

Date and Time: Saturday, May 4, 2024 2:33:00AM EEST

Job Number: 223498656

Documents (100)

1. [ISLAMIC CULTURE OF PAKISTAN WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO BE CHANGED: QAZI](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

2. [Comment & Debate: Tony Blair means only one thing when he talks about his values: He claims his aim is to spread democracy and the rule of law, but his true commitment is to the global market](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

3. [Bedouins stay on the sidelines](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

4. [Israeli president lies low after rape claim: Katsav fails to appear at opening of Knesset No indication leader will resign as criticism mounts](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

5. [Freeing Prisoners Key Goal in Fight Against 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: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

6. [QAZI CRITICIZES MUSHARRAF'S WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT PROPOSAL ABOUT PAK- INDIA JOINT CONTROL ON KASHMIR](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

7. [Guardian Weekly: International News: Israel ends anti-rocket incursion in Gaza 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: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

8. [WHO IS FANATIC?](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

9. [Mufti told to quit or leave](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

10. [Applause for media moxie](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

11. [Hezbollah film to be shown in Cherryfield](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

12. [Ex-minister convicted in Israel Pressure of scandals could lead Olmert to shuffle cabinet](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

13. [Hit on Bridge North of Tyre Isolates South Of 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: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

14. [Inching Westward in the Maghreb Reforms in North Africa](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

15. [Talk yes, but don't dare trust these two pariahs](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

16. [At Ground Zero in Beirut, baby waits to be born](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

17. [President to be charged](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

18. [Dilemma over the war against terror](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

19. [Democracies have to be held to the highest standards](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

20. [Iran leader rejects UN deadline over nuke plans](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type

Narrowed by

News

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

21. [*'Dark Age' insurgents use modern tools to win*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

22. [*Bomb Shelter Saves Patients in Israeli Hospital*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

23. [*A changing society*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

24. [*Heat on for Iran nuclear answer Washington observed*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

25. [*Stay in Touch*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

26. [*Sheik's bid to seize Mufti title*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

27. [*PELOSI VISIT TO SYRIA IRKS BUSH SPEAKER'S TRIP IS LATEST MOVE BY DEMOCRATS TO
ASSERT INFLUENCE*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

28. [*France will be put to test over 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: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

29. [*The deadly game of power politics in Lebanon in hyregoes in hyregoes in hyregoes*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

30. [*France will be put to test over 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: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

31. [*Much too much LETTERS*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

32. [*Inside Today*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

33. [*Princeton student leaves friend behind 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: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

34. [*Former Israeli Official Guilty of Sexual Misconduct*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

35. [*Israeli police commissioner steps down Panel criticized him over 1999 crime case*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

36. [*How Canada can help contain the Iranian threat*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

37. [*Lopsidedness of the war on terror*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

38. [*Olmert and Abdullah: In Pursuit of a Mirage*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

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

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

40. [*gallery*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

41. [*Another resignation over comment: LIBERAL PARTY: Ignatieff accused Israel of war crime*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

42. [Forgotten lessons](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

43. [LETTERS FROM READERS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

44. [Who's afraid of Shirin Ebadi?](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

45. [Terror in paradise](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

46. [INSIDE](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

47. [*Who's Afraid of Shirin Ebadi?*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

48. [*Objective analysis requires applying rules to everyone*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

49. [*Inside knowledge*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

50. [*After the War, An Israeli City Starts Over*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

51. [*AP editors vote Iraq War top story of 2006*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

52. [*In Brief*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

53. [*Israeli police chief steps down Country reeling after allegations of official misconduct*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

54. [*Israeli jets attack before hiatus: Outrage over Qana 'massacre' prompts Israel to suspend bombings*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

55. [*In Brief*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

56. [*Saudi Arabia 's moment of redemption? Moderating Islam*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

57. [*News Summary*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

58. [*Brainpower: America 's #1 enemy*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

59. [*Tarnished legacy clouds Sharon's 79th birthday*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

60. [*Israel 's moral dilemma*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

61. [*Starred quality*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

62. [*How many more must they kill? But Blair and Bush still refuse to act*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

63. [News Summary](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

64. [Pelosi tours market in Damascus](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

65. [Labouring for dignity of dead as bombs fall nearby](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

66. [Guardian Weekly: This week: The roundup](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

67. [Women human shields killed in Gaza](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

68. [*Middle East Crisis - People in Ireland have role to play*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

69. [*Wimmin at 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: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

70. [*International Briefs*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

71. [*Pelosi mingles with Syrians Bush denounces House Speaker's trip to Damascus*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

72. [*NEWS IN BRIEF*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

73. [*Former Israeli justice minister convicted of forcibly kissing young female soldier*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

74. [Harper took AIDS conference seriously](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

75. [WORLD AT A GLANCE](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

76. [Kiss conviction may force israeli cabinet reshuffle](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

77. [Gunman: terrorist or sole act](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

78. [NDP endorses call to pull out of Afghanistan : 'No sign the world is safer,' Layton tells convention delegates](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

79. [*THE WEST AND MUSLIMS*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

80. [*Defending a people*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

81. [*Letters*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

82. [*Muslims must back Iran : Hilali*](#)

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: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

83. [*War in Iraq named the top story of 2006*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type

News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

84. [Jack Layton is out to lunch on Afghanistan : NDP leader is playing for support of the loony left of his party](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

85. [Deafening silence that shames all moderate Muslims](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

86. [The flip-flop symposium](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

87. [Comment & Debate: Delirious rhetoric: Condoleezza Rice flatters her president with empty words as the war on terror loses all credibility](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to Apr 15, 2007

88. [A hateful religious intolerance drives actions of terrorists](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**

News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to



Apr 15, 2007

89. [9/11 the fifth](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

90. [Women Lead an Islamic Revival In Syria , Testing Its Secularism](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

91. [Sex-case questions for Israeli President](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

92. [Iraq , the nightmare by which all other conflicts are measured](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

93. [Former Israeli justice minister convicted](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

94. [INSIDE](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

95. [... And Prepare To Use Your Guns](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

96. [How the Beirut marathon and Milton of Britain can inspire abroad and at home](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

97. [Minister quits over 'stolen kiss' at party on the day war broke out](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

98. [South Lebanon Towns Reclaim Their Dead and Hold Funerals](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

99. [Power struggle behind the scenes; Impasse has forced moderates into a corner](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

100. [*Israel Presses Attacks in Gaza, Killing a Rocket Maker*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jul 31, 2006 to
Apr 15, 2007

ISLAMIC CULTURE OF PAKISTAN WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO BE CHANGED: QAZI

The Frontier Star

September 9, 2006 Saturday

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Length: 500 words

Body

LAHORE, Sept. 9: Jamaat-e-Islami Amir Qazi Hussain Ahmad Saturday accused General Pervez Musharraf of using political turncoats to further his so called enlightened moderation agenda in the country through amendments in the Hudood laws which are based on Quranic revelations.

"The people of Pakistan will not allow the army generals to change Islamic culture of Pakistan as there is no room for legislation on secular basis in a country which came into being in the name of Islam. Constitution of Pakistan provides ample guidance in respect of democracy to federation in line with the Islamic teachings therefore its restoration in the original form can only steer the country out from the prevalent crisis," the JI ameer added.

Qazi Hussain Ahmad expressed these views while addressing central training workshop for the JI women office bearers here at Mansoor. The workshop is organized by Women Wing of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, which is attended, by large number of JI office bearers from across the country. Addressing participants of the workshop Qazi Hussain Ahmad highlighted role of women in the ongoing drive against the government. He pointed out that women in Palestine and Lebanon have changed the political scene in their respective areas by participating in the political and Jihadi struggle from the platform of Hamas and Hizbullah.

The JI women wing, he urged, can play important role in making the drive against Musharraf regime by mobilizing the masses. Replying a question about MQM the JI Ameer revealed a dangerous ploy seeking to enable Karachi-based parochial group to make inroad in the political arena of Punjab under official patronage. Islamabad, he said, is using an American think tank International Republican Institute to affect its agenda.

A recent public opinion poll conducted by the IRI has shown an upward change in the mass support to MQM. Contrary to factual position, the IRI survey puts MQM public support at 12 per cent, which, Qazi said, is enough to prove the pre-poll ringing plans under official patronage.

He said the MMA will thwart this official plan to make win MQM in the general elections by boycotting the elections being held with Musharraf in the power and tendering resignations from the assemblies if the military dictator tired to re-elect himself as president through them.

Earlier, in his address to training workshop the JI secretary general Syed Munawwar Hassan urged the women leaders not to be pessimistic in the wake of western media trial of the Islamic movements across the globe. To a question, Syed Munawwar Hassan said ironically all the resources and forces of Muslim countries are being used to extend logistic support to enemies of Islam. He said such rulers should be ousted from the corridors of power so that resources of Ummah could be utilized for the betterment of Muslims. He lauded the JI women wing for organizing a national level training moot to polish the organizational skill and moral faculty of its office bearers.

ISLAMIC CULTURE OF PAKISTAN WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO BE CHANGED: QAZI

Load-Date: December 6, 2006

End of Document

Comment & Debate: Tony Blair means only one thing when he talks about his values: He claims his aim is to spread democracy and the rule of law, but his true commitment is to the global market

The Guardian - Final Edition

August 4, 2006 Friday

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Section: GUARDIAN COMMENT AND DEBATE PAGES ; Pg. 27

Length: 1174 words

Byline: Peter Wilby

Body

So now we know. The purpose of intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan was not regime change, Tony Blair explained in Los Angeles on Monday, but "values change". By bombing and shooting their way into Baghdad and Kabul, he and President Bush wanted to convince the benighted locals of the benefits of democracy, free markets and the rule of law.

They think Israel can achieve the same ends by pulverising Lebanon, and thus dealing a blow to the "arc of extremism", successor to the still undefeated "axis of evil". And the reason extremism appears to be growing is that, in reality, we are winning. Iraqis, Afghans, Palestinians, Lebanese - they're all embracing democracy, and presumably voting for Hamas and **Hizbullah** only because of what the Marxists used to call false consciousness. The terrorists - who are all "the same thing" whether they are in Gaza, Baghdad, Kashmir, Indonesia, Africa, Madrid or London - are becoming more and more desperate because "reactionary Islam" now faces "existential battles" for its survival.

Well, it's good to have that straight. Many thought it unkind to compare the Blair-Bush policies in the Middle East to the medieval crusades. But it is hard to avoid the conclusion that Blair believes he is engaged in a holy war, even though he reckons this is true only of the other side. No wonder, with the stakes so high, he won't listen to Labour members, backbenchers, ministers or foreign-affairs advisers. Or even his own past words. "We could have chosen security as the battleground," he said in Los Angeles. "But we didn't. We chose values." Forget what he said about WMDs; strike it from the record.

Strike also from the record what was once the prime minister's favourite mantra: what matters is what works. Invasions of Iraq, Afghanistan and Lebanon clearly don't have to work in any conventional sense. Everything comes down to ideology after all.

So what is that ideology? What does Blair mean by values? Both in Los Angeles and, the previous day, in San Francisco, addressing the big cheeses from Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, Blair tried to give some coherence to his political philosophy, and explicitly linked it to the Middle East. The "isms" that now dominate debate, he argued, are not socialism or capitalism. (Nor, we must assume, communitarianism, one of Blair's forgotten favourites.) They are "protectionism, isolationism, nativism". It is a battle between "open or closed" responses to globalisation, between "modern or traditional attitudes to a changing world".

Comment & Debate: Tony Blair means only one thing when he talks about his values: He claims his aim is to spread democracy and the rule of law, but his true com....

On one side stand free trade, open markets, investment in education, science and technology; on the other, protectionism, tariffs, tight labour market regulation, resistance to foreign takeovers. No prizes for guessing which side Blair thinks he is on.

The key word here is "modern". It comes up repeatedly when Blair speaks. The "global fight", he said in Los Angeles, is "about modernisation". "Everywhere," he said at his monthly press conference in London yesterday, "we support a process of modernisation." This modernity, in Blair's mind, is associated with the "competitive global market" that he wishes the whole world, including Muslims, to embrace. That is what gives his political thinking, domestically and internationally, a kind of unity.

If he believed wholeheartedly in the rule of law, he would have a greater care for civil liberties and international conventions about when and how to wage war. If he were as committed to democracy as he says he is, he would pay more respect to the British public's views on the Iraq war and on Israel's bombing of Lebanon and to the Palestinian and Lebanese votes for Hamas and Hizbullah respectively. But Blair's true commitment is to the global market.

As things stand, the global market is run by the rich in the interests of the rich. Two-thirds of global trade is controlled by just 500 firms. The competitive element is competition between nation-states for their favours - in terms of investment, jobs, sponsorship of public projects. This is the modern world that Blair wants Islamic countries to join. When he and Bush talk about an "open" Middle East, they mean open not just to different political views and religions but also to global capital, restlessly searching for new markets and assets.

