dominated by bedouins from Syria."

Load-Date: March 8, 2005

'Save us,' she screamed as another shell landed

The Guardian - Final Edition

July 26, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: GUARDIAN HOME PAGES; Pg. 1

Length: 283 words

Byline: Suzanne Goldenberg, Lebanon

Body

It is their feet that tell their story. They are bloody, swollen and bandaged after carrying them over mountains and under rocket barrages as Israel's war against **Hizbullah** erased the lives behind them.

In their villages lay ancestral houses crushed by bombs, family heirlooms abandoned mid-flight, the elderly and the frail, and of course the dead, their bodies trapped beneath the rubble. All that belonged to the past now.

The awful present was here in Tibnin General Hospital, a modest facility even in ordinary times, whose doors yesterday opened on a vision of hell: as many as 1,600 desperate and terrified refugees caught up in Lebanon's deepening humanitarian crisis.

They were men, **women**, children and newborn babies, forced to abandon their homes as the frontline drew nearer, and stranded in this hospital for days. There was no running water or electricity, no doctors or medicines, little food and even less hope.

They had walked here over hills shuddering beneath Israeli air strikes. Some were barefoot. Others were shellshocked. Some barely managed to enter this world; five babies have been born prematurely at the hospital since the beginning of the war, the Lebanese Red Cross said.

The hundreds here are the most wretched of this war: too poor or unwilling to flee when the first waves of refugees washed up from south Lebanon. The only destination open for them was the darkness of this hospital cellar, barely relieved by a few flickering candles.

And they still aren't safe. Tibnin lies 7km from the town of Bent Jbail, a **Hizbullah** redoubt a couple kilometres north of the border that is now encircled by Israeli troops. Minutes after our arrival, two artillery shells slammed into the

Load-Date: July 26, 2006

Middle East crisis: Israel: Streets empty as civilians in missile range hunker down

The Guardian - Final Edition

July 18, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: GUARDIAN HOME PAGES; Pg. 4

Length: 704 words

Byline: Conal Urquhart, Nahariya

Body

Hizbullah poured more than 50 rockets into northern Israel yesterday, hitting a house and medical centre in Safed, a home in Akko and a three-storey apartment block in Haifa, injuring 11 as it collapsed.

If, as the Israeli newspapers reported, **Hizbullah** were finding it difficult to fire their missiles, there was no sign of it in the target zone. The main reason for the low casualty rate was that Israelis obeyed instructions from the army and hunkered down in their homes and bomb shelters.

Throughout the north of Israel, from Haifa to Rosh Hanikra on the coast and from Nahariya inland to Safed, which suffered a missile strike close to a hospital that injured five people, all economic activity had ceased. Holiday resorts, parks and beaches were empty. There were cars on the roads but 90% of them were military or police vehicles, or civilian vehicles carrying soldiers or police officers.

The other reason for the low casualty numbers was the inaccuracy of the missiles, which landed in the region of Kiryat Shmona, Tiberius and other northern towns without causing any damage.

Eilat, Israel's most southerly town, prepared to receive northern residents who may be forced to leave their homes. In Tel Aviv, the council prepared for missile strikes after an army warning that **Hizbullah** has missiles capable of hitting the city.

Israel's main nuclear reactor at Dimona is believed to be out of the range of any missiles **Hizbullah** may have, but its secondary experimental reactor at Soreq is only 10 miles south of Tel Aviv.

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Middle East crisis: Israel : Streets empty as civilians in missile range hunker down

change his routine regardless of the threat to his life. "I wonder why there are not more people out on the street. There is quite a lot of destruction, but it appears to be on the other side of the border so for the time being we might as well take it easy," he said.

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Mr Peres said: "I have a shop in Akko (the neighbouring town) and it is closed. So in the meantime, I stay in the house for a bit then I come and have a coffee and then go back."

The one hive of activity in Nahariya is the Carlton Hotel, which has been taken over by journalists and the Israeli army. The soldiers are men from the Nahal regiment and women from the education corps. The men, whose regiment was set up to farm and fight, are there to support the civil authorities while the women have been sent to entertain children.

At the hotel bar, there is a single British couple eating chips as if they were in Sorrento or Marbella. Chris Bale, from Liverpool, said he was working on an engineering project in the area and his wife arrived to visit him on Friday. "I thought the whole thing would blow over very quickly," he said. "Most of the time you forget about it but two rockets landed very close by and that quickly reminds you."

His wife, Carol, said she was quite scared and looking forward to going home. "I haven't left the hotel since I got here," she said.

Load-Date: July 18, 2006

Middle East crisis: Humanitarian crisis: Refugees shelter among victims of earlier conflict

The Guardian - Final Edition

July 26, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 5

Length: 506 words

Byline: Jonathan Steele, Ein el-Hilweh

Body

War has often struck at Lebanon's biggest Palestinian refugee camp but for the first time the guests have become the hosts.

As Lebanese villagers escaping Israeli air strikes move northwards from the border, some have sought refuge among the refugees of an earlier phase of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Displaced by Israel in 1948, the Palestinians of Ein el-Hilweh find themselves sheltering the Lebanese refugees of 2006. The year on the calendar advances but the grim dynamic has stayed the same.

"So many refugees are coming to Sidon. Local schools are full, so we cooperated with the municipal authorities to take them in," said Amne Jibril Suleiman, who heads the camp's branch of the Union of Palestinian Women in Lebanon.

"It started two days ago. Our families collected food and blankets for them. As Palestinians who have experienced being refugees from various battles, we feel with these people," she said.

Some 200 Lebanese families have been welcomed into Palestinian refugee homes in the overcrowded camp which has more than 45,000 people and sits on the edge of the coastal town of Sidon. Others are sheltering in schools.

The Qebya and Faluja schools at Ein el-Hilweh are similar to hundreds of others across Lebanon. Desks are piled up on the landings. Mattresses and blankets stretch across the floor beneath the blackboards, wallcharts and children's drawings. One large family has moved into each of the 21 classrooms. The school only has handbasins and the refugees cross the road to shower in Palestinian homes. Hot food is brought in by volunteers from the Rafik Hariri Foundation, set up by Lebanon's Sunni prime minister who was murdered last year.

Sidon normally has a population of about 300,000, 90% of them Sunnis. Now it has an extra 70,000 displaced people. The newcomers are Shia and the crisis has not only forged Lebanese-Palestinian solidarity but cooperation between sects.

"The bombs were targeting houses, and there was a shortage of milk, food, and general security. During the last Israeli occupation we stayed in our village. But now there is no basis for human life," said Qassem Skeike, 26, who used to run a snack bar in Ein Bel near Tyre.

Middle East crisis: Humanitarian crisis: Refugees shelter among victims of earlier conflict

Outside a classroom his cousin, Hisham Skeike, said many young Lebanese were joining Hizbullah.

"They don't all support their policy - I'm against their ideology of establishing an Islamic state - but they want to . . . defend their lands," he said.

The two young men were unusual. At this school and another which we visited, the majority of the displaced were women and children.

Many elderly people had stayed in their villages, as had many young men.

But the women expressed strong support for Hizbullah. "My husband is with Hizbullah, and the baby in here is too," said Hadije, a pregnant woman as she tapped her belly.

Some of the new refugees were Palestinian. Sawsan Yassin, 28, left the Rashidiya refugee camp south of Tyre after it was shelled on Sunday.

"When we have an independent and democratic Palestinian state, all this destruction will end," she said.

Load-Date: July 26, 2006

End of Document

In Short

The Irish Times

November 24, 2005

Copyright 2005 The Irish Times

Section: World; Other World Stories; Pg. 12

Length: 567 words

Body

A round-up of today's other stories in brief

Spain wants to sell aircraft to Venezuela

MADRID - Washington is still considering whether to allow Spain to sell aircraft with US technology to Venezuela, but hopes the sale will not go ahead, according to the US ambassador to Spain.

Spain angered the US government in March with plans to sell EUR 1.3 billion of equipment to Venezuela, including four coastal patrol ships, four corvettes, 10 C-295 transport aircraft and two maritime surveillance aircraft.

The aircraft Spain wants to sell to Venezuela have 50 to 60 per cent of US components and so would require a US export licence. - (Reuters)
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Researcher halves Bosnian war toll

SARAJEVO - The death toll from the Bosnian war, which ended 10 years ago this week, was half of the widely used figure of about 200,000, a leading Bosnian war crimes researcher has said.

"This is still an extremely high figure but there is a big difference now that people cannot irresponsibly use inflated numbers for their political goals," said Mirsad Tokaca, who heads the Sarajevo-based Investigation and Documentation Centre.

Mr Tokaca estimated the number of victims at between 100,000 and 150,000 a year ago. - (Reuters)

Israel, Hizbullah exchange fire

LEBANON - Israeli troops exchanged fire with Hizbullah guerrillas across the Lebanese border yesterday to provide cover for an Israeli paraglider pilot who drifted into Lebanon by accident.

The second incident on the border in three days was brief but looks set to increase tension in the area, hours after Israeli aircraft dropped leaflets in Beirut urging Lebanese to act against Hizbullah, which is backed by Syria and Iran. - (Reuters)

Anti-Semite tape by Jackson on TV

In Short

NEW YORK - Michael Jackson has been taped making overtly anti-Semitic remarks during a phone call, describing Jews as "leeches" who conspired to leave him "penniless".

"They suck," said Jackson. "I'm so tired of it . . . they start out the most popular person in the world, make a lot of money. It's a conspiracy. Jews do it on purpose."

The message, aired on Good Morning America, was taped two years ago. - (Guardian service)

French MP seeks case against rapper

PARIS - A French court has agreed to consider a complaint brought by a conservative MP against rapper Monsieur R, for referring to France as a slut in a song.

The court said it would rule early next year on the complaint filed by Daniel Mach, MP for the Pyrenees Orientales, who said he had the backing of 150 MPs but was bringing the action "on my own personal account, because I feel assaulted by these insults". - (Guardian service)

Brazilian priest jailed for abuse

BRASILIA - A Brazilian court has sentenced a Catholic priest to 14 years and eight months in prison for his second paedophilia conviction amid concern of a looming child abuse scandal in the world's largest Catholic country. The incidents involved a 13-year- old altar boy and a five-year- old boy. - (Reuters)

New president of Liberia confirmed

MONROVIA - Election officials have confirmed Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as the winner in Liberia's first post-war elections, making her Africa's first elected **female** president.