Even to some moderate Muslims, this is a big step. They live, for the most part, in traditional societies. Yet they are invited to join a global market under which, as Marx and Engels warned, "all that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned". Some Gulf states contrive to allow Mammon to coexist with God, but Islam as a religious faith has developed no significant equivalent of Calvinism, which interpreted worldly commercial success as a sign of God's grace.

There lies the inadequacy of Blair's approach. As he acknowledges, we have to convince moderate Muslims that our values are preferable to those of reactionary Islam. But it is not, as he seems to think, enough just to find a settlement in Palestine. He also has to convince Muslims that our laws and political systems can better protect what they hold precious than can the fanatics and terrorists. This does not necessarily include sharia law and veiled women, but it does mean preserving a certain social and cultural integrity, and running their own economies as they wish.

What happened in Iraq immediately after the invasion - the wholesale privatisations, the grab for assets by US-based multinationals - justifies their scepticism.

But the modern world doesn't have to be under the thumb of global capital. We can be "open" to a global market but it need not be this one. The rules of global trade can be biased towards the poor, instead of being framed in the interests of the rich. They can encourage tariffs where they protect infant industries in developing countries, instead of allowing them only where they protect western interests. Crucially for Islamic countries, they can allow controls on capital movements, as well as on migration of people. They can nurture stronger trade unions, stricter health-and-safety regulation and improved environmental practices, instead of treating all these as market distortions. They can act against international monopolies and, again crucially for Islamic countries, in favour of local ownership. They can favour investment in public goods over private consumption.

In that kind of global market many poor Muslims might see something for them. In the global market we have now they see benefits only for rich westerners. Blair talks about liberty and tolerance. But the global market is highly illiberal and intolerant. It allows only one form of economic organisation and it is relentlessly hostile towards the traditional, as anyone who surveys British retailing or recalls what happened to mining communities will understand. Muslims might be persuaded of the merits of democracy and legality, but the merits of modernity, as defined by Blair, are a harder call.

Comment & Debate: Tony Blair means only one thing when he talks about his values: He claims his aim is to spread democracy and the rule of law, but his true com....

Peter Wilby is a former editor of the New Statesman peter.wilby3@ntlworld.com

Load-Date: August 4, 2006

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Bedouins stay on the sidelines

The Toronto Star
August 21, 2006 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A07

Length: 860 words

Byline: Oakland Ross, Toronto Star

Dateline: KALA AL-SMARA, WEST BANK

Body

He doesn't know his age, he won't give his name - and he absolutely refuses to talk politics.

Or at least not in the presence of a foreign visitor.

"We don't care about politics," he says. "We just feed our sheep and our goats and take care of our children."

Wearing a long grey robe and a white kaffiyeh, or head scarf, the man has a patriarchal air and lounges on the hard-packed earthen floor of a tent made of metal rods and stitched-together grain sacks. He sips from a glass of mint tea while commanding the rapt attention of nine boys or young men, all of whom are either his sons or his nephews.

The women in this man's life, including two wives and three daughters, have conformed with their deeply embedded culture by vanishing from sight.

The barren, sandy hills of the Judean desert rise and fall all around, and a baking afternoon sun pierces the clear blue skies. War seems a long distance away.

"I can't say anything about politics," the man insists. "It's not our business. We want a simple life."

That may well be so, but simple lives are hard to come by in the Middle East, even for Bedouin Arabs, who for centuries have roamed the deserts of Sinai and the Negev, with their tents, their camels, their herds of sheep and goats, their poems and songs.

If the man in Kala Al-Smara is keeping mum about war and politics, it is likely out of wariness and fear, rather than because he truly does not care about such matters. He happens to belong to an especially vulnerable group of his people, for whom discretion has become second nature.

Other Palestinian Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza have reacted much more boldly, even defiantly, in the wake of this summer's war between Israel and Hezbollah guerrillas in southern Lebanon, a conflict that Israelis generally expected to win quickly and decisively.

That is not the way it turned out, and the war's inconclusive finale is being celebrated in much of the Arab world as a huge victory for Hezbollah and its leader, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah. In the West Bank city of Ramallah, for

Bedouins stay on the sidelines

example, merchants are doing a thriving business selling T-shirts emblazoned with the Hezbollah commander's bearded features, while "Nasrallah" is now said to be the name of choice bestowed upon newborn boys.

Ramallah is a modern city, however, with newspapers, satellite TV dishes, Internet cafes and other amenities eschewed by Bedouins, who mostly prefer a life lived in harmony with the slower rhythms of the natural world. Many continue to lead a nomadic existence not greatly different from long-ago times.

This is not the case for those who nowadays huddle along the shoulders of the modern Israeli road that carves its way through the starkly beautiful moonscape of the West Bank, from Jerusalem to Jericho.

Now deeply impoverished, most of the people encamped in this area were displaced from their traditional lands in the Negev Desert in 1948, during the war that created the modern state of Israel, and here they have squatted ever since, on land they do not own, accompanied by their herds of sheep and goats, surrounded by tin and scrapwood bric-a-brac, and serenaded by the intermittent roar of diesel-powered trucks shunting past along busy Route 1.

Periodically, the people here are obliged to move yet again - not, as nomads naturally do, in search of greenery - but because they are in the way of yet another new road, such as the one currently being constructed between Jericho and Bethany, or because the land they live on is being swallowed by yet another Israeli settlement.

If they prefer not to talk politics with prying strangers, who can blame them?

Still, there are exceptions, and Abu Douad is one. A man with at least one foot in the modern world, the 37-year-old Palestinian Bedouin is reclining on a blanket, along with his short-wave radio - tuned to the BBC Arabic service from London - a jug of drinking water, a pot of mint tea and his cellphone.

"Some Bedouins didn't know there was a war," he says, but he is not among them.

Not only did Abu Douad follow the conflict faithfully, but he now holds clear opinions about the war's outcome and betrays no fear about expressing them.

"Of course, it was Nasrallah who won the war," he says.

Abu Douad is pleased with the result. "This is the first time someone did something like this to the Israelis," he says.

But there is bad news as well.

Normally, Abu Douad supplements his livelihood by charging travellers on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho for the privilege of climbing aboard his camel to have their pictures snapped.

Just now, the creature loiters nearby in the afternoon sun, sporting a gaily ornamented saddle but definitely riderless, for the war has hit tourism hard.

"Since the war began, there has been nothing," complains the camel's owner.

That loss of income may not be Abu Douad's only source of misery should Israelis react to the war just ended, as many expect them to do, by reducing their support for unilateral withdrawal from settlements in the West Bank. Such a response would mean less land and less hope for Palestinians.

But that's the way it tends to go in wartime. A fortunate few may win, but most people seem to lose.

Graphic

Bedouins stay on the sidelines

ELIANA APONTE reuters A Bedouin herds his flock outside the northern Israeli town of Shlomi. Construction, not war, is the greatest threat to Bedouin culture.

Load-Date: August 21, 2006

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Israeli president lies low after rape claim: Katsav fails to appear at opening of Knesset No indication leader will resign as criticism mounts

The Guardian - Final Edition

October 17, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 18

Length: 534 words

Byline: Rory McCarthy, Jerusalem

Body

The Israeli president, Moshe Katsav, yesterday cancelled an appearance at the opening session of parliament as he faced mounting pressure over a police recommendation that he be charged with rape.

But Mr Katsav, 60, gave no suggestion that he intended to resign his post, despite the wave of criticism he faces.

Police on Sunday said that after months of investigations they had enough evidence to call for the president to be charged with rape and sexual assault as well as fraud, illegal wiretapping, bribery and obstruction of justice. Five **women** from his office have provided evidence against him, saying in some cases he forced them to have sex. A further five **women** made complaints of sexual harassment dating back several years.

Israel's attorney general, Menahem Mazuz, is expected to take several weeks deciding whether to charge the president, and if so, what those charges should be.

Mr Katsav, who became president six years ago, was a bland political figure until these allegations. His position is largely ceremonial and his resignation would not unseat the government.

But his attendance at the start of the winter session of the Knesset yesterday was to have been one of his most visible duties. Several MPs had threatened to boycott the session if he attended.

The president's brother, Lior Katsav, suggested he wanted to avoid a confrontation. "There are apparently some members of the Knesset who want to hover like vultures over carcasses and create provocations and to harm the image of the Knesset and symbols of power in Israel," he told Army Radio. "The president will not be part of this charade." He said his brother was innocent.

Mr Katsav's lawyer said the president would not resign, although if charges were formally brought that might be a "turning point". If charges are laid, they will be the most serious faced by an Israeli leader and would probably force him to resign to face trial. A rape conviction carries a maximum of 16 years in jail.

Israeli newspapers rounded on the president yesterday, saying he should step down now. Farewell, President Katsav, said one headline to an article in the Ha'aretz newspaper by Ze'ev Segal. If Mr Katsav did not resign immediately, he wrote, he "will find himself at the head of an institution whose foundation he has destroyed".

Israeli president lies low after rape claim: Katsav fails to appear at opening of Knesset No indication leader will resign as criticism mounts

An article in the Ma'ariv newspaper was headlined Your Excellency, My Rapist. "Even if only 10% of the allegations against Katsav are true, the gravity of the offences still defies comprehension, almost like the infamy which he has brought to the office of the president," wrote the article's author, Moshe Goral.

At the parliamentary session, the prime minister, Ehud Olmert, said he was open to peace talks with Lebanon and that the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, was a "legitimate partner" for talks. The peace process is in its worst stalemate for years, however. There are no signs that Lebanon is willing to talk to Israel, or that the Palestinians are in a position to begin negotiations. Mr Olmert called for a meeting with the Lebanese prime minister, Fouad Siniora, and said Hizbullah "has ceased to exist as a state within a state in Lebanon". He ruled out talks with Syria.

guardian.co.uk/israel

Load-Date: October 17, 2006

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Freeing Prisoners Key Goal in Fight Against Israel

The New York Times

August 4, 2006 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 3; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1; HOSTILITIES IN THE MIDEAST: WAR AIMS

Length: 1676 words

Byline: By CRAIG S. SMITH; Steven Erlanger contributed reporting from Jerusalem for this article.

Dateline: JERUSALEM, Aug. 2

Body

When **Hezbollah** guerrillas sneaked into Israel last month, killing and capturing Israeli soldiers and setting off the current crisis, their goal was to trade them for a Lebanese man held by Israel.

The prisoner, Samir Kuntar, was part of a cell that in 1979 raided an apartment building in the northern Israeli town of Nahariya, terrorizing the Haran family. Mr. Kuntar shot Danny Haran in the head, killing him, while his daughter, Einat, 4, watched, then smashed the girl's head in with his rifle butt, killing her as well. Mr. Haran's wife, Smadar, hid in the attic with their 2-year-old daughter, so afraid that the girl would cry out that she accidentally suffocated the girl to death.

After **Hezbollah** made off with two Israeli soldiers in the raid last month, Israel vowed that it would not negotiate for their release. But the question of prisoners held by Israel -- nearly all of them Palestinians -- is the subtext of this crisis and is likely to figure in its resolution. It is an issue that animates **Hezbollah** and the Palestinians as much as anything else in their fight with Israel.

Political discourse, billboards, street graffiti and militant songs and manifestos are all laced with references, sometimes nearly rote, to winning freedom for the prisoners.

The prisoners now number about 9,700, about 100 of them **women**, according to a spokeswoman for the Israeli Prison Authority. About 300 are younger than 18, including two girls and a boy of 14, being held in juvenile detention facilities for acts against Israel. The Israelis say many of them are terrorists -- if not quite on the scale of Mr. Kuntar, not far from it -- and some clearly are. But the Palestinians say that others are wrongfully accused and that many have never committed a violent act.

The Hamas movement's military wing, the Qassam Brigades, say they captured the Israeli corporal Gilad Shalit as a bargaining chip to win the release of at least some of those prisoners, particularly the **women** and children. It is a move that many Palestinians support.

"We have 10,000 prisoners in jail, and the world cares only for this one Israeli prisoner," said Mohsin Jirjawi, an uncle of a Palestinian wounded in the current fighting, referring to Corporal Shalit during an interview in Al Shifa hospital in Gaza City, where his wounded nephew is. He said all Palestinians supported Hamas's proposal to trade

Freeing Prisoners Key Goal in Fight Against Israel

prisoners with Israel. "And when Israel doesn't respond, our steadfastness grows." When it followed with its raid, **Hezbollah** said it was acting in solidarity with the Palestinians.

Since 1998, the Palestinian Authority has maintained a Ministry of Prisoners' and Former Prisoners' Affairs, with 300 bureaucrats to keep track of the rising number of prisoners in Israeli jails and to give allowances and legal aid to the prisoners and their families. Even its own minister, Wasfi Qabaha, is now in prison, arrested by Israel in the wake of the capture of Corporal Shalit.

For the Palestinians, the ripples of distress from every arrest have become an oppressive wave. One Gaza family has four sons in prison, and more than one family has both parents and children in jail, the Israeli Prison Authority said.

Fakhri al-Barghouti of Ramallah was sentenced to 28 years in jail and is sharing a cell with two of his sons, who are both serving life sentences, said Muhammad Tluli, the Palestinian prisoner's ministry assistant deputy minister. Israeli officials could not immediately confirm those details, but said the Israeli Prison Authority did approve such living arrangements for prisoners with good records of behavior.

"We are willing to sacrifice ourselves for the freedom of the Palestinian prisoners," said Abu Muhammad, a field commander for the Qassam Brigades, in a standard turn of phrase. He said he had spent four years in prison after the first intifada, or uprising, against Israel that began in 1987. "Even if Israel destroys all of Gaza, we will fight until they are released," he said.

One of the factors that helped the militant movement Hamas beat the long-governing Fatah movement in elections in January was Fatah's failure to win the release of Palestinian prisoners in large numbers. The Fatah leader and Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, secured the release of 900 prisoners in 2005, but Palestinians complained that the prisoners freed did not include long-term prisoners or fighters. Israel said it would not release any Palestinian guilty of killing Israelis.

During the current crisis, the Palestinians and their backers have insisted that there is an easy way for Israel to reclaim its soldiers. "From the first day, the Arab countries have supported a prisoner exchange -- it's the logical solution," said Taher al-Nounou, the Palestinian Authority's Foreign Ministry spokesman.

Israel has repeatedly said that it will not trade prisoners to free its soldiers. But Israel has traded prisoners many times. In January 2004, it released some 430 prisoners in exchange for Elhanan Tannenbaum, an Israeli businessman kidnapped by **Hezbollah** four years earlier. The exchange also included the bodies of three Israeli soldiers.

In 1997, Israel freed the spiritual leader of Hamas, Sheik Ahmed Yassin -- who was later killed in an Israeli missile strike -- along with dozens of others in return for two Israeli intelligence agents who had been arrested in Jordan after a failed attempt to kill Hamas's current leader, Khaled Mashaal.

"Israel returned prisoners many times in the past, so why is Israel being so stubborn this time?" asked Ikrama Sabri, the mufti of Jerusalem, the highest-ranking Islamic cleric here, in a recent sermon at Al Aksa Mosque. "Returning the prisoners will bring happiness and peace to the hearts of both the Israelis and the Palestinians."

That kind of talk has given hope to people like Fathiya Sbieh, who believes the fighting will mean that she will see her new grandchild soon.

Two months ago, Ms. Sbieh watched on TV as her daughter Samar got off a prison bus, her hands and feet shackled, and hobbled into Meir Hospital in Kafr Saba in Israel. She watched again as Samar hobbled out five days later, this time with her hands free, holding her newborn son.

Ms. Sbieh insists that her daughter's only crime was using someone else's identification card to get permission to travel to the West Bank. But Orit Shteltzer, another spokeswoman for the Israeli Prison Authority, said that Samar had been convicted of belonging to the Qassam Brigades and that she had prepared a suicide belt for a would-be bomber.

Freeing Prisoners Key Goal in Fight Against Israel

The birth was widely covered in the Gaza Strip, where her family has lived since fleeing the fighting in Israel in 1948. The prison guards who took her to the hospital insisted that she remain shackled during her Caesarean section. Ms. Sbieh still believes that her daughter's hands and feet were tied. A hospital spokeswoman, Hagit Sharon, said Samar was shackled only in her room. She said the hospital had refused the request of prison administrators to keep her shackled in the operating room. Ms. Shteltzer said her agency had made no such request.

In the Palestinian Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs headquarters in Gaza City, the walls are lined with posters bearing the pictures of prisoners. One shows the face of Saeed al-Ataba, the longest-serving Palestinian prisoner in Israeli jails. He will soon enter his 30th year in prison.

Like all the Palestinian Authority's ministries, this one has twin headquarters, another in the West Bank city of Ramallah. It deposits monthly stipends of about \$45 in prisoners' canteen accounts and distributes allowances averaging \$340 a month to many families whose breadwinners are in jail.

The ministry, with funds from the Palestinian Authority, normally spends \$3 million to \$4 million a month to support prisoners and their families and to cover some legal fees, said Mr. Tluli, the deputy minister, beneath a calendar with the picture of a dove flying from an open hand. The caption reads, "No freedom without releasing prisoners."

But because of the international financial embargo since Hamas came to power, no money has been paid to prisoners since April and none to their families since March.

So deep is the hatred of Israel that fighting the country has become a tradition in some families and prisoners often span several generations. Awni Abedalkader Ferwana, now white-haired and weary, was arrested in 1970 and sentenced to 25 years in prison. He admits to having thrown grenades at Israeli jeeps in Gaza City. He was freed in 1985 as part of prisoner swap in which 1,150 Palestinian inmates were exchanged for three Israeli soldiers captured in Lebanon. He was delivered by bus to Gaza where he hugged his sons, one of them for the first time. "It was like being reborn. My feelings were expressed by my tears."

His eldest daughter had married and had a child. She was the exact age his wife had been when he went to jail. "My eldest brother was 18, I was 15," recalled one son, Jamal. "It was the first time I met my father without a prison grill between us." But then in 1986, Jamal was arrested and sentenced to five years for fighting the Israelis. He said he threw a firebomb at an Israeli jeep, among other actions. The Israeli Prison Authority could not confirm that.

"It was normal for a kid of 15 who grew up with a father in prison," Jamal said. "Knowing that he's alive and you are denied his love and cannot reach him is something very painful. This creates hatred in your heart." A year after that, during the beginning of the first intifada, Jamal's brother, who said he was part of a team that hunted down Palestinian collaborators with Israel, was picked up in a sweep. The brothers said they were freed in 1994.

Jamal, now 36, sat by his curly haired 3-year-old son. "If the Israelis keep up like this," he said, "who can prevent my son from becoming a fighter? He sees images of blood, martyrs, hears sonic booms and says, 'I will become a martyr and fight them.'"

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo: The Ministry of Prisoners' and Former Prisoners' Affairs in Gaza City has photographs of Palestinian prisoners and former prisoners. (Photo by Shawn Baldwin for The New York Times)(pg. A8)

Freeing Prisoners Key Goal in Fight Against Israel

Load-Date: August 4, 2006

End of Document

QAZI CRITICIZES MUSHARRAF'S WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT PROPOSAL ABOUT PAK-INDIA JOINT CONTROL ON KASHMIR

The Frontier Star

August 18, 2006 Friday

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Length: 532 words

Body

LAHORE: Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) president and Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Qazi Hussain Ahmad on Friday criticized President General Musharraf's willingness to accept proposal about Pak-India joint control over Kashmir and said it is a deliberate efforts to strengthen the lobbies for elimination of borders between the two.

Delivering Juma Sermon at Jamia Mansoorah, Qazi Hussain Ahmad said that New Delhi is consistently declaring Kashmir its integral part despite Islamabad had offered scores of building measures for normalization of relations between the two countries.

He said the proposal about joint control over Kashmir is another blow to the principled stance of Pakistan on Kashmir and ironically, a military regime is welcoming this shameful viewpoint. He said amendments in the Hudood Ordinance are not meant to empower women rather these are incorporated to please western lobby and US which intends to promote their culture.

Condemning tactful mum of political supporters of the military regime on Hudood amendments, Qazi said his party had warned these amendments adding that it would cast negative impact on the election results because government could use the amendments in the Hudood law as slogan.

"They have now bowed before the dictates of their military boss," he added. It is a matter of sheer shame that in an Islamic country sins like Zina with consent is not to police cognisance in the name of misuse of law, he maintained. He said it is American and Western conspiracy to promote western culture in pretext of protecting women rights from the misuse of law.

"The objective of the west to promote vulgar culture. Those who still pin hopes on such rulers to bring Islamic system in the country are naive enough," he said. He was of the view that the Muslims will be able to end their isolation on international front if they forge unity in their ranks.

He said Hizbullah has made the Muslims to talk with pride after pushing Israel out from Lebanon after tough resistance. Meanwhile, addressing protest demonstration outside JI headquarters, Qazi Hussain Ahmad termed the cancellation of route 9 on Multan road as a cruel action of the government. This, he said, will further aggravate the miseries of the people. Hundreds of protesting drivers and cleaners of Route No. 9 Wagons converged in front of main gate of Mansoorah after Juma prayer and started chanting slogans against the government.

On hearing about the demonstration, Qazi Hussain Ahmad rushed towards main gate.

QAZI CRITICIZES MUSHARRAF'S WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT PROPOSAL ABOUT PAK- INDIA JOINT CONTROL ON KASHMIR

On seeing the JI Amir, demonstrators welcomed him with slogans. Local PML (N) leader Mirza Iqbal Baig, a representative of demonstrators presented memorandum consisting of their demands to the JI Amir. Qazi Hussain in his brief address assured the demonstrators that he would talk to authorities in this regard.

He said it is ironical that old buses of private companies owned by higher authorities are licensed to ply on Route 9 without taking the drivers of already plying Wagons into confidence. "This arbitrary action will make scores of people jobless besides creating law and order issue," he noted. After the assurance of Qazi Hussain, Ahmad demonstrators dispersed peacefully.

Load-Date: December 6, 2006

End of Document

Guardian Weekly: International News: Israel ends anti-rocket incursion in Gaza town

Guardian Weekly

November 10, 2006 Friday

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TheGuardianWeekly

Section: Pg. 11

Length: 509 words

Byline: Guardian Reporters and agencies

Body

Israel on Tuesday ended a week-long incursion into the Gaza Strip town of Beit Hanoun that left nearly 50 dead, most of them militants. The Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, said its purpose had been to "significantly decrease" rocket fire from Palestinian militants. But hours after the Israelis made their early morning withdrawal, a homemade Qassam rocket was fired from a field in the town.

The incursion, the latest in more than a dozen offensives in Beit Hanoun in recent years, was the biggest assault in Gaza since June. In the past four months more than 350 Palestinians have died. One Israeli soldier has been killed and one seriously injured. Israeli action continued elsewhere on the Gaza Strip. Eight Israelis and three foreign workers have been killed in Israel by Qassam rockets in the past four years.

Among the dead in Beit Hanoun was a girl aged 12, shot in the head by an Israeli sniper. Two volunteer paramedics with the Palestinian ambulance service, both 17, were killed in Beit Lahiya.

Beit Hanoun, a town of more than 30,000 people, was closed off, with reports of electricity cuts and limited water and food. Tanks and bulldozers were on the streets.

Palestinian women have said that at least one of them was killed and 10 injured in the face and legs as they walked past tanks into Beit Hanoun, saying that they wanted to help free a group of Palestinian gunmen holed up inside a mosque. Israeli snipers claimed that they had hit eight gunmen hiding among the women.

"The operation is limited in time but we have no intention of announcing when it will end," Mr Olmert said last Friday. "When we reach the conclusion that the effectiveness of the operation is bringing us closer to reaching the goals, we will definitely pull our forces out of Gaza . . . We have no intention of staying in Gaza."

The latest Gaza offensive has brought international criticism. "The right of all states to defend themselves does not justify disproportionate use of violence or actions which are contrary to international humanitarian law," said a statement from the Finnish presidency of the European Union.

Guardian Weekly: International News: Israel ends anti-rocket incursion in Gaza town

In Jerusalem the newest member of the cabinet, Avigdor Lieberman, sparked criticism when he said Arabs in Israel should lose their citizenship so that Israel could become as "homogeneous" a Jewish state as possible. Mr Lieberman, a far-right politician, was brought in to shore up Mr Olmert's weak coalition.

In Beirut **Hizbullah** confirmed last week that indirect talks involving a UN mediator were under way with Israel on a prisoner exchange, but it also gave a warning that any attempt by an international force to disarm the group would transform Lebanon into another Iraq or Afghanistan.

A diplomatic initiative by Tony Blair, the British prime minister, to urge Syria to restart Middle East peace talks received a cool response from the governments of Israel and the United States. Mr Blair had sent his senior envoy, Sir Nigel Sheinwald, to meet the Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad, in Damascus.

Palestinians at point of no return, page 22

Load-Date: November 24, 2006

End of Document

WHO IS FANATIC?

The Nation (AsiaNet)

September 7, 2006 Thursday

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Length: 530 words

Byline: NARGIS BANO

Body

Islam is a religion of peace, but when someone tries to create tension and confusion among Muslim communities, Islam orders to root out the undermining factors. Yet, it has always been a trend among western societies to connect religious fanaticism and terrorism with the Muslims. First, let us ponder on the meaning of Jihad and ordinary war.