Officials representing her opponent, George Weah, said he still refused to concede defeat, maintaining allegations of ballot-box stuffing and vowing to keep fighting the results in court.

International observers said the vote was largely clean. - (AP)

Load-Date: November 24, 2005

Anger grows as Lebanese seek refuge

Christian Science Monitor

July 26, 2006, Wednesday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 6

Length: 775 words

Byline: Nicholas Blanford Correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: TIBNINE, LEBANON

Highlight: Israeli warplanes continued bombing southern Lebanon, while troops met resistance in *Hizbullah* strongholds.

Body

Wearing only slippers on his feet, it took Yussef Beydoun two-and-a-half terrifying hours to walk from his shell-battered village of Kounine to the relative safety of Tibnine.

Here the 78-year-old is one of some 1,600 refugees crammed into Tibnine's government-run hospital, all of them having fled from a cluster of Shiite hill villages to the south. With drinking water running out, no milk, no electricity, and declining stocks of food, as well as little prospect of imminent escape from Tibnine, the refugees are caught in a vortex of confusion, anger, and despair.

"All the time there's bombing, all the houses have been hit. I thought my heart would stop," says Mr. Beydoun, a slim stooped man with a white floppy hat shading his face from the intense midday sun. He says he left Kounine after his house was flattened by Israeli bombing, killing his Sri Lankan and Ethiopian maids.

"They are still buried under the rubble," he says.

Tibnine, a mixed Shiite and Christian town famous for its Crusader fortress, looks south across a shallow valley of stony grassland and tobacco fields that gently rises to a crest, marked Tuesday by puffs of grey smoke from shell bursts.

Out of sight on the other side of the ridge is Bint Jbail, the largest Shiite town in the border district and the nexus of Israel's 13-day onslaught against *Hizbullah* guerrillas. Israeli commanders say they now have the strategic town surrounded.

Surrounding Shiite villages, such as Aitaroun, Kounine, Beit Yahoun, and Ainatta have also borne the brunt of Israel's air and artillery blitz.

"It's very bad in Kounine," says Souad Shibli, an Egyptian nurse whose Lebanese husband is working in Kuwait. "All night there are explosions. We want cars to go to Beirut. Please tell [UN Secretary-General] Kofi Annan we must have cars to get us out," she adds, her voice becoming more shrill.

Packed into the entrance of the hospital are dozens of refugees anxiously awaiting news of where the next food is coming from or if a way out of Tibnine has been found.

Anger grows as Lebanese seek refuge

"The taxis are charging \$100 each to take us to Beirut. Who here has \$100?" screams Majida Bazzi, her arms flailing wildly in her rage. "There's nowhere to escape the bombing. We have no cars. There's no water in the hospital. Nothing."

The stairs leading to the hospital basement are lined with women, sitting silently, clutching children or babies, talking quietly or just staring blankly.

The narrow cramped passageways in the basement are filled with people who instinctively headed below ground in case Israeli shells strike the hospital. The only light is from candles placed every few yards. Most of the refugees huddled in the basement appear to be sleeping on the cold cement floor.

If Israel hopes that its military campaign will turn Lebanon's Shiites against Hizbullah, whose capture of two Israeli soldiers on July 12 sparked the current conflagration, then it would appear they miscalculated, judging from the mood of these refugees.

"God grant protection for Nasrallah," they chant, referring to Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, Hizbullah's leader.

"You go to [US President] Bush and tell him to come here and you will see what we will do with him," yells Bilal Jumaa, a shopkeeper from Bint Jbail who has spent the past week in the hospital. The throng gathered around him cheered loudly at his words.

The refugees naturally considered the hospital as a safe haven from the incessant artillery barrages and airstrikes around them, but there have been several near misses. Several days ago, a missile fired from an Israeli jet exploded close to the Lebanese Red Cross center, adjacent to the hospital, causing some damage.

Earlier Tuesday, artillery shelling set fire to the tinder dry grass on a steep slope below the Red Cross center. Thick black smoke wafted in through the broken windows of the building while the crackle of burning brush was punctuated every few seconds by the ear-splitting sound of more artillery rounds exploding nearby.

The Lebanese Red Cross and their counterparts in the International Committee of the Red Cross are almost the only humanitarian workers traveling the deadly roads of south Lebanon. But their ability to help ferry casualties to hospital is limited.

Ali Hamadeh, another Red Cross volunteer, says that the center received a call the other day from a man who said his house in Aitaroun had been hit by an Israeli missile and collapsed on top of 30 people inside.

"He couldn't reach them under the rubble and we couldn't get there either because of the bombings," says Mr. Hamadeh. "If anyone was badly injured ... they will be dead by now."

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Load-Date: July 25, 2006

Weck off now, Israel warned

Guardian.com

July 14, 2006

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theguardian

Length: 1555 words

Highlight: Welcome to the Wrap, Guardian Unlimited's digest of the best of the day's papers.

Body

ISRAEL 'MUST RESUME TALKS TO AVERT WAR'

"What's it all about?" asks the Mirror, summing up the current crisis in the Middle East with admirable concision. If, on the other hand, you want a stringent defence of Israel and a veiled warning to the country to back off now to avoid all-out war in the region, turn to the Sun and the Times.

"Israel has proved it will not be bullied," says the former. "Now it must choose the only route out of this crisis ... by reining in its forces and taking its place at the negotiating table."

The Telegraph says the answer is for a UN force to go into Lebanon and disarm Hizbullah. It is left to the Guardian, the Independent's Robert Fisk and the FT to condemn Israel's rocket attacks, which have killed at least 50 civilians, closed Beirut airport and provoked retaliatory strikes from Hizbullah on Haifa.

The Guardian describes the bombing of the airport as "outrageous" and says the crisis is "now a war in all but name". "None of this excuses Hizbullah. Its raid ... was an act of aggression, none the less so for being carried out by a non-state actor. Israel withdrew from Lebanon in 2000. Hizbullah's motive was to take prisoners to use as a bargaining chip to secure the freedom of its own people held in Israel. It calculated too that with the Israelis besieging the Gaza Strip and punishing and killing Palestinians there to try to free another captured soldier, their operation would be hailed as an act of Arab and Muslim solidarity with Hamas. That would suit Hizbullah's backers in Syria and Iran and cheer suffering Gazans, if not the many ordinary Lebanese who will pay the price in ruined lives and lost revenues. "The dangers in any such calculation have quickly become depressingly clear." George Bush should tell the Israeli PM to halt the attacks and seek mediation, the paper says.

The FT - which is worried about the jump in the oil price since the crisis erupted - also describes Israel's reaction as disproportionate and "illegitimate under international rules that outlaw the collective punishment of entire populations". It says Ehud Olmert is trying to prove his military credentials by "lashing out" and his strategy will not work.

The Times juxtaposes accounts of the deaths of a Lebanese family and an Israeli woman in moving reports on its front page. The latter was hit by a Hizbullah rocket as she sat on her balcony; the family was a Shia cleric with alleged connections to Hizbullah and his wife and 10 children. All died in an Israeli air raid on their home.

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Guardian.com

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Length: 1568 words

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Means to an end - MIDDLE EAST IN CRISIS

Weekend Australian

July 29, 2006 Saturday

All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Inquirer; Pg. 22

Length: 1567 words

Byline: Cameron Stewart

Body

MATP

Australia's reluctance to question Israel's response in Lebanon is partly because the conflict has changed into something more profound, writes associate editor Cameron Stewart

AS Israeli bombs pounded Beirut this week, several Australian diplomats left the relative safety of the embassy to view the damage. What they reported to Canberra was that some of the latest Israeli targets seemed puzzling.

The bombs had obliterated truck stops, residential buildings and other non-military targets that did not have obvious connections with Hezbollah, the terrorist group that provoked the Israeli attacks almost three weeks ago.

Yet Australia has chosen not to publicly question the tactics and the targets employed by Israel in its efforts to dismantle Hezbollah.

Despite a civilian death toll in Lebanon that has topped 400, outnumbering Israeli casualties 20 to one, Australia, the US and Britain continue to reject UN claims that Israel's response has been disproportionate and excessive.

At the ASEAN regional forum in Malaysia yesterday, Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said it was important for nations to be dispassionate in their analysis and to try to view the conflict from the perspective of those involved. He said Australia's national interests were also at stake, with about 25,000 Lebanese Australians in Lebanon when hostilities broke out. Australia feared that instability in the Middle East had a direct effect on global security.

Australia's reluctance to question the size and scale of Israel's response is not simply because it is one of Israel's firmest allies. It is also because this conflict, which began as a tit-for-tat retaliation, has quickly morphed into something larger and more profound for the region and the world.

As US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice indicated this week, the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah looks set to spark a fundamental shake-out in the world's most troubled region. "It's time for a new Middle East," she said. But what does she mean and what would a new Middle East mean for Australia?

The conflict between Israel and Hezbollah has spiralled out of control, with both sides underestimating the strength and resolve of their opponent.

Means to an end - MIDDLE EAST IN CRISIS

Hezbollah, while wanting to provoke Israel through the killing and kidnapping of its soldiers, did not expect Israel to unleash more than 2000 air strikes in its largest military campaign since its 1982 invasion of Lebanon.

Similarly, Israel has been frustrated that its bombs have failed to break the back of Hezbollah or prevent it from launching missiles into Israel.

There is no going back to the status quo that existed only three weeks ago. The Middle East has been irrevocably changed. Israel has committed too much to retreat while Hezbollah still holds the power to attack Israeli territory.

"If Hezbollah does not experience defeat in this war, that will spell the end of Israeli deterrence against its enemies," military analyst Ze'ev Schiff wrote in the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz. "We did not choose this war but we have reached a strategic crossroad."

The conflict has proved that Israeli air power alone will not be enough to render Hezbollah impotent in southern Lebanon. The only way Israelis can pacify Hezbollah is to occupy the area or have someone else do it for them.

After a bloody and unsuccessful 18-year military occupation from 1982 to 2000, Israel is adamant it does not want to reoccupy the region. So the only obvious solution is for a peacekeeping force, presumably under the UN flag, to occupy the Hezbollah stronghold.

Understandably, Israel says it will support that only if such a force has the teeth and mandate to disarm and nullify Hezbollah, unlike the existing, ineffectual UN presence in southern Lebanon.

While a meeting of 15 foreign ministers in Rome this week voiced enthusiasm for an international military force, no one seemed keen to volunteer their soldiers. The US has ruled out its troops, NATO says it is stretched and Britain already feels over-committed. Australia says it will consider any request, although many believe the Australian Defence Force is spread too thin, with sizeable deployments in Iraq, Afghanistan and East Timor.

The unspoken reluctance is that such a mission will be a particularly dangerous one. Any international force with a mandate to disarm Hezbollah will no doubt be targeted.

France and the US pulled out of an international force in Lebanon in 1983 after a Hezbollah suicide bombing of a marine barracks in Beirut killed 241 Americans and 41 French paratroopers.

The US effectively stymied any push for an immediate ceasefire at the foreign ministers' summit by attaching preconditions between Israel and Hezbollah.

In effect, Washington has signalled it is comfortable with Israel continuing its military campaign in the hope it will seriously degrade Hezbollah.

Amid the carnage, the US also sees an opportunity to reshape Middle East politics to its liking. Rice is seeking to isolate Hezbollah's main sponsors, Iran and Syria, by creating an umbrella of Arab allies opposed to Hezbollah.

Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan have issued rare statements criticising Hezbollah. Mai Yamani, author of *Cradle of Islam*, describes this development as stunning. "Never before in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict has a state [Saudi Arabia] that considers itself a leader of the Arab Muslim peoples backed Israel so openly," she writes.

Yet it remains far from certain what influence, if any, criticism of Shia Iran and Shia Hezbollah by Sunni governments will have. Many analysts believe Syria may ultimately respond to pressure to loosen its links with Hezbollah, if only as a ploy to secure other concessions from the West and from Israel.

But Iran has given no sign that it will pay attention to, much less bow to, international pressure to cut the terrorist group adrift. On the contrary, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad says the conflict could trigger "a hurricane of broader fighting" in the Middle East. "He who raises a wind will get a hurricane," he says.

Downer says Iran's comments have greatly fuelled tension in the region and undermine Israel's sense of security.

Means to an end - MIDDLE EAST IN CRISIS

Many senior Israeli government officials believe their country will have to launch military air strikes against Iran sometime in the next 18 months to knock out its nuclear facilities. Israel's actions in Lebanon send a clear message to Tehran that it will be willing to go to such extreme lengths if it feels its safety and security is jeopardised.

The danger for Israel is that its actions in Lebanon are simply too extreme and will therefore prove counterproductive. In seeking to eliminate Hezbollah, it has killed and maimed hundreds of civilians, destroyed homes and undermined Lebanon's economy for at least a decade. Hezbollah has helped ensure this outcome by hiding among the civilian population, making it almost impossible to quarantine innocent people from the fighting. This is partly why Israel is struggling to dismantle Hezbollah despite the incessant air campaign.

Hezbollah also has proved to be better prepared than expected, running its operations from sophisticated underground bunkers and using hit-and-run tactics to avoid detection and to strike back at Israeli forces.

UN humanitarian affairs chief Jan Egeland says the tactic of hiding behind civilians amounts to cowardice.

"My message was that Hezbollah must stop this cowardly blending ... I heard they were proud because they lost very few fighters and that it was the civilians bearing the brunt of this. I don't think anyone should be proud of having many more children and women dead than armed men," Egeland says.

One of the key unanswered questions is to what extent the Lebanese population will blame Hezbollah for this war. In the south, the group is a key provider of social and community services to the population and is held in esteem by many, who credit it for effectively expelling the Israelis in 2000.

The danger for Israelis is that the overwhelming majority of Lebanese will blame them rather than Hezbollah for this war. If so, instead of reducing the number of Islamic extremists on its doorstep, Israel's actions are likely to infect a new generation of Lebanese with a hatred of the Jewish state.

And although Hezbollah started this fight, Israel's reputation is taking a battering in many countries as images of maimed Lebanese children turn the tide of public opinion against Jerusalem.

The condemnation of Israel's actions grew louder this week after several disastrous blunders, including the death of four UN observers and the bombing of ambulances. But the Australian Government has remained a firm supporter, saying Israel's actions are justified given the threat Hezbollah poses to its security. Sources in Canberra say there is no push to modify this position.

In a speech on the Middle East in April, Downer said: "The Australia-Israel relationship has never been stronger." He is a firm believer that a two-state solution is the only way forward for long-term peace in the region. Canberra, like the US, sees Israel as a crucial bulwark against Islamic extremism in the Middle East.

And, like the US, Australia sees the potential for this conflict to deal a blow to the region's two great sponsors of terrorism, Iran and Syria. That is why Canberra will not be wavering in its support for Israel's actions in Lebanon, no matter where its bombs land.

Load-Date: July 28, 2006

Lebanese told to flee militant stronghold

The Australian (Australia)

July 14, 2006 Friday

All-round Metro Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 9

Length: 700 words

Byline: Correspondents in Jerusalem and Beirut

Body

Reuters, AP, AFP, AAP

THE Israeli army has warned Lebanon to evacuate all residents from a southern Beirut neighbourhood where it believes the Iranian-backed **Hezbollah** leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah lives.

Israel yesterday stepped up reprisals against Lebanon, a day after Lebanese **Hezbollah** fighters seized two Israeli soldiers and killed eight.

"We have passed on a warning to Lebanon to evacuate all civilians from the (southern) neighbourhood of Beirut, which is a **Hezbollah** stronghold and where Nasrallah lives, and where the organisation's headquarters and weapons stockpiles are," the Maariv NRG news website quoted a senior Israeli army official as saying. Israel Radio earlier carried a similar report.

The army said it had no comment on whether Nasrallah was a target for assassination.

But Israeli army chief Brigadier-General Dan Halutz noted that all senior **Hezbollah** leaders lived and had offices in the southern Beirut neighborhood of Dahiya. An Israeli helicopter gunship killed Nasrallah's predecessor, Sheik Abbas al-Mousawi, in 1992.

Israel enforced a naval blockade of Lebanon yesterday and jet fighters bombed Beirut's international airport.

Israel's heaviest air campaign against Lebanon in 24 years smashed the airport's runways and also targeted **Hezbollah** television and a military air base in the eastern Bekaa Valley near the Syrian border.

At least 52 Lebanese civilians died as a result of the Beirut air strikes and military action in the south of the country.

Lebanese Information Minister Ghazi Aridi responded last night with a call for "a complete and immediate ceasefire".

With Lebanon's sea and air links cut, **Hezbollah** retaliated against Israeli "massacres" by firing 60 Katyusha rockets at Nahariya in northern Israel and seven at the town of Safed, 15km south of the border. Two **women** were killed and at least 32 people were wounded.

Lebanese told to flee militant stronghold

Hezbollah said the two soldiers, Ehud Goldwasser, 31, and Eldad Regev, 26, had been seized to force Israel to release Arab prisoners. Israel insisted it would discuss no such swap and instead launched the military offensive to its north.

In Canberra, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade said the Australian embassy in Beirut had been closed because of the worsening security situation.

In Jerusalem, Israeli Defence Minister Amir Peretz said **Hezbollah** would not be permitted to return to its previous positions along the Israeli border.

Israel has long demanded the Lebanese Government disarm **Hezbollah**, which is an avowed enemy of the Jewish state.

The violence was the worst between Israel and Lebanon since 1996 when Israeli troops still occupied part of the south.

It coincided with a major Israeli offensive into the Gaza Strip to retrieve a captured soldier, Gilad Shalit, and halt Palestinian rocket fire. The office of Palestinian Foreign Minister Mahmoud al-Zaharb was destroyed and at least 24 Palestinians were killed.

In Beirut, Israel's attack on the airport forced flights to divert to Cyprus. Lebanon said its only international airport would be shut for at least 48 hours.

The attack followed dawn air strikes in south Lebanon that killed, among others, eight young children, and wounded 52 people, security sources said.

Ten members of one family were killed in Dweir village and another seven family members died in Baflay.

Two hours after the airport raid, an Israeli helicopter fired a missile at the headquarters of **Hezbollah's** al-Manar TV station in the Beirut suburb of Haret Hreik, wounding six people.

Israeli aircraft later attacked an al-Manar transmission tower south of Baalbek in eastern Lebanon, witnesses said.

Israel had promised a "very painful" response to **Hezbollah's** cross-border attack. "Either **Hezbollah** are stupid, or they don't care," said Michael Karam, editor of a Lebanese business magazine. "Now we've got no airport, so no tourism and no prosperity."

Hezbollah's attack, for which Israel holds the Beirut Government responsible, tore up tacit understandings that had limited border violence for the six years since Israeli troops withdrew from southern Lebanon.

US President George W. Bush said **Hezbollah's** supporters in Damascus and Tehran shared responsibility. "Syria needs to be held to account," he said.

Load-Date: July 14, 2006

Israeli air force pounds Lebanon

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

July 16, 2006 Sunday

FOURTH EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A1

Length: 1089 words

Byline: By Sam F. Ghattas THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: BEIRUT, LEBANON

Body

WHAT'S NEW

- * Israeli jets pound Beirut and Hezbollah targets.
- * Hezbollah rockets strike deeper into Israel.
- * Lebanon's prime minister indicates he might send army to confront Hezbollah.
- * Israel says Iran helped Hezbollah fire missile at ship.
- * Western nations make plans for evacuations.
- * Israel bombs target in Gaza City.

Warplanes bombed Beirut's southern suburbs for hours early Sunday, a day after Hezbollah missiles landed deeper inside Israel and Israel staged the heaviest airstrikes yet in the four-day-old conflict.

The Israeli air force on Saturday hit strongholds of the Hezbollah Shiite Muslim guerrilla group, bombed central Beirut for the first time, and pounded seaports and a key bridge. Then, before dawn Sunday, 18 thunderous explosions shook southern Beirut, where Hezbollah is based.