Jihad means exertion of power, wealth, knowledge etc for Allah. It is a holy war against those who stop Muslims from following the ways of Allah and maltreats helpless men, women and children. Contrary to this there is greed of expending territorial boundaries behind ordinary war.

To promote peace west has contrived policies and laws according to which no nation, group or government can maltreat the masses. However, paradoxically enough, they themselves break these laws relentlessly. A few months ago, I had a chance to watch a teleplay in which a person joins a Mujahideen group and afterwards dies for nation's cause. The play presented Jihad as condemnable if it is for religious cause but admirable if it is for nation's sake. Islam has declared Jihad a sublime act for religion and for nation. If perpetuated in the light of Quran and Hadith no one can attribute any type of extremism, to Jihad.

Before tagging Muslims as fanatic, the so-called torchbearers of peace must have a cursory look at the history of the mankind. History is replete with examples of fanaticism, committed by the western societies. In Spain Masjid-e-Qurtaba has been locked by the authorities. What was the purpose behind Afghanistan and Iraq war and what motive led Israel to attack Palestine and Lebanon? Afghanistan was wiped out because Taliban were there, Iraq met the same destiny due to President Saddam's dictatorship, Palestine is suffering due to Hamas and Lebanon is undergoing the same turmoil due to Hizbullah. Is it not fanaticism to destroy the whole nation just for one group?

Why doesn't the western world pay heed to Kashmir issue? Why is the reaction of west so humble towards this issue? Because the invaders are non-Muslims. If any Muslim state invaded a non-Muslim state, the situation would have been different. If war against atrocity is an unpardonable crime, then this law should be implemented without any religious discrimination.

We as Muslims should help our brothers in distress and overcome our differences. This would create an atmosphere of love, trust and brotherhood. The only way to remain united is to follow the teachings of Islam. We are the followers of Allah's beloved Prophet (PBUH), and then what is hindering us from ascending the peaks of sublimity? As far as I have observed the reason is that, we let everyone to ravish the sanctity of our religion.

In the name of freedom of Press libel caricatures have been printed, under the pretence of the prevailing freedom of choice, apostate of Islam in Afghanistan has been set free under the influence of western powers. However,

WHO IS FANATIC?

whenever Muslims express their views or protest against tyranny, a tag of fanaticism is attached to them. Islam is the only religion on the face of earth that does not permit fanaticism. Islam preaches love, peace, equality and tolerance.

Load-Date: September 11, 2006

End of Document

Mufti told to quit or leave

The Australian (Australia)

April 10, 2007 Tuesday

All-round Country Edition

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Section: LOCAL; Pg. 1

Length: 611 words

Byline: Richard Kerbaj

Body

MATP

THE Howard Government has intensified its pressure on Australia's most senior Islamic spiritual leader, Taj Din al-Hilali, demanding he consider leaving the country and stepping down from his position as mufti.

Immigration Minister Kevin Andrews and Foreign Minister Alexander Downer yesterday expressed outrage at Sheik Hilali's weekend visit to Tehran, during which he called on the Islamic world to unite behind the radical Iranian regime.

Muslim leaders from around Australia attacked the Egyptian-born cleric for becoming an "ongoing problem".

And Australian Federal Police are examining whether to involve state-based counter-terrorism agencies in their investigation of allegations that Sheik Hilali diverted Australian-raised charity funds to terrorism supporters in Lebanon last year.

The Australian revealed yesterday that Sheik Hilali had been quoted in the Iranian media as calling on Muslims worldwide to serve in Iran's "trenches" and not "kneel" to its enemies. It was the latest in a series of controversies that have dogged the mufti.

"The Australian community has lost patience with the sheik," Mr Andrews said.

"The sheik needs to say if he wishes to continue as a citizen of Australia or reside in an alternate country."

Mr Downer said Sheik Hilali had "become a completely discredited figure" in Australia and was causing embarrassment to this country.

"Sheik Hilali is damaging the standing of the Muslim community in Australia and beyond," he said. "And the sooner they find a more credible spokesman for the Islamic community than Sheik Hilali, the better.

"They need a good and a moderate and a decent leader, and there are plenty of them who can do the job."

Mr Downer questioned whether Sheik Hilali's support for Iran meant he also supported their backing of terrorist attacks

Mufti told to quit or leave

Continued -- Page 2

From Page 1

by organisations such as Hezbollah in the Middle East.

"When he's calling for people to support Iran, what is he calling for?" Mr Downer said.

"Is he calling for people to support Iran's nuclear program? Is he calling for Iran to become a nuclear weapons state?"

Australia's top female Muslim leader, Aziza Abdel-Halim, blamed the "hopeless" Australian National Imams Council for its decision two weeks ago to allow Sheik Hilali to stay in his position as mufti for another three months.

She said his reported comments in Iran were "tactless" and threatened to further divide Muslim Australia from mainstream society.

"Why should he involve the Muslims of Australia in politics that are very far from us here, and at the same time put us in a situation we don't really care to be in," Sister Abdel-Halim said. "I don't know what he's hoping to gain from what he's doing."

Opposition Leader Kevin Rudd said Sheik Hilali's comments in Iran were "unacceptable in the extreme".

"These statements by Sheik Hilali deserve complete condemnation and provide a further reason why he should be removed as the Mufti of Australia," he said.

It was revealed last week that Sheik Hilali had handed out \$US38,000 (\$46,000) of Australian-raised charity funds in Lebanon last year, of which he gave \$US10,000 to a political leader with links to al-Qa'ida and Hezbollah.

The money, raised by the Sydney-based Lebanese Muslim Association and other Islamic bodies, is the subject of an AFP investigation.

Senior Muslim leader Ameer Ali said Sheik Hilali was becoming an "ongoing problem" for the community and would best serve his people by leaving his spiritual post as mufti.

In October, Sheik Hilali came under criticism internationally after The Australian revealed a sermon in which he compared immodestly dressed women to uncovered meat.

Load-Date: April 9, 2007

Applause for media moxie

Christian Science Monitor

October 27, 2006, Friday

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Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. 8

Length: 551 words

Byline: The Monitor's View

Body

As a TV host in Lebanon, May Chidiac speaks out forcefully against Syria's interference in her country, past and present. For that, she became a target, losing her hand, leg, and nearly her life to a car bomb last year. But she's back on air, outfitted with a manicured prosthesis - and lots of determination.

This week, Ms. Chidiac was honored for her courage by the International Women's Media Foundation - as were Gao Yu, a freelance newswoman in China who's been twice jailed for her reporting, and this newspaper's Jill Carroll, who was held hostage in Iraq for 82 days early this year.

While America celebrates its Pulitzer Prize winners for journalistic excellence each spring, this is the time of year when several media-related organizations recognize the journalistic moxie of individuals standing up for press freedom around the world. The awards give the recipients needed moral, institutional, and financial support, and according to some award winners, can help protect them by increasing their stature outside their countries.

It's remarkable how little press freedom there actually is in the world. Journalists in China, Russia, much of the Middle East, Central and Southeast Asia, Africa, and parts of Latin America work under restrictions - some severe - or threats. Think how these places would benefit if the media were allowed to fulfill their role as independent checkers on government, as watchdogs on political suppression, or as probers of poverty-perpetuating corruption and market-suppressing organized crime.

Trying to fulfill this role is often dangerous. In the past 15 years, at least 580 journalists have been killed in the line of duty, according to the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists. In its annual census last year, the committee tallied 125 editors, writers, and photojournalists in jail. War zones such as Iraq increase such fatalities, but not necessarily due to crossfire. The majority of the deaths there (85 since the 2003 invasion) have been targeted killings.

Media intimidation can have its intended effect. In Colombia, where about 30 journalists have been killed in the past decade, the deaths have decreased but only because of self-censorship by terrified journalists. Under threat, reporters switch to safer subjects or change careers. Sometimes they're forced to flee.

All this makes a story such as Chidiac's all the more remarkable. After nine months in hospitals, and with her would-be killers still at large, this flamboyant - and simply buoyant - woman is hosting a new show, appropriately named "With Audacity." She's still speaking out against Syrian meddling, but now criticizes Hizbullah's militias, which she sees as the cause of Israel's invasion in July (which she also condemns).

Applause for media moxie

Chidiac describes the courage to go on as something "you feel deep inside, that you dare to do without giving consideration to all the threats of the red lines somebody has drawn for you." It also comes from a conviction that what needs to be done is more important than the risks of doing it: "You have to do what you're convinced [of], and if you don't act this way, you have to change your job."

Lebanon is better off with Chidiac still on the set - an inspiration to threatened journalists everywhere.

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Load-Date: October 26, 2006

End of Document

Hezbollah film to be shown in Cherryfield

Bangor Daily News (Maine)

September 2, 2006 Saturday

State EditionCoastal Edition

Copyright 2006 Bangor Daily News

Section: Pg. C2

Length: 34 words

Dateline: CHERRYFIELD

Body

The documentary "Two Hezbollah Women" will be shown at 6:30 p.m. Monday, Sept. 11, at the Ricker House Barn. The film shows family life and lifestyle of two Lebanese wives dedicated to the Hezbollah movement.

Load-Date: September 5, 2006

End of Document

Ex-minister convicted in Israel; Pressure of scandals could lead Olmert to shuffle cabinet

The International Herald Tribune

February 1, 2007 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 5

Length: 590 words

Byline: Greg Myre - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

An Israeli court Wednesday convicted the former justice minister, Haim Ramon, of sexual misconduct for forcibly kissing a young **female** soldier in a highly publicized case that has added to the scandal surrounding the country's leadership.

Ramon's conviction in the Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court also prompted speculation that Prime Minister Ehud Olmert might soon shuffle his cabinet.

Ramon resigned after he was indicted in August and his duties were taken over by Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni on an interim basis. With Ramon's conviction, Olmert may seek broader changes in an attempt to re-energize a government dragged down by scandal and criticism of its handling of last summer's war with **Hezbollah** in Lebanon.

The ruling comes a week after the Israeli president, Moshe Katsav, suspended himself for three months while prosecutors considered possible charges of rape and sexual assault. The Justice Ministry said such charges were likely, but prosecutors have not made a final decision.

In Israel's macho culture, the prosecution of prominent figures for sexual misconduct traditionally has been rare, but it has become more common in recent years.

Ramon, 56, was charged with kissing a 21-year-old soldier at a government office on July 12, the day the war began between Israel and **Hezbollah**.

Ramon said the woman flirted with him during an office gathering, and asked to have her picture taken with him.

In court, Ramon's lawyers showed a photograph of the two hugging each other as they posed for the camera. In his testimony, Ramon also acknowledged the kiss, but said it was consensual.

But the soldier said that Ramon kissed her against her will, and the three-judge panel concurred.

"This was not a kiss of affection," said Judge Hayuta Kochan, who read the unanimous verdict. "This has all the elements of sexual crime."

Ex-minister convicted in Israel Pressure of scandals could lead Olmert to shuffle cabinet

Cameramen and photographers swarmed around Ramon as he left the courthouse without commenting. Ramon, who is divorced, was accompanied by his girlfriend. He is to be sentenced in about three weeks, and could face jail time.

Ramon has been a legislator for more than two decades and was a leading figure in the center-left Labor Party.

When a former prime minister, Ariel Sharon, abandoned his conservative Likud party and created the centrist Kadima party at the end of 2005, Ramon was among the Labor legislators who defected to join Kadima.

Sharon suffered a stroke in January of last year, but the new party captured the Israeli parliamentary elections last March. Ramon was once considered a confidant and important ally of Olmert.

In another development Wednesday, Olmert has asked security officials to examine the possibility of rerouting part of Israel's West Bank separation barrier to include two additional Jewish settlements, his office said.

Under the current route, the two settlements, Nili and Naaleh, are outside the barrier.

Haaretz reported Wednesday that Olmert had already approved the change. But Olmert's office said the prime minister had only asked for a review, and on his own could not overturn the cabinet's decision on the barrier's route.

If the route is ultimately changed, about 20,000 additional Palestinians would find themselves on the western, or Israeli, side of the barrier, according to the Haaretz report.

Israel says the barrier is to protect against suicide bombings and other attacks.

But much of the international community opposes the barrier, and the International Court of Justice, in a nonbinding ruling in 2004, said the parts built in the West Bank violated international law.

Load-Date: February 2, 2007

Hit on Bridge North of Tyre Isolates South Of Lebanon

The New York Times

August 8, 2006 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 9; HOSTILITIES IN THE MIDEAST: DESOLATION

Length: 872 words

Byline: By SABRINA TAVERNISE

Dateline: TYRE, Lebanon, Aug. 7

Body

The one bridge into Lebanon's south that remained is now gone.