Hezbollah's TV aired footage showing two long columns of smoke rising from buildings into the night sky. Much of Shiite-populated southern Beirut was deserted, its residents having fled east to Lebanon's Bekaa Valley.

Lebanon's prime minister indicated he might send his army to take control of southern Lebanon from Hezbollah -- a move that might risk civil war.

In a more ominous sign, Israel accused Iran of helping fire a missile that damaged an Israeli warship, a charge both Hezbollah and Iran denied.

Israeli air force pounds Lebanon

Hezbollah, meanwhile, fired waves of rockets ever deeper into Israel, and Israeli officials warned that Tel Aviv, 70 miles inside Israel, could be hit.

The death toll in the conflict rose above 100 in Lebanon, and stood at 15 in Israel. The fighting broke out Wednesday when **Hezbollah** captured two Israeli soldiers and killed eight others in a cross-border raid.

Choking back tears, Lebanese Prime Minister Fuad Saniora went on television to plead with the United Nations to broker a cease-fire for his "disaster-stricken nation."

The prime minister, criticizing both Israel and **Hezbollah**, also pledged to reassert government authority over all Lebanese territory.

But any effort by Saniora's Sunni Muslim-led government to use force against the Shiite Muslim **Hezbollah** guerrillas could trigger another bloody civil war in Lebanon. Many fear the 70,000-strong army itself might break up along sectarian lines, as it did in the civil war from 1975-1990.

Reacting to Saniora's statements, Israel's Vice Premier Shimon Peres said Lebanon must prove it was serious by putting its troops on the border.

"We have to see what they do and not what they say," Peres told Israel's Channel 2 TV.

Iran, meanwhile, denied any role in the fighting. It disputed Israeli claims that 100 Iranian soldiers had helped **Hezbollah** attack an Israeli warship late Friday.

There has been no sign in Lebanon of Iranian Revolutionary Guards for 15 years. But Iran is one of **Hezbollah's** principal backers along with Syria, providing weapons, money and political support. Many believe Iran and Syria are fueling the battle to show their strength in the region.

In Cairo, Arab foreign ministers met and adopted a resolution calling for U.N. Security Council intervention. But moderates led by Saudi Arabia, bickering with Syria and other backers of **Hezbollah**, denounced the Lebanese guerrilla group's actions in provoking the latest fighting.

West studies evacuations

In one sign the West expects a drawn-out battle, the U.S. Embassy said it was looking into ways to get Americans in Lebanon to Cyprus. France said it had already decided to send a ferry from Cyprus to evacuate thousands of its citizens. The British were sending two warships, including the carrier *Illustrious*, toward Lebanon, in apparent preparation for evacuations.

In all, 33 people were killed in Lebanon on Saturday, police said. That raised the Lebanese death toll in the four-day Israeli offensive to 106, most of them civilians. On the Israeli side, at least 15 have been killed, four civilians and 11 soldiers.

Israeli warplanes demolished the last bridge on the main Beirut-Damascus highway -- over the Litani River, six miles from the Syrian border -- trying to shut routes out of Lebanon.

In other Israeli attacks Saturday:

Near the southern Lebanon border, fleeing refugees, including **women** and children, were cut down by an airstrike as they left the village of Marwaheen. The bodies of several children, one headless, were sprawled on the ground. Police said 15 were killed in the afternoon attack, and an Associated Press photographer counted 12 bodies in the two cars.

Near the Syrian border, at least three civilians were killed when planes attacked a bridge, cutting the last land link on the main road to Syria and its capital, Damascus.

Israeli air force pounds Lebanon

In central Beirut, jets struck the port and a lighthouse on the seafront boulevard, a few hundred yards from the campus of the American University of Beirut. The seaport is adjacent to downtown Beirut, a district rebuilt at a cost of billions of dollars after the 1975-1990 civil war.

The brunt of the onslaught focused more and more on Hezbollah's top leadership in south Beirut and the eastern city of Baalbek. Ambulances raced to a Baalbek residential neighborhood where black smoke rose from airstrikes. Israel also targeted the headquarters compound of Hezbollah's leadership in a crowded Shiite neighborhood of south Beirut for the second straight day.

Hezbollah in turn struck out repeatedly at Israel. Its rockets hit Tiberias three times on Saturday, the first attack on the city since the 1973 Mideast war. At least two houses were directly hit, but only a few light injuries were reported, medics said. The town is 22 miles from Lebanon.

Residents were ordered into bomb shelters, and Israeli news media reported that hundreds of tourists were fleeing the city. Police used megaphones to urge bathers at the Sea of Galilee to seek shelter.

Gaza developments

On Israel's second front, against Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip, Israeli aircraft struck on Saturday the Economy Ministry of the Hamas-led Palestinian government and three other targets, killing two people, Palestinian and Israeli officials reported.

Early Sunday, Israeli tanks approached the town of Beit Hanoun in northern Gaza, across the border from an Israeli town, Sderot, frequently hit by Hamas rockets, residents and Palestinian security officials reported. Palestinian hospital officials said two people were wounded by Israeli artillery fire in the area.

Israel attacked Gaza on June 28, three days after Hamas-backed militants killed two Israeli soldiers and captured a third at an army post just inside Israel.

Is the region headed for all-out war? NewsWatch | B1

Notes

Middle East crisis

Graphic

PHOTO

PHOTO - U.N. peacekeepers cover the bodies of people killed when their vehicles were hit Saturday by Israeli warplanes on the main road near the southern border village of Ter Harfa, Lebanon. At least 12 Lebanese villagers, including women and children, were killed. Witnesses said a convoy was leaving the village of Marwaheen, which abuts the border, when it was struck. The Associated Press

Load-Date: July 16, 2006

Israeli air force pounds Lebanon

End of Document

Now bombers target Europe

Sunday Express

July 30, 2006 Sunday

Scottish Edition

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Section: NEWS; 5

Length: 306 words

Byline: By Julia Hartley-Brewer

Body

HEZBOLLAH "sleeper" cells across 20 Western countries have been ordered to prepare for terror attacks on London and other cities in protest at the Israeli bombardment of Lebanon.

Imad Mugniyeh, the Lebanese commander of **Hezbollah**'s overseas operations who once headed the FBI's Most Wanted Terrorists list, is understood to be behind the plan, according to German intelligence sources.

A similar alarm has been raised by Israel's Shin Bet security service and Israeli embassies and institutions are on high alert.

Mugniyeh, who is known as "the Lebanese bin Laden", lives in Iran and has evaded capture for more than 20 years, despite the US placing a \$5million bounty on his head. Nadim Shehadi, a Middle East expert at Chatham House, the foreign policy think-tank in London, warned the crisis could also make a fresh Al Qaeda attack on Western Europe more likely.

He said: "There is a strong rivalry between **Hezbollah** and Al Qaeda. The real risk is how this will affect Al Qaeda. They have been attacking **Hezbollah**, accusing them of being infidels and **Hezbollah** has hit back saying they kill **women** and children.

"Now Al Qaeda has been upstaged and they need to show their might. The challenge now is for Al Qaeda to prove its credentials with another major attack." Meanwhile, the first hint of peace emerged last night after Israel accepted it is not demanding the disarming of **Hezbollah**.

A senior Israeli Foreign Ministry official said it would just demand the proposed peacekeeping force in south Lebanon keep **Hezbollah** away from the border.

The hopes came as Israeli troops began pulling out of one of the bloodiest battlegrounds.

But there are still fears the shattered countryside around the town of Bint Jbail, which has witnessed the worst fighting, could face an aerial bombardment to root out remaining pockets of **Hezbollah** resistance.

Load-Date: July 31, 2006

Now bombers target Europe

End of Document

Scale of the human crisis emerges

The Guardian - Final Edition

July 25, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: GUARDIAN HOME PAGES; Pg. 1

Length: 700 words

Byline: Brian Whitaker, Beirut

Body

The people of Lebanon are facing their "hour of greatest need", the UN said yesterday in launching an emergency appeal for \$150m (£81m) to help an estimated 800,000 civilians whose lives have been disrupted by Israeli bombing of Lebanon.

The relief plan would focus on providing food, water, healthcare and other essential services, Jan Egeland, the UN emergency relief coordinator, said.

The situation in Lebanon is "very bad, and deteriorating by the day", said Mr Egeland. On Sunday he described the bombing of south Beirut as "a violation of humanitarian law".

But last night he had harsh words for ***Hizbullah*** as well, rebuking the Shi'ite group for cravenly using civilians as human shields. "***Hizbullah*** must stop this cowardly blending. . . among ***women*** and children," Mr Egeland said.

A UN report accompanying the appeal highlighted the scale of the devastation during 12 days of warfare, saying:

*The ongoing (Israeli) military operation has caused enormous damage to residential areas and key civilian infrastructure such as power plants, seaports and fuel depots.

*Hundreds of bridges and virtually all road networks have been systematically destroyed, leaving entire communities in the south inaccessible.

*Skyrocketing prices for basic goods (eg the price of sugar has risen by 600% and cooking gas by 400%) further deplete the coping mechanisms of the Lebanese.

*The longer the hostilities last, the more dramatic the humanitarian situation will become. Food, water, health, fuel, and other basic needs will increase; so will the number of internally displaced persons.

*Reports indicate that there is a lack of essential goods, with needs particularly acute in villages along the Israeli-Lebanese border, which have been isolated by the conflict. There are reports that food supplies in some villages have been exhausted.

*The widespread destruction of public infrastructure . . . as well as the targeting of commercial trucks, has seriously hampered relief operations.

Scale of the human crisis emerges

*As many as 800 persons live in a school designed for 200 to 300 children. School water systems cannot cope with the extent of needs. Neither can sanitary facilities . . . a resurgence of diarrhoea cases has been noted in some centres.

In addition to this list, Mr Egeland said there was one school housing 1,000 people which had only six toilets. He warned that fuel was becoming critical in many areas and power failure would affect water supplies and sewage, bringing increased health risks. Calling for an immediate ceasefire, he said: "Only cessation of hostilities can really make it safe for us (to deliver aid)." Failing that, the UN was hoping to arrange a "notification scheme" which would allow safe passage for humanitarian goods.

The UN already had 100 trucks contracted or on their way to deliver aid within Lebanon, Mr Egeland said. The first convoy could head south from Beirut to Sidon and Tyre as early as tomorrow, and the UN was working on details with the Israeli military, he said.

The UN is asking Israel for safe passage through three Lebanese ports. Initially, it hopes to have two ships ferrying supplies into Beirut from Cyprus, with the ports of Tripoli, in the north, and Tyre, in the south, to be added later.

It has also asked Israel to grant safe passage for convoys from Syria. Mr Egeland said the plan was to set up a staging area on the border to receive aid and prioritise it for distribution. "We are hopeful that in the course of this week you will see a real difference on the ground. By next week we will have a major operation really started," he said.

The White House said yesterday that George Bush had ordered helicopters and ships to Lebanon to give humanitarian aid. "Humanitarian supplies will start arriving in Lebanon tomorrow by helicopter and by ship," said White House spokesman Tony Snow. "We are working with Israel and Lebanon to open up humanitarian corridors." He described the move as "a significant US commitment".

Mr Bush still opposed the idea of an immediate ceasefire, he added, saying there was no reason to believe it would stop violence in the Middle East; instead the world should confront Hizbullah and its practice of using the Lebanese people as "human shields".

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Load-Date: July 25, 2006

A moral and strategic mistake

Australian Financial Review

July 28, 2006 Friday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Features; Pg. 81

Length: 1418 words

Byline: Geoffrey Barker.

Body

Israel has miscalculated the consequences of its attacks on Lebanon, writes Geoffrey Barker.

Israel's brutal artillery and aerial attacks on Lebanon - and now on United Nations observers - are at once morally untenable and strategically counterproductive.

The attacks will not reduce or eliminate security threats facing Israel and the wider global community. They are more likely to intensify those threats - including threats from terrorist groups and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The attacks will strengthen support throughout the Middle East for Hezbollah militants in Lebanon and for Hamas on the West Bank, as well as for thug states such as Iran, which is pursuing nuclear weapons, and Syria, which arms and finances Hezbollah.

The attacks have undermined efforts by Lebanon's new and fragile democratic government to establish effective authority over elected Hezbollah militants in its ranks and to gradually disarm Hezbollah fighters. And there is now at least an outside chance of a wider Middle East war, possibly between Israel and Syria.

Israel's declared objectives - to clear Hezbollah from southern Lebanon in order to stop rocket attacks, and to have an international peacekeeping force installed in the area - are plainly unrealistic.

Southern Lebanon is Hezbollah's breeding ground; some 2000 United Nations forces, in the area for years, have proved ineffective against Hezbollah militants. Moreover, new longer-range rockets will enable Hezbollah to strike at Israel far from southern Lebanon.

There is little reason for hoping that international diplomacy will bring an early end to this crisis. The United States, backing Israel to the hilt, is not pressing for ceasefire until conditions are right for what US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice calls "a durable solution".

In fact, the US has given Israel carte blanche to do whatever it wants in Lebanon, and is supplying Israel with precision weapons to help it to do so. Owen Harries, a pre-eminent Australian strategic thinker, has told the ABC the Middle East now faces greater instability as the Bush doctrine enters its "death throes".

A moral and strategic mistake

Without US pressure, Israel has little incentive to heed calls at the Rome conference by Lebanon, its Arab allies, some European nations and the United Nations for a quick end to the war. Egged on by US neo-conservatives, it might rather be encouraged to widen the war by attacking Syria.

The bottom line, then, is that Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has embarked on a war of moral and strategic miscalculation with potentially grave consequences for Israel and the world.

In order to understand the magnitude of Olmert's moral miscalculation it is necessary to consider the internationally accepted conditions for a so-called just war.

This issue has received little detailed attention, but Israel's actions have caused more than 400 civilian deaths and thousands of injuries, and displaced some 750,000 people. Some 41 Israelis have been killed in Hezbollah rocket attacks or in fighting.

Israel has ignored the consequences for thousands of foreign nationals in Lebanon, some of whom have been killed trying to escape. It has attacked a country with which it is not at war, destroying buildings, homes and infrastructure.

It is not simply a question of who started it. Accepting that Hezbollah was the immediate initiator, the issue is whether Israel's actions were a proportionate response to Hezbollah's rocket firings into Israel and to the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers, reportedly being held for a prisoner exchange.

The literature on just war and international law stresses that the internationally accepted conditions for just war involve the principles of discrimination and proportionality. Non-combatants are entitled to immunity; the use of force should be "neither gratuitous nor excessive" the philosopher A. J. Coates writes in *The Ethics of War*.

These notions are complex and contested, but it is impossible to see how Israel's actions against Lebanon respect the principles of either discrimination or proportionality, however the terms are understood.

Olmert appears to have let the Israeli military strike to maximise the terror effect, killing civilians and making it extremely difficult for UN agencies to deliver relief supplies and to bring wounded people to hospitals. Now it appears the US is rushing new precision weapons to Israel to enable it to continue its attacks.

Of course, as strategic expert Allan Behm says, Israel does face two well-organised, well-funded and well-armed centres of opposition to its existence: Hamas and Hezbollah. Hamas controls the Palestinian West Bank and Gaza legislature; Hezbollah has 23 seats in the Lebanese parliament and two ministries.

"They present a substantial threat to Israel, and Israel has the right to plan militarily to meet that threat, including with armed force," Behm says.

But Behm, former head of international and strategic policy in the Defence department, disputes that the abduction of two Israeli soldiers and Hezbollah rocket attacks on Israel were provocations justifying the use of armed force against other than military targets in Lebanon.

Behm worries that Israel's actions may have legitimated Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons, especially in the Shiite world. "Global interests are not served by military activity with that sort of counterproductive impact," he says.

While Hezbollah and Hamas clearly constitute a challenge to Israel's security and are capable of inflicting severe pain on Israel, they are not a threat to Israel's existence. A nuclear-armed Iran obviously could constitute such a threat.

Behm's view is that Israel's mistake was not in responding to Hezbollah, but in the timing and nature of the response. He says Israel acted too quickly, as well as disproportionately, in not giving the recent Group of Eight industrialised countries summit meeting time to focus on preventing Iran from gaining nuclear weapons.

A moral and strategic mistake

"Israel's actions have strengthened support for Iran and Syria . . . For Israel the priorities should be to deny nuclear capability to Iran and to work with the Lebanese government to reinforce security by disarming Hezbollah. Those objectives are now going to be more difficult".

Behm also says Israel's miscalculation has made it more difficult for its Western allies to achieve rapprochement with the Arab world. "Military force is used to support policy. Here we have an immature and inexperienced Israeli government being driven by military rather than policy considerations," he says.

In so doing, Israel is adding a new and bloody chapter to the bitter history of Israel-Lebanon relations. In fact, Israel's actions are consistent with its 1982 invasion and occupation of Lebanon and with Israeli attacks on Palestinians over many years in the Gaza strip.

It is now extremely difficult for Israel to credibly maintain that its military actions are not morally equivalent to those of Hamas or Hezbollah fighters. Israel's reported use of cluster munitions in populated areas of Lebanon is, if accurate, disgraceful. So was the air strike that targeted a UN observation post, killing four UN peacekeepers.

There are no clean hands in the Middle East. The UN emergency relief co-ordinator in Beirut, Jan Egeland, has condemned both the Israeli bombings and Hezbollah rocket firings into Israel. He has also accused Hezbollah's "cowardly blending" with women and children in civilian centres being struck by Israel. Other UN officials have warned both sides they might be guilty of war crimes.

Egeland's remarks reflect the moral ugliness and strategic futility of the Middle East conflict. The Israelis and their enemies need to understand that, short of nuclear warfare, they cannot destroy each other, although they can inflict great and continuing suffering on each other.

Terrorism expert Clive Williams argues that Israel will not be able to break Hezbollah as an organisation or sever its links to Syria and Iran. "Israel will eventually have to negotiate with Hezbollah on the issue of occupied Lebanese land and prisoners," he says.

Williams also warns that Israel's actions have made it many new Arab and Muslim enemies and lost it friends in the West. He agrees that Israel and Hezbollah have committed war crimes, but says moral outrage against Israel will be greater, though neither party will face legal consequences.

Israel has, nonetheless, made a moral and strategic error that jeopardises its own security as well as wider global security.

Graphic

PHOTO: Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's goals in Lebanon appear increasingly unrealistic. Photo: AP

Load-Date: April 5, 2012

Lose-lose situation

University Wire

July 25, 2006 Tuesday

Copyright 2006 Daily Toreador via U-Wire

Section: COLUMN

Length: 395 words

Byline: By James Hershberger, Daily Toreador; **SOURCE:** Texas Tech

Dateline: LUBBOCK, Texas

Body

In the middle of the 1800s, Sicilian farmers became fed up with being overly taxed on the fruit they grew by the Italian government. As a means of retaliation, they formed what is now known as the Mafia, an organization that used whatever means necessary to secure fair treatment for themselves and their family, both legal and illegal. Though the Mafia became infamous for their criminal activity, one finds reluctant admiration for those willing to stand up for themselves in the face of oppression.

Currently, violence between the Israeli army and the Lebanese militia known as Hezbollah has grabbed the attention of the world and its leaders. Though Hezbollah is demonized by the media as a militant Islamic group, they are in some ways similar to those men of Sicily who took a stand against mistreatment. Hezbollah operates schools and hospitals in southern Lebanon, gaining popular support among the people. At the same time, it is impossible to ignore the violent activity carried out by the organization.

While combat operations by Hezbollah are wrong, the aggression by Israel is too often ignored by the American public. Israel allows its military to carry out unprovoked attacks against both the Lebanese and the Palestinians in the Gaza strip. Both the Israelis and Hezbollah launch excessive bombing campaigns in which women and children are killed.