The crossing point just north of here carried almost all of the traffic over the Litani River, the strategic line that separates this country's north from its south. It was hit by an Israeli bomb overnight on Sunday.

Traffic to the south has been cut. A single tree lying on its side from bank to bank is all that links the river's two sides, said the aid group Doctors Without Borders.

"Now all the population living in the south is completely isolated," said Sergio Cecchini, a spokesman for the group, whose workers brought medical supplies across the river on Monday by walking into the water.

Even before the bridge went out, conditions had become so difficult that the International Committee of the Red Cross had not gone to villages in the south in three days. In one village, a patient could not be reached by rescue workers for four days, and her leg had to be amputated. Grandmothers in hospitals here in Tyre beg ambulance drivers for rides home, afraid of being shot.

It is not an empty fear. On Sunday, missiles killed a man drinking coffee and a bread truck driver, and nearly hit a convoy of journalists, all in town, rescue workers said.

Now, with the Israeli military imposing a curfew throughout southern Lebanon, local residents are bracing for what might be coming next.

Life is like camping. After almost 10 days of eating canned food, mostly tuna and sardines, Suha Bandawi, 39, a Tyre bank worker, started a fire in her garden, propped up a cooking pot in the center of it and fried some eggs and potatoes. She has not found gas for her stove for days.

"My heart was too full of cans," she said.

On Monday evening Ms. Bandawi stood with her grandmother, Hajija Jawad, 72, on a road near the beach, watching and listening to explosions that seemed to be some miles away. Missiles went out. Missiles came in.

Hit on Bridge North of Tyre Isolates South Of Lebanon

"Sometimes I take a sandwich here," Ms. Bandawi said, leaning against a wall in black sweatpants and a blue cotton stretchy hijab.

Large bombs continued to fall. On the northern outskirts of the city, four large apartment buildings became dusty mountains of concrete and household items in an Israeli airstrike about 3 p.m. The sound of a child's toy beeped rhythmically under the rubble. A wall was sheared off, revealing the back of a couch that faced several stories of open air. A door banged a beat against its frame, blown by wind through a broken window.

A sardonic young man with a red beard, who identified himself only as "citizen," said the strike showed Hezbollah's strength.

"They can't defeat Hezbollah, so they start targeting civilians," he said.

He grinned when asked if he was from the militia. "I'm from Lebanon," he replied, getting into a Mercedes coated with concrete dust.

With all the airstrikes in the last two days, people are afraid even to move around in town. Qasim Chaalan, a volunteer with the Lebanese Red Cross, said he had ferried patients to their homes after ordinary hospital visits. They were afraid to travel alone.

On Monday afternoon he met a group of about 15 or 20 old women who were waiting in a clump at Jabal Amel Hospital, hoping to catch a ride back to their villages with an ambulance. He transported a 74-year-old to a school in town, but had to turn down the others.

"I told them, 'All the people are leaving these villages, and you want to go?' " he said.

The bombs come suddenly and soundlessly, as if guided from minute to minute by some giant, invisible eye looking for targets. They seem to know what they are after: in the Ramel neighborhood a missile had pierced the roof and smashed through the floor of a house that neighbors said belonged to a man close to Hezbollah who sold cooking gas.

Ms. Jawad said the precision strikes were the biggest difference between this war and the one with the Israelis in 1982.

"In the past the bombing had a whistle, and we would try to move away very fast," she said. "Now it comes from nothing. You are gone."

As bombs continue to fall and a cease-fire seems as far away as ever, people had stabs of approaching dread.

"Something will happen," Ms. Bandawi said, watching the shore as if looking for something. "They will not leave a house standing in this city."

"All the buildings look empty to you, but the basements are all full," she said as footsteps on sidewalks echoed in the eerie quiet.

A Lebanese aid official had similar thoughts.

"They'll start to do as much as they can now," the worker said, referring to the Israelis. "We're afraid of the end. All the people are talking about it."

Across town near Jabal Amel Hospital, another explosion shook the air at 5:53 p.m.

Ahmad Mroue, a doctor wearing his hospital scrubs, looked exhaustedly in the direction of the blast from a small balcony off his office. A patient, Maryam Jawad, was brought in on Sunday from Bint Jbail, the southern town with some of the heaviest fighting. It took four days for rescue workers to retrieve her. By the time she arrived, her leg had to be amputated.

Hit on Bridge North of Tyre Isolates South Of Lebanon

"I'm not thinking about anything other than to stay living," Dr. Mroue said. "We want only this. Not democracy. Not liberty."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos: Four buildings in this part of Tyre were destroyed yesterday by two waves of Israeli airstrikes, 10 minutes apart. The man at center was one of the few civilians visible after the attack. (Photo by Tyler Hicks/The New York Times)

After the last bridge on the Litani River was bombed, members of Doctors Without Borders and local volunteers passed supplies across. (Photo by Samuel Aranda/Agence France-Presse -- Getty Images)

Load-Date: August 8, 2006

End of Document

Inching Westward in the Maghreb; Reforms in North Africa

The International Herald Tribune

October 31, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 6

Length: 619 words

Byline: Stanley A. Weiss

Dateline: RABAT, Morocco

Body

A democratic "Arab Spring," it seemed, had suddenly blossomed. Lebanon's "Cedar Revolution" forced the withdrawal of Syrian occupying troops. Millions of Iraqis defied insurgents to vote in historic elections. Palestinians elected the moderate Mahmoud Abbas as president, renewing hopes for peace talks with Israel. Egyptian strongman Hosni Mubarak promised the first-ever contested presidential election.

Hardly two years later, however, the decades-long winter of Arab discontent grinds on. Iraq teeters on the brink of civil war. The peace process lies dead, with Israel and Hamas clashing in Gaza and Lebanon still reeling from the summer war between Israel and Hezbollah. Mubarak claims "re-election" with 88 percent of the vote, his main challenger back in prison.

But a visit to this desert kingdom and its North African neighbors reveals that the best hope for Arab reform may lie not in spectacular events in the heart of the Middle East, but in small steps along the region's periphery.

To be sure, Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria won't become Jeffersonian democracies anytime soon. In all three, autocratic regimes are enriched by rampant corruption and rely on heavy-handed security services to stamp out opposition.

Yet by virtue of their geography and history, the countries of the Maghreb at the crossroads of the Middle East, Africa and Europe continue to flirt with foreign, social and economic policies that could be models for the region.

All three countries have, at times, reached out to Israel, and been among Washington's closest Arab allies in the war on terrorism. "We have chosen," we were repeatedly told by officials across the region. "We are looking West."

Of course, many non-officials don't share the sentiment. Three years after the Casablanca terrorist bombings, security officials disrupted the latest plot here last month Moroccans planning a "holy war" in the kingdom. In Tunis, where Qaeda-linked terrorists bombed a synagogue in 2002, women are increasingly wearing head scarves in defiance of a government ban. In Algiers, our delegation traveled in armored cars under police escort.

Yet each nation, in its own way, is combating the underlying frustrations that lead to fundamentalism. Algeria, with a press among the freest in the region, held elections two years ago considered its fairest yet. A national reconciliation plan is granting amnesty to Islamic militants (if not justice for their victims) while privatization of state-owned companies and increased social spending is designed to reduce massive youth unemployment.

Inching Westward in the Maghreb Reforms in North Africa

In Tunis, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali sticks to the "Tunisia model" repressive politics alongside progressive economics. Claiming an absurd 95-percent victory in the last election, Ben Ali's regime argues that Tunisia's reputation as a leader in women's rights and the most open economy in the Arab world with a robust middle class, low poverty and high literacy show that you can give people dignity without democracy.

"If you own your own home, send your kids to school and have a good life, you don't think about blowing yourself up at a cafe," said one Tunisian minister. Islam? Not surprisingly, our hosts in each capital invoked Hezbollah and Hamas to argue that too much democracy too fast is too dangerous.

ceremony from the mid-1980s when ruins of so more than 2,100 years after the Romans But in a region where change comes slow, the tentative reforms in the Maghreb may not be the most dramatic, but they may prove to be the most lasting.

Stanley A. Weiss is founder and chairman of Business Executives for National Security, a nonpartisan organization based in Washington.

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Load-Date: November 1, 2006

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Talk yes, but don't dare trust these two pariahs

Daily Mail (London)

November 15, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: ED 1ST; Pg. 12

Length: 934 words

Byline: ANN LESLIE

Body

HOW hypocritical can you be? Here's Tony Blair, a man who signed up to every jot and tittle of George Bush's 'axis of evil' theology, now saying that, in the cause of Middle East and, especially, Iraqi peace, we must negotiate with Syria and Iran, two of the world's biggest pariah states.

But leaving the 'hypocrisy' accusations aside, will dealing with these two slippery regimes actually help sort out the crisis in Iraq, let alone the 58-yearold Israeli/Palestine problem?

Blair clearly hopes that, in the last desperate spasms of his premiership, he can count success in the Middle East as his chief 'legacy'. Some hope.

Let's deal with Syria first. It feels thoroughly aggrieved: after 9/11 it did provide large amounts of intelligence to the West. 'And what did we get in return?' one of its leading diplomats in the West complained to me over dinner one evening. 'Nothing but threats and abuse.' I pointed out that Syria has been and still is a way-station for foreign jihadists to cross the border and create mayhem in Iraq. 'Look, we have a very long border and we can't control everyone crossing over: even America can't control its border with Mexico.' Syria also feels aggrieved because it was driven out of Lebanon by Western pressure and the so-called Cedar Revolution.

I stood in Beirut's Martyrs' Square last year when huge anti-Syrian demonstrations were being held: placards declared ' KIFAYA! Syria go home!' (KIFAYAis Arabic for 'Enough!') and the crowds in Martyrs' Square were shouting out that they'd had enough of Syria's presence in Lebanon.

Syria was widely believed to have been responsible for the assassination of Rafik Hariri, an extremely popular former prime minister who had turned against Syrian control; its army and its security services had been in Lebanon for 28 years.

Syria also supports the Islamist terrorist group Hamas which is now the government of Palestine and Hezbollah, the Iranian-backed Shia militia in southern Lebanon that provoked the latest blood-soaked battle with Israel.

Israel, with reason, accuses Syria of funnelling Iranian-made weapons to Hezbollah. BOTH Syria and Hezbollah, of course, hate Israel. So much so that when I was in Beirut before the Syrians pulled out, I was warned by Lebanese friends not to mention Israel in phone conversations: 'Phones are bugged, so if we want to refer to Israel, we use the word "Dixie" or "the place to the south of here".' Despite all this I believe that negotiating with Syria might work. It is not in Syria's interest to have a country in turmoil, like Iraq, on its borders; Syria is not a rich

Talk yes, but don't dare trust these two pariahs

country and it already has to deal with around 400,000 Iraqi refugees. If Iraq collapses completely, Syria will bear the immediate brunt.

The fact is that Syria is a secular dictatorship, run by a minority Muslim sect called the Alawites, and its only interest is in keeping the Assad family and its Alawite clan in power and, of course, in regaining the Golan heights captured by Israel in 1967. Unlike Iran, it is not a theocracy bent on spreading Islamic revolution throughout the world.

And Syria is desperate for foreign investment and longs to join the outside world: if it doesn't, the regime is in danger from its own people.

Now let's look at Iran. Here, I'm afraid, there's zilch chance of any accommodation. Anyone like me who has been to Friday prayers in Tehran has had to listen to endless attacks on the West and Israel and chants of: 'Death to Israel!' 'Death to America!' Iran has said it wants to talk to America, but lays down endless conditions that it knows are nonnegotiable.

'Frankly, Iran thinks it's on a roll,' I was told over lunch recently by one of the most experienced of American diplomats.

He had been a leading Middle East negotiator for three administrations: 'America has got rid of Iran's chief Middle East enemy Saddam and the Iranians now believe that the U.S. can't attack them militarily because of the mess in Iraq, military "overstretch", and public opinion.

'You have to try and convince Iran that if it doesn't play ball over its nuclear weapons programme (and it's nonsense for it to keep insisting that it's only for peaceful nuclear power), Israel will attack if the Americans won't.

'Iran's President Ahmadinejad has promised to "wipe Israel off the map" and if Israel feels its very existence is in danger if Iran gets its nuclear bomb, it won't wait for U.S. permission to attack. When Saddam built a nuclear facility at Osirak in 1981 the Israelis didn't ask for American permission when they went in and destroyed it.' The problem in dealing with Iran is that according to another negotiator I talked to 'they are the most sinuous and deceitful negotiators I've ever come across.

It's partly that their mindset operates under TAQQIYA, religiously sanctioned deception, which is a particularly strong strain in Shia theology.