Regardless of these facts, many world leaders still view Israel as a country defending itself with Hezbollah as the aggressors. As reported in the July 17 issue of Newsweek, President Bush commented to British Prime Minister Tony Blair at the G-8 conference, "what they need to do is get Syria to get Hezbollah to stop doing this shit, and it's over," what a classy guy our president is. But the reality is both sides are overly violent, and it is ridiculous to demand that Hezbollah stop when Israel refuses to.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice currently is in the Middle East, meeting with officials on both sides and trying to broker a peace. She will not be successful unless she acknowledges that both sides have been unjustly violent and that it must be ceased by both sides. To believe that one side is entirely good and the other entirely bad is wrong. Both Israel and Hezbollah are to blame for the bombing and killing and that must be recognized for a lasting peace.

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Lose-lose situation

Load-Date: July 25, 2006

End of Document

'We had a dream. I'm sorry it didn't work.'

The Irish Times

July 18, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 11

Length: 1138 words

Body

MIDDLE EAST: Just as Lebanon was set to prosper under peace, war with its bullets and violence has reprised its devastating role, writes Megan Stack in Beirut

After years of taking on debt, forgiving their neighbours and hiding the scars of civil war, the people of Lebanon are watching with dread as their carefully rebuilt country splinters around them.

The last five days of Israeli airstrikes have shattered bridges, bloodied children and wasted roads. But they also mark another cycle of destruction for this seaside city, forcing some to wonder whether their country is cursed to live in perpetual violence and others to gird their loins defiantly for another round of death and destruction.

"We feel raped," intoned Camille Younis. "We never, never, never expected anything like this."

It was Saturday afternoon, the city smothered in sticky heat. The deep rumble of explosions from the south shook the floor under Younis's feet. His car rental agency was the only shop on a strip of newly rebuilt downtown real estate that had bothered to open its doors under Israeli bombardment. The place was deserted.

Younis (50) sat glumly in his office, a bottle of Stolichnaya vodka and an ashtray brimming with Gitanes butts before him. He had invested all his money in the business, he said. He borrowed money and invested that, too. When the fighting started, his livelihood began to melt away. Younis was disgusted with Israel and angry with Hizbullah.

"My God, we had a dream," he said, pointing out his window to the mosque and church that rose side by side across the street. "We had a dream of Lebanon, and I'm sorry it didn't work."

The torrent of air strikes has cut down a national wish that has sometimes seemed on the verge of coming true: that the people of Lebanon, with its mountains and cedar forests and sparkling beaches, could have a peaceful, prosperous country.

"We are in shock. Nobody is ready to go through this war," said Nayla Mouawad, the minister of social affairs. Like most Lebanese, she has been scarred by her country's cycles of bloodshed.

Her husband, President René Mouawad, was assassinated just days after taking office in 1989. She was an outspoken critic of neighbouring Syria's tampering in Lebanese affairs. And now she is facing a fresh round of violence. "People are depressed and more than depressed," she said. "They are desperate."

'We had a dream. I'm sorry it didn't work.'

The history of this tiny coastal country is a tapestry of betrayal, assassination and patronage. Lebanon has been repeatedly divided. Animosity among its many religious sects and a shaky central government exposed it to foreign meddling.

The civil war that dragged on from the mid-1970s until 1990 split the capital in half and pitted Lebanese against one another amid intrusions by Americans, Iranians, Syrians and Israelis. Israel's presence didn't end until 2000, when it pulled its troops from southern Lebanon.

The years of fighting left a bleak inheritance: the nation was physically destroyed, nearly drained of citizens, deep in debt and known internationally as a haven for warlords and terrorists.

The war also left Lebanon under the absolute control of Damascus. Syria sent its soldiers to control the countryside, backed Hizbullah and exercised a puppeteer's control over the government in Beirut.

It took violence, too, to drive Syria out of Lebanon. When charismatic former prime minister Rafik Hariri was assassinated last year, enraged Lebanese blamed Syria and thronged the streets in mass protests. Under heavy international pressure, Syria finally withdrew from Lebanon in the spring of 2005.

A weak and fractious government was left to sort out its considerable political differences, including the fate of Hizbullah. The movement kept its weapons and became a partner in the new government.

"We have paid a price for this homeland with our blood and our souls," a grim-faced Lebanese prime minister Fouad Siniora told his country on Saturday night. "We will rebuild what the enemy has destroyed as we did in the past. Lebanon has bled before and today it is bleeding anew."

Just a few months ago, Lebanon seemed to be rising from the wreckage of its past. The sun-splattered maze of shops and cafes, mosques and churches, plazas and pedestrian walkways in the heart of the capital had been rebuilt, limestone block by limestone block. For the first time in years, there was no war or occupation. Tourists came pouring in to explore the hillside city at the lip of the Mediterranean.

When Beirut rose from the ashes, it did so with flair. Racing to outdo one another, Lebanese built gourmet restaurants, gleaming boutiques and pulsing nightclubs. The city became fashionable again, particularly among wealthy Arabs looking for a place to escape the oppressive summers of the Persian Gulf.

But Lebanon never decided what to do about Hizbullah. Leftovers of the civil war still clutter the country: the old, abandoned buildings with their walls laced by decades-old bullet holes, the dead family members, and the things that aren't said.

Still, many Lebanese youth were accustomed to speaking of war as a strange and dark national memory. Now they wonder whether they, too, are destined to watch Lebanon buckle in war.

"It isn't so much that we are scared, but that we are scared for the future," said Maya Boutros, a 21-year-old education student who sat on a cement bench, staring over the empty streets. "I'm studying now, but for what? We don't have a future."

In the midst of the bombing in Beirut's southern suburbs, two sisters hauled plastic chairs to their front door and settled in with a tub of garlic between them. A songbird whistled in a nearby tree. The women bent their veiled heads together, one sister peeling the bulbs, the other mincing them with a small knife.

It was a portrait of equanimity under fire, long a Lebanese trademark. But when they spoke, the women were tense. The bombings had gone on all night, shattering the windows along their street. Living in the shadow of Hizbullah's radio station, a likely target for Israeli missiles, they expected more to come.

"We are really afraid," said Fatma Hajima (40). "We hope there's a resolution, because it's not easy to live here and hear the Israeli jets." As she spoke, the war planes roared overhead.

'We had a dream. I'm sorry it didn't work.'

Back in his downtown car rental agency, Younis mulled over a life spent fighting. He fought in the civil war, and then he fought to establish his agency. He drove the same road from his village to Beirut for years, and watched the faces and uniforms on the soldiers change - all the different armies that have sent their young men into Lebanon.

His car service was the best, he boasted. He gave his customers a CD to listen to, snacks and roadmaps. "Who else does that?" He blinked back tears. "It seems everything we've worked for has been destroyed," he said. "I feel betrayed."

Load-Date: July 26, 2006

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Israeli forces push deeper into Lebanon; Secretary of State Rice visits Beirut

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

July 25, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: FRONT; Pg. a1

Length: 1260 words

Byline: ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: BEIRUT, Lebanon

Body

Backed by tanks, Israeli troops battled their way to a key Hezbollah stronghold in south Lebanon on Monday, seizing a hilltop in heavy fighting and capturing two guerrillas. The U.S. completed its evacuation of 12,000 Americans and said it would switch to bringing in humanitarian aid.

On the 13th day of Israel's offensive, its forces moved one step deeper into Lebanon as U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice made her first diplomatic foray since the conflict began - and immediately met resistance.

The tangled knots in the negotiations meant fighting was likely to drag on just as the pace of Hezbollah rockets raining down on Israel shows no signs of letting up despite the aerial bombardment of its positions. Air power alone is proving insufficient to rout the guerrillas, who are proving tough opponents on the ground as well. Mideast observers say Hezbollah only has to remain standing - not beat Israel - to emerge victorious in Arab eyes.

Rice paid a surprise visit to Beirut on the way to Israel, trying to push a blanket plan that would call for a cease-fire simultaneous with the deployment of international and Lebanese troops into southern Lebanon to prevent Hezbollah attacks on Israel.

Parliament speaker Nabih Berri, a prominent Shiite Muslim who has been negotiating on behalf of Hezbollah, rejected the idea and said a cease-fire should be immediate, leaving the other issues for much later. Western-backed Prime Minister Fuad Saniora took a similar stance and complained bitterly to Rice about the destruction wreaked by U.S. ally Israel.

Israel "is taking Lebanon backward 50 years and the result will be Lebanon's destruction," he told Rice, the prime minister's office said.

But a day after criticizing Israel for "disproportionate" strikes against civilians, U.N. humanitarian chief Jan Egeland accused Hezbollah of "cowardly blending" among Lebanese civilians.

"Consistently, from the Hezbollah heartland, my message was that Hezbollah must stop this cowardly blending ... among women and children," Egeland said. "I heard they were proud because they lost very few fighters and that it was the civilians bearing the brunt of this. I don't think anyone should be proud of having many more children and women dead than armed men."

Israeli forces push deeper into Lebanon Secretary of State Rice visits Beirut

Israel appeared to be easing bombardment in populated areas and roads in Lebanon that has killed hundreds, displaced as many as 750,000 and dismembered the transportation network. Instead, it appeared to be focusing its firepower on Hezbollah at the front. Beirut saw no strikes all day in apparent deference to Rice's visit.

Lebanese security officials reported three civilian deaths, without specifying where they occurred. Thirty strikes in and around towns and on roads were reported by security officials and Lebanese media - down from 37 the day before.

The numbers do not include strikes on Hezbollah positions that are not in populated areas. Israel reported 270 strikes on Sunday, suggesting that a large number were in more isolated regions.

Still, Hezbollah was able to launch 80 rockets into northern Israel, wounding 13 people, a rate only slightly lower than in past days.

Israel's overall death toll stands at 39, with 17 people killed by Hezbollah rockets and 22 soldiers killed in the fighting. Sixty-eight soldiers have been wounded, and 255 civilians injured by rocket fire, officials said.

On the Lebanese side, security officials said 384 people had been killed, including 20 soldiers and 11 Hezbollah guerrillas.

Israeli military officials say several thousand troops are moving in and out of southern Lebanon, but there are fewer there at any one time.

At the front, Israeli ground forces waged a fierce battle Monday with guerrillas dug in at the closest large town to the border, Bint Jbail, known as "the capital of the resistance" for its vehement support of Hezbollah during Israel's 1982-2000 occupation of the south.