SHIITES, a minority in Islam, have always been oppressed by outsiders and by the dominant Sunnis of the Arab world, so they've always used TAQQIYA (frankly, telling lies) in order to survive'.

So even if the Iranians agree to cease meddling in Iraq, to cease supplying weapons (and even manpower) to the Shia militias in the south who are killing our servicemen and women, and to cease sponsoring terror in Lebanon and Israel, I'm afraid we're still on to a loser. As long as the current regime exists, Iran simply cannot be trusted.

Bush's 'change of direction' and Blair's assertion that Iran must be 'engaged' will, I'm afraid, end up with massive loss of face and another proof to gleeful Iran that it is still, triumphantly, 'on a roll'.

Load-Date: November 15, 2006

At Ground Zero in Beirut, baby waits to be born

Hindustan Times

July 31, 2006 Monday 11:47 AM EST

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Length: 522 words

Byline: Hindustan Times

Dateline: NEW DELHI, India

Body

NEW DELHI, India, July 31 -- FADIYA AL Ahmar will deliver her first baby in war-ravaged Beirut on Tuesday. Mercifully, Israel has announced its air strikes would stop for 48 hours, after its pounding snuffed out 54 civilian lives on Sunday.

"But you can never trust the Israelis," wails the 30-year-old, unsure of her safety at the Lebanese Red Cross shelter. "Whenever I hear Israeli jets fly, I run from the second to the ground floor. I am also taking pills to calm myself, knowing they could be dangerous in my present state. I am so frightened; my milk will be poison for my baby." Fadiya had left home in southern Beirut on July 12, hoping to be safe with her mother in Bourjel Brajni. On her way, the dreaded Israeli jets and aircrafts darkened the sky. And before she knew it, she was in war zone.

"Bombs were falling everywhere and I somehow managed to reach my mother." But Bourjel Brajni was nowhere as safe as she thought because the Hezbollah launches its attacks from there. She and her mother managed to survive in a makeshift shelter for seven days. "The Red Cross people said they couldn't come because our area was too unsafe." But none of this makes the Shiite woman blame the Hezbollah for her troubles. For her, "the cancer of Israel, spreading through the entire Arab world, is responsible for mine and all my countrymen's troubles."

Fatima's carpenter husband has left her for a day to check if anything remains of their house in southern Beirut. "For nine months this baby was our dream. We were making a beautiful room for him but now everything is lost." With some regret, she continues, "I was born and raised in war and now my child is being born into it. I pray to Allah that Hasan Nasrallah wins this war and that Israel and America leave us in peace. If that doesn't happen, I will be forced to leave all I have and take my baby to somewhere safe, even outside Lebanon."

But Fatima feels the crisis has unified her country. Her doctor, Dr William Mouwad, and most of the Lebanese Red Cross volunteers are Christians.

Fatima says they have proved you don't need to be of the "same blood to stand by someone. I hope there is never any discrimination in this country and we all continue to be as patriotic as we are now." Dr. Mouwad has conducted four abortions in the last two weeks, "because of the mental and physical state of these women." But it's not just the arrival of Fatima's baby that is worrying him.

Most shelters have 20-25 people sleeping in the same room without bathrooms. "And if one child gets diarrhoea, everyone could get it," he says. Moreover there are few medicines, and the incalculable psychological damage. "Just yesterday there was this girl in my clinic who broke down while watching the news on TV. She said the girl on

At Ground Zero in Beirut, baby waits to be born

the screen was her sister. It's too early to see the results of this war, but I can tell you it is one of the biggest disasters I have ever seen."

Meanwhile, all national flags flew at half-mast in Beirut and banks and governmental institutions remained shut to mourn the deaths in Qana.

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Load-Date: August 7, 2006

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President to be charged

The Leader-Post (Regina, Saskatchewan)

January 24, 2007 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: CANADA & THE WORLD; Pg. A3

Length: 232 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, CanWest News Service

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM -- The often sleazy universe of Israeli politics suffered another heavy blow to its reputation Tuesday when the country's attorney general announced that he intends to charge President Moshe Katsav with sex crimes including rape.

Six separate indictments against Israel's 61-year-old ceremonial head of state are to be handed down as the Israeli government reels from severe domestic criticism over its handling of the war against Hezbollah in Lebanon last summer.

Legal authorities also continued to investigate separate corruption allegations against Prime Minister Ehud Olmert involving the sale of his home and helping friends when a bank was privatized. Olmert's former justice minister, Haim Ramon, was recently forced to resign after being charged with forcing a soldier to kiss him.

The charges to be brought against Katsav by Attorney General Menahem Mazuz involve sexual harassment and sexual coercion, breaches of trust, obstruction of justice and illegally accepting gifts in return for favours.

If convicted on all counts he could face more than 20 years in jail.

Four women who worked for Katsav since he became president in 2000 or earlier, when he was Israel's tourism minister, have accused him of sexual improprieties.

Images of Katsav's young accusers, with their faces blurred, have appeared in the Israeli media for some time and were widely published again late Tuesday.

Load-Date: January 24, 2007

Dilemma over the war against terror

Aberdeen Press and Journal

August 17, 2006 Thursday

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Section: Pg. 19

Length: 209 words

Body

If Tony BLAIR ever wonders just how deep public disquiet goes over the war on terror, he need look no further than north-east NHS worker Suzy Wighton.

Suzy was awarded the MBE for her work in Palestinian refugee camps, but she plans to hand it back because of her disgust about the methods used by Britain to further the battle against terrorism.

It is a drastic step to take, but perhaps it was the only way Suzy felt her voice would be heard. The destruction of Lebanon and the agonising delay in the implementation of the ceasefire turned out to be the final straw for her.

The fact that Suzy has had to weigh up this decision for several years is an example of the deep dilemma many ordinary people have over the way in which the war is being pursued.

On the one hand, the extremists have to be rooted out to protect us all, but many find that hard to justify when seeing the mounting death toll of innocent men, women and children. The irony is that while much time, effort and money is being spent on pursuing extremists in Afghanistan, trying to keep the lid on a civil war in Iraq and assisting the Israeli fight against Hezbollah, the most immediate threat to British civilian lives appears to be from within these shores and our own society right now.

Load-Date: August 18, 2006

Democracies have to be held to the highest standards

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

August 15, 2006 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. A14

Length: 216 words

Byline: Ran Guin, Vancouver Sun

Body

Re: Vatican fails the test of moral credibility, Peter McKnight, Aug. 12

When Peter McKnight suggests that Hezbollah's actions are tantamount to premeditated murder, he is on safe ground. However, in the next breath, he grievously implies that the regular intentional firing of rockets into civilian areas, causing the deaths of hundreds of innocent women and children, amounts simply to "criminal negligence causing death." Just because the Israelis were officially targeting an apparent enemy does little to mitigate what would more accurately be portrayed as mass murder.

The Israelis are admittedly in a difficult situation, dealing with an enemy that is not clearly defined and thus difficult to hold to account -- either by the populace or by the international community. This difficulty, however, does not mean that we may abandon our duty to make elected states answerable.

Do we measure governments by even lower standards than we do criminals? On the contrary, if we wish to rant about the moral superiority of democracies, we must hold them even more scrupulously to account. If not, the public inherits responsibility for the actions of the state -- jeopardizing, in some eyes, the status of civilians themselves as innocent bystanders. So much for the moral high ground.

Ran Guin

Vancouver

Graphic

Photo: Ran Guin

Load-Date: August 15, 2006

Democracies have to be held to the highest standards

End of Document

Iran leader rejects UN deadline over nuke plans

Cape Times (South Africa)

February 22, 2007 Thursday

e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 233 words

Body

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad pledged to push ahead with the country's nuclear programme, and as a UN deadline expired said his people would not bow to intimidation.

Israeli aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, drawing anti-aircraft fire from the army, a military spokesman said. Israeli Defence Minister Amir Peretz has said the overflights are necessary to monitor continuing arms smuggling by Hezbollah.

Two women were killed and 28 other people injured when a five-storey building collapsed in a popular Istanbul suburb. Istanbul mayor Kadir Topbas speculated that the columns holding up the building might have been weakened by the heat from a bakery oven.

A Japanese woman was convicted of stealing a prized French bulldog and then throwing the pet to its death from her sixth-floor balcony when she was caught by the owner. The woman was given a suspended one-year prison sentence.

Seven UN police officers were injured in violence in the East Timor capital Dili, the UN envoy said. Police arrested 79 people.

India and Pakistan vowed to stay committed to their peace process despite attempts to derail it and agreed to jointly investigate the bombing of a cross-border train that killed 68 people.

Nearly eight out of 10 or 77.5% South Korean women believe they need cosmetic surgery to improve their looks, a survey showed. Only 20.4% disapproved while 47.3% had undergone plastic surgery.

Load-Date: May 23, 2007

'Dark Age' insurgents use modern tools to win

The Toronto Star

December 23, 2006 Saturday

Copyright 2006 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A22

Length: 233 words

Byline: Olivia Ward, Toronto Star

Body

The Taliban are often looked on as throwbacks to the Dark Ages, with extreme restrictions on women, and forcibly imposed religious rules.

But they are also making use of modern technology to win victories in Afghanistan over NATO forces, says Canadian military expert Sunil Ram.

"To put it in perspective, all you have to do is look at the videos posted to the Internet from Afghanistan," he says. "The enemy is always watching. They film (troops in battle), wait, watch and plan their strategy. It shows their sophistication and ability to learn."

The Taliban have also replaced pack animals with motorbikes, making faster progress on the steep mountain roads of southern Afghanistan, where Canadian and other troops are posted.

"(Intelligence reports) talked about Taliban on motorbikes as far back as 2003. Thousands of heavy-duty Japanese bikes were going into Pakistan, and not reappearing on the open market. They drifted over the border and disappeared. They're fast and hard to detect."

And, Ram added, the Taliban have learned from the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, which fought a recent war with Israel.

"They developed efficient tank-killing techniques against the Israeli forces, using advanced weapons. These have been transferred into Iraq and Afghanistan. When you put all the pieces together, and the Taliban are recruiting and training from Pakistan, there is nothing to stop them."

Load-Date: December 23, 2006

Bomb Shelter Saves Patients in Israeli Hospital

The Forward

August 4, 2006

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Section: News; Pg. 6

Length: 1116 words

Byline: Vita Bekker

Dateline: NAHARIYA, Israel

Body

Some might call it luck that the worst rocket attack on Nahariya's Western Galilee Hospital in 25 years caused no casualties. But Deputy Director Moshe Daniel insists it was foresight that saved lives in the July 28 attack.

That's because slightly more than two weeks earlier, 180 patients - expectant mothers, newborns, children, the elderly and the bed ridden - were evacuated to the hospital's bombproof underground shelter, the only one of its kind in an Israeli hospital.

Their move, made after Daniel was warned by the army at 1 a.m. of imminent rocket barrages, took place just 24 hours after Hezbollah's cross-border raid and its kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers. Since then, the fighting between Israel and Hezbollah has resulted in tens of rockets landing just outside the hospital's fence, their shrapnel hurled inside the campus.

"Hezbollah has been targeting the hospital since the beginning, but we've been prepared for this," said 60-year-old Daniel, a veteran of three Israeli wars, in an interview. The hospital, about six miles from Lebanon, can be seen clearly from the border, he added.

The preparation paid off last Friday, when the institution took its first direct hit. At 4:50 p.m., a rocket slammed through the window of the eye department on the surgical wing's fourth floor. The explosion blew off doors, twisted wall panels, scattered glass shards and left piles of rubble - more than a foot deep in some places.

The force of the blast reached as far as the first floor of a nearby wing, strewing glass fragments on the bed where an on-duty doctor was napping during a break.

The narrow escape from tragedy grabbed media attention both in Israel and abroad. Interest was especially strong because the hospital, based in this Mediterranean coastal city of 50,000, has become the front-line medical facility for soldiers and residents of the surrounding Western Galilee. The institution has treated 959 Israelis, including more than 60 soldiers, since the fighting began.

The underground warren of shelters, though never used before, had been prepared decades in advance. The idea was born in 1981, when three employees were wounded after rockets hit the hospital, landing near the maternity ward. Fortunately, the female patients were in the dining room at the time. Some returned to find their beds covered in glass and shrapnel.

Bomb Shelter Saves Patients in Israeli Hospital

The 450-bed underground complex was Daniel's brainchild. He modeled it after a similar facility at a hospital in Buffalo, N.Y., his wife's hometown, from where he said patients were evacuated during harsh snowstorms. In Nahariya, he thought, it could be used against missiles or bombs.

"We thought we'd never have to use it. But we kept it nice and clean," said Daniel, who had been decorated during his military service for treating 60 soldiers under fire. "We could go on for months in here," he added.

The government-funded hospital - initially built on an old olive grove and designed as a childbirth center - created the underground labyrinth of rooms and tunnels in the early 1990s at a cost of about \$4.5 million. But until now, it's only been used for linen deliveries and for garbage pickups, as well as for disaster simulation drills.

The complex has about a dozen rooms - some as small as classrooms and others as large as lecture halls. Several are protected against chemical and biological attacks.

The tunnels connecting the rooms are big enough for ambulances to ferry patients from a helicopter landing pad outside. Unlike the air conditioned rooms, the tunnels feel warm and stifling, their faded yellow walls stained and their floors cracked. Pipes from which water, gas and electricity flow are located inside the thick walls.

The underground facility includes a crowded emergency area with barely any room to maneuver around its 20 beds. Eight bombproof operating rooms are located right above, protected by 23-inch-thick reinforced concrete walls.

Downstairs, most patients fill a large room as big as an Olympic-size pool. The wards are separated by only a thin partition marked by a printed sign. The curtainless beds provide little privacy.

The room is full of activity. Some patients chatter loudly with visiting relatives, while others quietly read newspapers or sleep under blue blankets. Jewish and Arab patients lie next to each other, as they do above the ground during less intense times.

Boris Naor, whose face is dotted with stitches and drying wounds while his arm and leg are wrapped with bandages, said he feels safer underground. Naor was injured when a rocket fell through the roof of his house and into his living room. Four chips of concrete from his living room wall had to be extracted from his arm.

A nearby room holds hospital staff members' children who have nowhere to go because summer camps have been canceled. Inside, infants play in cribs while small children sit around low tables or on mattresses, some clapping and singing. They've been entertained in recent weeks by an Irish folk singer and a clown.

Close by, a makeshift pediatric ward attempts a cheery atmosphere, with colorful walls and bed sheets and animal-shaped helium balloons bobbing near the ceiling. While the children inside play, some visiting parents express discomfort with their being underground.

"There isn't enough air or light down here, and you can't tell day from night," said Shwokat Mary, 34, a resident of a border Druze village. He was visiting his 6-year-old son, who injured his right hand after falling as he tried to escape a rocket that landed in the village.

But comfortable or not, the shelters have spared lives.

While many northern Israeli residents have fled south for safety, hospital staff members risk their lives daily just to get to and from work. Spokeswoman Judith Jochowitz had to stop her car in an Arab village one evening and hide in between buildings after rockets flew over it. A maternity nurse, amid rocket attacks one day, abandoned her car and dove into a nearby ditch.

To help reduce staffers' stress, a center set up at the hospital by volunteers offers them massages, zone therapy, shiatsu and other treatments in a room filled with lighted and scented candles.

Bomb Shelter Saves Patients in Israeli Hospital

But for Daniel, who himself had a near miss with a rocket while driving, those hardships are anything but discouraging. His biggest worry, he said, is that Israel will cease its operations in Lebanon, widely supported among the Israeli population, because of international criticism.

"I'm sorry about what happened in Qana," Daniel said, referring to the southern Lebanese town where dozens of civilians were killed this week after an Israeli air strike. "But I hope it won't result in us stopping our fighting against Lebanon's Al Qaeda."

Graphic

IMAGE

Load-Date: August 11, 2006

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A changing society

The Guardian - Final Edition

August 21, 2006 Monday

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Section: GUARDIAN FEATURES PAGES; Pg. 6

Length: 1308 words

Body

Tehran is a city of elegant parks. And none is more serene than Sae Park, off Vali Asr Avenue, one of the capital's main thoroughfares. Known as the "lovers' park", it is where young and not-so-young couples sit at dusk beneath a canopy of fragrant chinar, cypress and pine trees, exchanging gossip and intimacies, sharing ice creams and swapping phone numbers.

According to Reza, 27, and his girlfriend, things are more easy-going socially than they were 10 years ago. They attribute the change to the presidency of Mohammad Khatami, Ahmadinejad's reformist predecessor. Despite Ahmadinejad's conservative instincts, the new government has been unable to put the street culture genie back in the bottle, Reza says.

"There's more personal freedom. You don't get harassed like you used to. The young people are changing the older people's attitude. They have to accept it - they have no choice, so they go with the flow." And in a country of 70m, where two-thirds of the population is under 30, the trend appears irreversible.

The present hardline government is not popular among many inhabitants of Sae Park. They complain about its failure to expand and diversify an economy that is roughly 80% state-controlled. Younger people worry about careers and jobs, about the difficulties of foreign travel and internet censorship, about the lack of things to do and places to meet. Leila, 27, says she would like to go to parties, to clubs; she would like to sing. "But they won't allow female singers, did you know that? Female vocalists are banned. They say they are too alluring to men. Poor men! They have weak brains!"

Yussuf, 63, has a different perspective. "I was a metallurgist until I retired. I trained in the US during the Shah's time. I worked all my life. But now I have to take part-time jobs because my pension isn't enough. This government is no good, they're all no good." Yussuf has another complaint: the government is sending money to Hizbullah in Lebanon that would be better spent at home, he says. "First you must look after your own people."

His friend, Ali, agrees. He wants to know into whose pockets Iran's record oil revenue is going. "Some of them (the governing elite) are buying cars for \$100,000. Think of that! Did they get that money by working?"

All the same, Ahmadinejad's personal brand of nationalist populism, typified by his defiant handling of the nuclear issue, has many admirers in Sae Park and beyond. "Why don't they just leave us alone and let us live under our own rules?" asks a 32-year-old engineer.

"Iran has the right to nuclear power," chanted a crowd in Ardabil, in northern Iran, last week. During a series of nine rallies addressed by Ahmadinejad, the sentiments expressed by ordinary people are the same. Western attempts to deny Iran nuclear technology are "an obvious attempt to keep us down, like they want to keep all the developing

A changing society

countries down," says Majid, a 30-year-old teacher in Tehran. "We don't want nuclear weapons. But we want to build our country. What's wrong with that?"

Iranians may be cut off from the modern western world in many ways, but they are well versed in the long history of western intervention in Persia. From the Treaty of Golestan in 1813, by which Russia took control of Iran's Caucasus territories, to the 1953 CIA-led coup that toppled Iran's democratically elected prime minister, Mohammad Mosaddeq, from the US embassy hostage siege to the Iran-Contra scandal, a tale of national subjugation and degradation forms the context in which Iran looks at the west. And Iranians hear, in derogatory western talk of "mad mullahs", an echo of a 19th-century British diplomat's sneering reference to "incomprehensible orientals". It smacks of disrespect.

And now, with Washington's neo-conservatives on one side and Ahmadinejad's neo-conservatives on the other, this mutual antagonism and misunderstanding is coming to a head. In some analyses, it has brought the two countries to the brink of military conflict. If the US attacks, experts say it is likely to take the form of "precision strikes" on the four main nuclear facilities and possibly Iranian armed forces and Revolutionary Guard bases, too. But Pentagon planners know Iran has the potential to retaliate, as the unexpected success of Hizbullah in Lebanon has shown. This week the US ambassador to Iraq highlighted what he said were Iranian attempts to push Shia militants into attacks on coalition forces in Iraq. And Baghdad is only one possible theatre for Iranian reprisals should the US pull the trigger.

Mohammad Saeidi is a practical man. Sidestepping the political, ideological and historical aspects of the nuclear dispute with the west, the vice-president of Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation is focused on a set of problems that must be solved logically if the country and its people are to develop to their full potential. "The country's oil and gas reserves will last a maximum of another 25 or 30 years," he says. "Therefore we have to provide other resources."

About 7,000 people work in Iran's atomic establishment - principally in Tehran and at the Bushehr, Arak, Isfahan and Natanz complexes. Saeidi says there are plans to build 20 nuclear power stations in all, at a cost of \$24-\$25bn. The first, at Bushehr, built with Russian help, is expected to come on stream next year. Saeidi says that in going nuclear Iran is only following the example of other countries with growing populations and rising energy demand. Nuclear power is cheaper, and its raw component, naturally occurring uranium, is in plentiful supply in Iran's central deserts.

It is the cascade of 164 centrifuges constructed at Natanz that has drawn most international attention since Ahmadinejad announced last April that Iran had mastered the processes for uranium enrichment. It was Natanz that finally prompted the US to join with European negotiators in offering the compromise incentives package that is now on the table. But like Larijani, Saeidi stresses the research stage nature of this work - and the ongoing inspections of Natanz and other plants by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

To try to divert nuclear material for bomb-making purposes without the UN knowing would be "impossible", he says, and if a deal is struck, Tehran would be ready to reintroduce spot checks. But, in any case, bomb-making is not Iran's aim, Saeidi says - even if it had the capacity, which it does not. Overall, independent experts tend to agree that, at present, Iran does not have the wherewithal to build a nuclear weapon. But that does not mean it will not in future.

Saeidi denies that Iran kept its facilities at Natanz secret, as claimed in 2003 by the Bush administration. He says there was no legal necessity to notify the IAEA before nuclear material had entered the plant. "Natanz is a very large factory. You cannot hide it. It wasn't secret."

He also denies receiving help from Pakistan, now or in the past, despite a spate of disclosures concerning the proliferation network run by the Pakistani scientist, AQ Khan. "We don't have any relation to Pakistan on the nuclear issue. All the equipment and components we are using are made by Iranian companies and factories."

Needless to say, such statements are disputed by the US and other western governments who suspect that Iran may be running a hidden, parallel uranium enrichment programme using more advanced centrifuges. They worry it is also experimenting with plutonium reprocessing. But all such claims are met with a flat denial.

A changing society

"We don't have any secret programme. We don't have any secrets," Saeidi says. Iran does not want the bomb, he and other officials insist; and it has no plans to build one. What it does want is a plentiful future supply of nuclear energy to fuel the rise of a new, more powerful nation - and in this ambition, it will brook no obstacles.

Load-Date: August 22, 2006

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Heat on for Iran nuclear answer; Washington observed

Australian Financial Review

August 18, 2006 Friday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; International News; Pg. 56

Length: 1108 words

Byline: Tony Walker. Tony Walker is the AFR's international editor.

Body

Bernard Lewis, the Princeton Islamist scholar, reminded people in a Wall Street Journal column last week of the significance of August 22 in the Islamic calendar.

This was the day on which the Prophet Mohammed, according to believers, mounted a winged horse for a night flight to the "farthest mosque", taken to mean Jerusalem, before proceeding on to heaven and back.

August 22, therefore, is a day of rare significance in the Islamic firmament.

Lewis's column was prompted by an undertaking from Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad that Iran's response to demands that it freeze its nuclear enrichment program would be revealed on August 22.

"This might well be deemed an appropriate date for the apocalyptic ending of Israel and if necessary of the world," Lewis writes. "It is far from certain that Mr Ahmadinejad plans any such cataclysmic events precisely for August 22. But it would be wise to bear the possibility in mind."

Well, it's reassuring to hear that it is "far from certain" that Iran intends to bring an end to the world as we know it on August 22, but Lewis's apocalyptic spectre can't be dismissed longer-term given the risks of a Middle Eastern nuclear arms race.

Henry Sokolski, executive director of the Nonproliferation Policy Education Centre and a hawk on Iran's nuclear ambitions, likens the present moment historically to the Treaty of Versailles that shaped post-World War I Europe.

A more recent international crisis that brought the world to the brink of a nuclear apocalypse, and one that seems more relevant, is the Cuban missile crisis of 1961 in which US president John Kennedy faced down Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, thus averting a nuclear showdown.

The present American leadership might pay attention to the Kennedy experience in which a first-term president had the resolve to restrain warmongering generals predisposed to strike pre-emptively at Cuban missile sites to allow diplomacy, backed by a credible military threat, to take its course.

Interestingly, it's the generals, not the politicians, who are especially reluctant about the military option on this occasion, acknowledging the difficulties involved.

Heat on for Iran nuclear answer Washington observed

Whether a nuclear stand-off with Iran provides the catalyst for wider regional conflict - or even World War III (which, according to Newt Gingrich, has already started) - dealing with the Iranian nuclear threat is by far the most serious challenge facing the international community.

It is also the most pressing.

The war in Lebanon provided a distraction, momentarily, and Iran might have used its Hezbollah proxies to bring about this outcome, but by the end of this month (August 31), the Security Council is obliged to deal with the Iranian nuclear issue under Resolution 1696.

That resolution demands Iran suspend, by August 31, "all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, including research and development, to be verified by the International Atomic Energy Agency."

Failing such compliance Iran could become subject to "economic and diplomatic" sanctions, including restrictions on the movements of Iranian officials, a ban on the sale of nuclear-related technology to the Islamic Republic and constraints on financial transactions "associated with proliferation activities".

These relatively mild sanctions would form the basis for further action, according to an unspecified timetable at this stage, leading ultimately to the possible use of force under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

One would trust that the use of force would be a last-worst option under any unfolding scenario and that hasty and precipitate action, as in the case of Iraq, be avoided at all costs.