Four Israeli soldiers were killed - two in fighting and two in a helicopter crash - and 20 were wounded, military officials said.

The army said it captured two Hezbollah guerrillas, the first time it has taken any into custody during the fighting. "When the enemy surrenders, we take them prisoner. The two prisoners are located in Israel and will be held here with the aim of interrogating them," said Brig. Gen. Alon Friedman.

Nearly constant gunfire and explosions could be heard, and large plumes of gray smoke rose over the area. Israeli tanks and armored bulldozers entered the fray as guerrillas fought back with anti-tank missiles and mortars. Two tanks sped across the rocky hills back into Israel to ferry out wounded soldiers.

Backed by an intense artillery barrage, troops seized a hilltop inside the town, but the rest of Bint Jbail remained in the hands of up to 200 Hezbollah guerrillas, military officials said.

An Israeli tank was hit by Hezbollah fire, they said. Hezbollah released no casualty figures. It has claimed 11 dead in the entire campaign, though Israel says it has killed more than 100 of its fighters.

A day earlier, a Red Cross doctor visited Bint Jbail and reported an unknown number of families hunkered down in schools and mosques for protection, though much of the population of about 30,000 had fled.

Bint Jbail holds a legendary reputation with Hezbollah, because it was one of three large towns inside Israel's buffer zone and backing for the guerrillas remained strong throughout the occupation. Signs in the town tout its nickname. When Israel withdrew from Lebanon in 2000, Hezbollah leader Sheik Hassan Nasrallah held a large celebration in Bint Jbail, proclaiming that the guerrillas now stood on Israel's border.

The move into Bint Jbail, about 2.5 miles from the border, represents the spear point of Israel's advance, moving forward from Maroun al-Ras, a frontier village captured in more heavy fighting over the weekend.

Israeli forces push deeper into Lebanon Secretary of State Rice visits Beirut

At the same time, Israeli forces were working to destroy every **Hezbollah** post within a half mile of the 40-mile Israeli-Lebanese border, Israeli Maj. Gen. Gadi Eizenkot said.

The Israeli bombardment hit the southern cities of Tyre and Nabatiyeh. An Israeli shell crashed into a house near the Lebanese town of Marjayoun late Monday, wounding two children, witnesses said.

President Bush ordered U.S. Navy ships that have ferried nearly 12,000 Americans out of the country the past week to start on Tuesday taking in humanitarian aid for Lebanon. Tens of thousands of refugees are in temporary shelters, supplies of medicine are tight at many hospitals and fuel is slowly running out.

"We are working with Israel and Lebanon to open up humanitarian corridors," White House spokesman Tony Snow said. So far Israel has loosened its blockade of Lebanese ports to let aid ships into Beirut, but has not defined any safe land routes for convoys to the south.

At a hospital in Tyre, where Israeli rockets frequently hit nearby, dirty bandages hid the worst of 8-year-old Zainab Jawad's swollen, bloodied nose. Her arm was strapped to her chest and fractured in two places.

Stretched out on a bed at Najem Hospital, Zainab squeezed shut her brown eyes as memories of the attack flooded back, some of her words muffled as she fought sobs.

A day earlier, Israeli bombs destroyed her family's home in the southern village of Ayta Chaeb. Then rockets slammed into the car as they fled.

"I don't want to remember, but I can't help it. What I remember most is the sound, the sound of the planes and I was scared because I thought there were so many," she said. "I fell asleep last night, but all I could hear in my sleep were planes."

Graphic

Condoleezza Rice

Load-Date: July 25, 2006

MID-EAST CRISIS; Iran linked to missile ship attack

Sunday Mail (South Australia)

July 16, 2006 Sunday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 6

Length: 650 words

Byline: Sam F. Ghattas in Beirut

Body

IRANIAN troops helped **Hezbollah** militants fire a missile that damaged an Israeli warship off Beirut yesterday, an Israeli official has claimed.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said about 100 Iranian soldiers were in Lebanon and helped fire the Iranian-made, radar-guided C-102 at the ship, leaving two Israeli sailors dead and two missing.

If true, the Iranian link marks the most dangerous upturn in the spiralling conflict in southern Lebanon.

In the past, Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has threatened to "destroy" Israel.

Israel launched its latest offensive into southern Lebanon after **Hezbollah** guerillas crossed the Israel-Lebanon border on Wednesday and captured two Israeli soldiers and killed eight others.

Hezbollah responded to the Israeli attacks by firing hundreds of rockets at northern Israel.

Last night Israeli jets pounded **Hezbollah**'s south Beirut stronghold and a string of roads and other targets around the country, killing at least 15 Lebanese.

The onslaught coincided with five **Hezbollah** rockets hitting the northern Israeli town of Tiberias, 35km south of the border.

There were no casualties.

At least 12 Lebanese villagers, including **women** and children, were killed in what appeared to be an Israeli air strike on a convoy of vehicles evacuating a village near the border with Israel in southern Lebanon, a witness said.

The convoy was leaving the village of Marwaheen, next to the border, when it was attacked. Associated Press photographer Nasser Nasser said he counted 12 bodies in two cars that burned from the attack shortly after midday.

At least three civilians were killed in another Israeli air strike on the main highway linking Lebanon to Syria.

MID-EAST CRISIS Iran linked to missile ship attack

The audacious missile attack on the Israeli warship, in sight of Beirut, came soon after Israeli missiles were fired at the home of Hezbollah leader Sheik Hassan Nasrallah. The Hezbollah leader immediately vowed more bloodshed in "an open war".

Another Hezbollah missile also reportedly hit and sank a nearby civilian merchant ship at around the same time. That ship apparently was Egyptian.

After his Beirut compound had been attacked, Nasrallah promised a wider, bloodier war in a pre-taped statement broadcast on Hezbollah's television station.

The guerilla leader threatened to strike deep into Israeli territory at targets including the northern city of Haifa, which was hit by a rocket on Wednesday.

"You want an open war, we will give you an open war," he said.

"War, war on every level. To Haifa and, believe me, beyond Haifa.

"The surprises that I have promised you will start now. Now in the middle of the sea, facing Beirut, the Israeli warship . . . look at it burning.

"We won't be the only ones paying the price. Not only our houses will be destroyed, not only our children will be killed . . . those days are over. You must bear the responsibility for what your government has done."

Immediately after, TV stations showed night-time footage of what they said was the Israeli warship burning, but it was unclear.

One station also showed dozens of Lebanese dancing in the streets to celebrate the attack.

Last night an Israeli intelligence official warned Hezbollah had missiles that could reach as far as 100-200km into the country, putting cities such as Jerusalem and Tel Aviv at risk.

He said Hezbollah had 20 missiles with a range of 100-200km.

"They may hit Tel Aviv," the official said, adding Israeli intelligence officials were not sure why Hezbollah had not used the missiles since it started firing rockets at Israel on Wednesday.

An army spokesman said that since Wednesday, more than 350 Katyusha rockets had been fired into Israel, killing four people and injuring about 60.

On Friday, one hit a house in Meron, killing a woman and her five-year-old grandson and wounding other family members.

About 500,000 residents of northern Israel were told to stay in or near bomb shelters.

Load-Date: July 16, 2006

'Sitting-duck' Britons in Lebanon wait for the Royal Navy to arrive

Western Mail

July 17, 2006, Monday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 9

Length: 878 words

Byline: JOHN BINGHAM

Body

Foreign Office Minister Kim Howells said that evacuation plans to get up to 10,000 British nationals out of Lebanon were in full swing tonight. But Dr Howells warned the operation was going to 'take some doing', while two Royal Navy ships - aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious and assault ship HMS Bulwark - were not expected to arrive before Wednesday.

Italian military planes evacuated 350 people yesterday to Cyprus, which has become a key transit point for evacuees.

France has 20,000 nationals in Lebanon and the US 25,000.

Meanwhile EU foreign affairs supremo Javier Solana joined a team of UK diplomats and consular staff on a flight into Beirut from Cyprus onboard an RAF helicopter.

Last night one British charity worker told of the 'absolutely horrific' sight of bombers passing overhead and the feeling of powerlessness to stop the killing.

Fierce fighting between Israel and Hezbollah raged for the fifth day since the kidnap of two Israeli soldiers by Hezbollah plunged the Middle East into crisis.

It is understood that preparations for a joint international evacuation by land, air or sea include talks calling on Israel to hold fire to prevent western vessels or aeroplanes coming under attack as they try to remove foreign nationals.

But officials stressed that the parties were being urged to call a complete ceasefire.

Addiction counsellor Clair Vainola, 31, from Newcastle upon Tyne was spending last night in the refuge of a small yacht moored in a marina close to the US embassy in the hope that the site would be safe from Israeli bombing.

She told how other foreigners including Australians had also gathered at the same spot.

Describing her experiences, she said that the past five days had been full of 'worst moments.'

She said, 'The worst moment for me was that look of terror on people's faces, mothers and women crying, trying to escape where the Israelis are bombing.'

'Sitting-duck' Britons in Lebanon wait for the Royal Navy to arrive

'For me the worst moment is when I hear planes going over my head carrying missiles, when I see buildings going up in smoke knowing that people are being killed and that I am powerless to do anything.'

She added, 'What keeps me going is my faith in God - not Tony Blair - because I ultimately believe that whatever happens I will be OK either way... I have just got to have that faith that ultimately I will reach back home.'

'I'm stuck as a sitting duck.' she added.

Prime Minister Tony Blair yesterday joined fellow world leaders at the G8 Summit in urging an end to the days of bloodshed.

He signed up to an emergency communique which said, 'Extremist elements and those that support them cannot be allowed to plunge the Middle East into chaos and provoke a wider conflict. 'The extremists must immediately halt their attacks.' Number 10 said that was a clear reference to Syria and Iran, whom Mr Blair had earlier blamed for fomenting the latest crisis. But the communique added: 'We call upon Israel to exercise utmost restraint, seeking to avoid casualties among innocent civilians and damage to civilian infrastructure and to refrain from acts that would destabilise the Lebanese government.': Big questions behind current crisis: What is the latest crisis in the Middle East about? Israel has been exchanging fire with forces across its border with Lebanon for five days. It is not a direct conflict between the two countries but between Israel and a group called Hezbollah operating inside southern Lebanon which it effectively controls.

How did it start?

Israel has a long history of stand-offs across its northern border with Lebanon. In the past it even occupied the south of the country. But the recent crisis erupted last week when two Israeli soldiers were kidnapped by forces operating across the border and suspicions fell on Hezbollah.

Who are Hezbollah?

Best known in Britain as the group behind the kidnap of hostages Terry Waite and others in the late 1980s, Hezbollah is the Lebanese 'Party of God', a radical Islamic group.

Have Hezbollah and Israel fought before?

Yes. Hezbollah was established in 1982 to fight the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. Believed by some to have invented the modern concept of suicide bombing.

What about other countries?

Lebanon's other big neighbour Syria has long been seen as an ally of Hezbollah. Iran - which is on a collision course with western countries over fears that it is developing a nuclear capability - has also been accused of aiding Hezbollah.

Who runs Lebanon?

The government of Lebanese Prime Minister Fuad Siniora came to power last year after the 'Cedar revolution', a series of mass demonstrations against Syrian interference which forced the foreign troops to withdraw.

Why is Hezbollah so powerful?

Prominent during the civil war which devastated Lebanon in the 1980s, Hezbollah has built up a powerful base in southern Lebanon and has seats in the country's parliament. It has gained popularity by running welfare programmes and its security arm is seen by some as providing protection in the south. Although the government has resisted calls to curb Hezbollah, Mr Siniora made an emotional television address, calling for a ceasefire and pledging to reassert government authority over all Lebanese territory. The comments are seen as an indication that he could deploy the army but could risk tensions with Hezbollah.

'Sitting-duck' Britons in Lebanon wait for the Royal Navy to arrive

Load-Date: July 18, 2006

End of Document

Debate on crisis in the Middle East

The Irish Times
July 25, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: LETTERS; Pg. 15

Length: 1570 words

Body

Madam, - Recent reporting on the escalating and disproportionate attacks by the Israeli armed forces is an indictment of our spineless Government's handwringing reaction.

The Israelis' contention that they are carrying out "pinpoint" attacks on Hizbullah activists is a complete sham. How many more innocent people will have to die before somebody with the power to make a difference decides to take action to stop the slaughter?

The weasel-words of Condoleezza Rice that any ceasefire would be a fraud reflects the unstated satisfaction of the US Government with current Israeli policy. The inaction of our own Government reflects poorly on a nation with a proud humanitarian record. - Yours, etc,

PETER CLIFTON, Peatlands, Midleton, Co Cork.

Madam, - Mary Raftery (Opinion, July 20th) is right. In the face of this palpable wrong - this appalling bombardment of Lebanese civilians by Israeli planes - each of us has a duty to speak out.

I cannot believe how anyone can seek to justify the Israeli attacks. The reports of children dying in the rubble of their homes, of whole families being wiped out as they try to flee the bombing, are utterly horrific. The tragic consequences of such a disproportionate reaction to Hizbullah provocation make the inaction of the international community, including our own government, wholly indefensible. - Yours, etc,

IVANA BACIK, Law School, Trinity College, Dublin 2.

Madam, - All my adult life I have been an ardent supporter of the struggle for freedom of the Palestinian people. I have witnessed with my own eyes the daily suffering they endure under occupation. I fervently support the goal of a secular democratic state in Palestine/Israel where Jew, Muslim and Christian can live together in peace and equality. Yet these strongly held views have never prevented me from stating my unqualified condemnation of the killing of Israeli civilians by the armed wings of Hamas, Hizbullah and others.

What I find shocking, therefore, is the total failure of those whose sympathies lie with the state of Israel to condemn, without equivocation, the murder of hundreds of Lebanese and Palestinian civilians by Israeli forces in recent days. I can only conclude that they believe that these people are not as deserving of life as Israelis are. There is only one word for an attitude that justifies and lauds the murder of innocent human beings because of their nationality: racism. - Yours, etc,

Dr COLM BREATHNACH, Cedar Brook Walk, Cherry Orchard, Dublin 10.

Debate on crisis in the Middle East

Madam, - Paddy Monaghan, of "Irish Christian friends of Israel" (July 20th), writes "to express support for Israel". Judging by both the tone and content of his letter, he should as a Christian be not so defensive and uncritical of Israel's disproportionate reactions in its ruthless bombardment of the sovereign state of Lebanon, where many Christians have been among the victims.

His partisan support for Israel makes a mockery of the message of justice and peace announced by Jesus, a message which all Christians are obliged to uphold, rather than becoming an uncritical ally of any side in a conflict where the Geneva Conventions are deliberately ignored .

He calls upon the Irish Government to deal with the "root cause of the conflict", which he perceives to lie with Syria and Iran. He fails to understand that the root cause of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict goes back to 1948; but without raking up the rights and wrongs of the past, the need now is for Israel to recognise the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to have their home in Israel and for Palestinians to respect the Jewish people's right to co-exist in harmony and justice in the same homeland.

As a Christian I dissociate myself from the extreme position of these so-called Irish Christian Friends of Israel. Muslims, Christians and Jews must learn to co-exist in a world where extremists and fundamentalists of all these major religions of the world have distorted and disfigured their revealed message: that all people are equal in the sight of God, Allah, and Yahweh. - Yours, etc,

BRENDAN BUTLER, The Moorings, Malahide, Co Dublin.

Madam, - There is no justification for Israel's devastating bombardment of Lebanon. As a response to the abduction of two Israeli soldiers it is massively disproportionate and the consequences in terms of the loss of innocent life and the destruction of the infrastructure relied upon by ordinary Lebanese people were entirely predictable.

Israel is also doing exactly what Hizbullah (and its supporters in Iran and elsewhere) wants it to do. It is escalating the conflict with potentially catastrophic consequences for the whole region. In particular, it is likely that the Israeli attack will serve only to destabilise Lebanon and radicalise the large element of its population which up to this point has rejected Hizbullah terrorism.

Supporters of Israeli aggression tell us that the bombing is justified by the firing of rockets into Israel from south Lebanon and the abduction of Israeli soldiers by Hizbullah. While there is no justification for the rocket attacks on Israel, which clearly target civilians, and while the abduction of Israeli soldiers is utterly to be condemned, it must be remembered that the rocket attacks came after the beginning of the Israeli bombardment and that Israel itself abducted two Gaza civilians on June 24th. - Yours, etc,

LENNY ABRAHAMSON, Leinster Road West, Rathmines, Dublin 6.

Madam, - Last Friday's letter from Noam Chomsky et al. makes mention of "a doctor and his brother" who were kidnapped by the Israelis, claiming that incident was "scarcely reported anywhere except in the Turkish press". However, after a brief trawl through the Internet I find it mentioned by - among others - the Observer, Haaretz, the Jerusalem Post, the Los Angeles Times, the New York Times, Agence France Presse, Associated Press, CNN and Xinhua, the Chinese state news agency.

Furthermore, the source for this story seems to an Israeli Defence Forces spokesman. The "doctor and his brother" accordingly become "two Hamas members believed to be planning a large attack against Israel". Additionally, the "doctor" in the story is a 31-year-old medical student lately returned from university in Sudan: I could not ascertain from the story whether he had ever practised medicine anywhere, though the letter seems to imply that the Israelis plucked the scalpel from his hand and dragged him away from sick patients.

Although the missive from planet Chomsky alleges that all this is indicative of "the double standards repeatedly employed by the West", one could just as easily draw the opposite conclusion - namely that we care so little about Hamas attacks on Israel that they fail even to raise an eyebrow in the West, whereas once Israel decides to act, everyone is a critic.

Debate on crisis in the Middle East

What Chomsky seems to be implying is that, put simply, "Israel started it". He cannot say this directly because it is untrue - not to mention childish and irrelevant - so he turns to innuendo and obscure references to the Turkish press, since he knows that his acolytes are too lazy or ignorant to check his footnotes or supply the missing context for themselves. The timeline Chomsky offers also suffers from the flaw that spokespersons for the Popular Resistance Committee boasted after the raid on Israel that they had been planning it for two months.

This letter is just an example of dishonest innuendo wrapped around with a lot of windy rhetoric. We do not need "the world's greatest intellectual" to remind us that war is horrifying: Chomsky's simple demonologies and ludicrous conspiracies are just fantasies that in their own small way are standing in the way of peace. - Yours, etc,

MAURICE FOLEY, Raheny, Dublin 5.

Madam, - I laughed out loud at Tom Carew's attempt (July 19th) to show us by using statistics why it was OK for the Israeli army to kill children. It was a classic. Let's hope we hear from him again. - Yours, etc,

MICHAEL CUDDY, Thor Place, Stoneybatter, Dublin 7.

Madam, - The European Union should send a rapid response group to the Middle East. As Ireland has recently signed up to EU "battlegroups", there is nothing to stop Irish MEPs from initiating such action. Israel has prevented the assets and supports of the European Union - i.e. food and medicines - from reaching hungry, needy and fearful men, women, and children. The battlegroup should be sent to monitor how the assets of the European Union are being treated, and not to engage in military action.

I am sure that the simple arrival of a battlegroup representing 25 nations would send a message to Israel that it cannot bully the European Union as it is bullying the Lebanese and Palestinians. - Yours, etc,

PETER KENNEDY, Sutton Park, Sutton, Dublin 13.

Madam, - Among the numerous bits of military hardware mentioned by observers of the current Israeli attack on Lebanon, two are noticeable by their absence from dispatches. What happened to the (in)famous "smart" missiles of the Gulf wars? And amid the "rain" of Hisbullah missiles falling on northern Israel, where are the Patriot missiles - those paragons of US technology that were to render Israel immune to Arab missile attacks?

The media that so slavishly extolled these technical wonders in recent Middle East conflicts are very quiet. Does their silence indicate a healthier scepticism, or simple embarrassment? - Yours, etc,

PHELM MURNION, Páirc Thiar, An Spidéal, Gaillimh.

Load-Date: July 26, 2006