Political timetables should not dictate what might transpire in what is unarguably a very significant challenge to a nuclear non-proliferation regime that has served the world tolerably well for more than a quarter of a century.

Iran's refusal to abandon its nuclear enrichment ambitions risks not simply a regional nuclear arms race, but also the unravelling of a rules-based non-proliferation regime.

It is impossible to exaggerate the risks involved in failure of a diplomatic process. What is required is determined, measured diplomacy in which the five permanent members of the Security Council remain united in their insistence that Iran stop its enrichment activities clearly aimed at achieving a nuclear weapons capability, whatever Iranian protestations to the contrary.

It was mildly encouraging this week that China's Assistant Foreign Minister, Cui Tiankai, on a visit to Tehran, told Iran's nuclear negotiator that China hoped Iran would respond to a June 6 package of incentives in a "positive way".

This package included assistance to Iran in acquiring light-water nuclear reactors as opposed to heavy-water reactors used to produce weapons-grade plutonium; the lifting of some US sanctions such as restrictions on the supplies of Boeing spare parts; and the possibility of joining the World Trade Organisation.

Iran's most recent responses have not been encouraging. Iran's Foreign Minister, Manouchehr Mottaki, this week described demands for a suspension of nuclear enrichment activities as "illogical".

Ahmadinejad was, predictably, more combative, referring this week to Security Council resolution 1669 as a "stick" and vowing that Iranians would "not bend under the language of force". He was speaking at a rally to celebrate Hezbollah's "victory" over Israel.

Hubris is not entirely absent, one suspects, from Iran's political calculations these days and herein lie additional risks and challenges.

So, what should the world do, and what position specifically should Australia adopt on an issue that has implications for both our trading and security interests? Iran is a relatively significant trading partner with whom we have full diplomatic relations.

Heat on for Iran nuclear answer Washington observed

Australia's support for a sanctions regime is axiomatic, some ill-informed reportage and commentary notwithstanding, but policymakers might also consider using their much ballyhooed leverage in Washington to push their US friends towards the desirability of talking directly to Iran.

The US has taken a half-step in that direction by agreeing to participate in discussions with the EU-3 (France Germany and Britain) and Iran. It might consider taking another half-step and engaging Tehran, instead of pursuing a policy of further isolating the Islamic Republic.

It might be too late to shift course, given the fact that a Security Council resolution is now on the table, but the seriousness of the Iranian issue dictates that all possible avenues are exhausted, including discussion of security guarantees, before there is any hasty talk of resort to force.

Graphic

PHOTO: Victory celebration . . . Iranian women rallying in Tehran hold posters of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah. Photo: AP

Load-Date: April 5, 2012

End of Document

Stay in Touch

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

August 18, 2006 Friday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; Stay in Touch; Pg. 20

Length: 996 words

Byline: Jacqueline Maley & Alexa Moses

Body

Hollywood is doing its bit for the war effort

NICOLE KIDMAN and 83 of her Hollywood mates have denounced terrorism, 'cos it's, like, really bad?

In a move that has the international Muslim extremist community quaking in its boots, the group of high-profile luvvies has taken out a powerfully worded full-page advertisement in the Los Angeles Times calling for an end to the slaughter of innocents by nasty men belonging to organisations beginning with H. Take that, you terrorist punks!

The signatories include the chairman of News Corporation, Rupert Murdoch, the actors Michael Douglas, Dennis Hopper, Sylvester Stallone, Bruce Willis, Danny De Vito, Don Johnson, James Woods, Kelly Preston, Patricia Heaton and William Hurt, and various directors, including Ridley Scott and Michael Mann.

The ad singles out for special mention *Hezbollah* in Lebanon and Hamas in Palestine.

"We the undersigned are pained and devastated by the civilian casualties in Israel and Lebanon caused by terrorist actions initiated by terrorist organisations such as *Hezbollah* and Hamas," it reads.

"If we do not succeed in stopping terrorism around the world, chaos will rule and innocent people will continue to die. We need to support democratic societies and stop terrorism at all costs."

Last we heard, the UN-brokered ceasefire between *Hezbollah* and Israel was still holding, so the ad must have worked. No word yet on any mass al-Qaeda surrenders, but we'll keep you posted.

NOT ON THE ROAD AGAIN!

Guitar fans over the age of 45, start salivating now. Mr "Slow Hand, Fast Car" is coming to Australia for the first time in 17 years, and this time we hope no one will let him behind the wheel of a car.

We are referring, of course, to the guitarist Eric Clapton, of Cream and the Yardbirds fame, who was clocked doing 216 kmh in France in 2004, and lost his right to drive in that country.

The promoter Michael Coppel has announced that Clapton will tour Australia for the first time since 1990 and perform in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth. He will play at the Sydney Entertainment Centre on Monday, January 29, and we sincerely hope someone else is driving him to the gig.

Stay in Touch

LOOK AT ME, LOOK AT ME

The Honourable David Ernest Oldfield, soon to be retiring from politics, yesterday sent the following email to every person who works at the NSW Parliament:

"Dear Fellow Parliament House Dwellers, Like me or hate me, at 8.30 on Channel Seven on Thursday night 17 August and for a number of Thursdays following that, you'll be able to enjoy a good laugh at the shenanigans and tribal politics of Celebrity Survivor. For the record, I do not think of myself as a celebrity, though some of my fellow contestants certainly are celebrities, so join us all and watch the pampered struggle as primitives. In short, I believe this show may be seen as Lost meets Survivor meets Gilligan's Island. Best regards, David Oldfield."

We can't be certain, but we suspect that this correspondence may herald the beginning of the end of Western civilisation.

HISTORY WARS

Concerned that postmodernist hippies were poisoning the minds of our children, John Howard kicked off his history seminar yesterday by stumping up a \$100,000 annual prize to be awarded "in recognition of an outstanding publication or body of work that contributes significantly to an understanding of Australian history".

Come question time, and Labor leader and former historian Kim Beazley decided to quiz Howard on his own past.

"I refer the Prime Minister to the history summit being held in Canberra today and the importance of teaching pivotal facts. Given the Prime Minister is so interested in history, when interest rates hit 21.39 per cent in 1982, who was treasurer?"

Among those chuckling away at the rare sight of Howard being stumped by a good 'un was the Treasurer, Peter Costello.

His giggles soon turned into perplexity when Jackie Kelly leapt to his defence a little later.

The Labor Whip Roger Price was too clever by half by asking Mr Costello to comment on why chicken slaughter statistics had increased under the Howard Government. (Labor has branded Costello chicken man for failing to challenge Howard - geddit?)

Kelly, who last week was branding Costello a North Shore toff, rose and demanded the question be ruled out of order because it was "pure poess".

Normally it is Beazley who sends people scrambling for the dictionary.

However, the Speaker must have understood Kelly, because he accepted her argument and ruled the question out.

Sugar and spice and all things nice ... grrrr!

DESPITE the right-on roots of Sesame Street (the South African version of the show even has an HIV-positive character), most of the Muppets on the strip are blokes. There's Elmo, Cookie Monster, and Ernie and Bert.

But this week a new girl landed on the block. Is she a scientist? A taxidermist? A wannabe film director in the vein of Sofia Coppola? Nope, Abby Cadabby is a fairy with frothy pink pigtails and a pretty turquoise frock, and she's baffling America as to whether she's a mushy marketing opportunity or a third-wave feminist.

As any Muppette knows, getting a gig on Sesame Street is tough, and keeping it is tougher. The females currently struggling to make it on the strip include spunky Zoe and the bilingual Rosita, and they're nowhere in the race against the heavyweights - even the Count is more famous than frumpy Prairie Dawn, who plays Cookie Monster's killjoy sidekick on the Letter of the Day segment. Dig further back in Sesame history and the trend continues with a string of pathetic Muppettes who weren't pretty enough to make the cut, including monster Lulu and bespectacled Elizabeth. Both were homely, and both were ditched by producers after a few seasons.

Stay in Touch

However, Sesame's producers say Abby has caught the fancy of the kiddie focus groups already, meaning a pretty face and a demure nature may be the key to cracking the Sesame glass ceiling.

Stay tuned for the catfight between Abby and a jealous Zoe in the street.

Graphic

THREE PHOTOS: Abby Cadabby meets Oscar the Grouch. Photo: New York Times Pop a shirt on, hon ... dancer Katie Ripley blocks traffic pondering her goosebumps, as she stars in a Sydney Dance Company television ad for the ballet Underland. Photo courtesy of the Sydney Dance Company

Load-Date: July 17, 2007

End of Document

Sheik's bid to seize Mufti title

Sunday Telegraph (Australia)

April 8, 2007 Sunday

Regional Edition

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Section: LOCAL; Pg. 7

Length: 255 words

Byline: CLAIR WEAVER

Body

MATP

THE Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC) will oppose any move by controversial cleric Sheik Taj Eldeen Alhilaly to register the title of Mufti for himself.

Sheik Alhilaly, who is expected to be stripped of the title by his fellow imams, is reportedly trying to head off the move by setting up his own Islamic organisation.

AFIC president Ikebal Patel said the move was outrageous and would be rejected by the Muslim community.

"It's like Fred Nile trying to register the title of Cardinal. It's so far from leftfield," Mr Patel said.

AFIC took the first step towards severing ties with Sheik Alhilaly last year when it stopped paying his stipend.

It is now awaiting a decision by the Council of Imams on whether Australia should have a mufti, which will formally end the sheik's tenure.

Mr Patel said Sheik Alhilaly had alienated many Muslims because of his controversial comments.

"His salary was stopped last year when these issues arose," he said.

"We will be bound by the decision of the imams on whether Australia needs the position of mufti."

Egyptian-born Sheik Alhilaly outraged many by comparing Australian women to uncovered meat and joking about notorious Sydney gang rapes.

The 66-year-old imam then went on Egyptian television in January and attacked the West for being "oppressive".

He said immigrants had more right to live in Australia than "descendants of convicts".

Sheik Alhilaly is also facing a police investigation into the distribution of funds raised for victims of the Israel-Hezbollah war in Lebanon last year.

Sheik's bid to seize Mufti title

Load-Date: April 7, 2007

End of Document

PELOSI VISIT TO SYRIA IRKS BUSH; SPEAKER'S TRIP IS LATEST MOVE BY DEMOCRATS TO ASSERT INFLUENCE

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

April 4, 2007 Wednesday

SOONER EDITION

Copyright 2007 P.G. Publishing Co.

Section: WORLD; Pg. A-1

Length: 646 words

Byline: ZEINA KARAM, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: DAMASCUS, Syria

Body

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi mingled with Syrians in a market and made the sign of the cross at a Christian tomb yesterday in a visit to hard-line Syria that was criticized by President Bush.

Mr. Bush said the visit sends mixed signals to Syria's government, which his administration accuses of supporting terrorism. The United States says Syria allows Iraqi Sunni insurgents to operate from its territory, backs the Hezbollah and Hamas militant groups and is trying to destabilize the Lebanese government. Syria denies the allegations.

Ms. Pelosi's visit to Syria was the latest challenge to the White House by congressional Democrats, who are taking a more assertive role in influencing policy in the Middle East and the Iraq war. The Bush administration has resisted calls for direct talks to help ease the crisis in Iraq and make progress in the Israel-Palestinian peace process.

Soon after Ms. Pelosi's arrival in Damascus, Mr. Bush criticized her visit. "A lot of people have gone to see President Assad, ... and yet we haven't seen action. He hasn't responded," he told reporters at a Rose Garden news conference. "Sending delegations doesn't work. It's simply been counterproductive."

Ms. Pelosi, D- Calif., did not comment on Mr. Bush's remarks before heading from the airport to Damascus' historic Old City. She was scheduled to meet President Bashar Assad today.

Wearing a flowered head scarf and a black abaya robe, Ms. Pelosi visited the 8th-century Omayyad Mosque, shaking hands with Syrian women inside and watching men in a religion class sitting cross-legged on the floor.

She stopped at an elaborate tomb, said to contain the head of John the Baptist, and made the sign of the cross. About 10 percent of Syria's 18 million people are Christian.

At the nearby outdoor Bazouriyeh market, Syrians crowded around, offering her dried figs and nuts and chatting with her. She strolled past shops selling olive oil soaps, spices and herbs and, at one point, bought some coconut sweets and eyed jewelry and carpets.

PELOSI VISIT TO SYRIA IRKS BUSH SPEAKER'S TRIP IS LATEST MOVE BY DEMOCRATS TO ASSERT INFLUENCE

Democrats have argued that the United States should engage its top rivals in the Mideast -- Iran and Syria -- to make headway in easing crises in Iraq, Lebanon and the Israeli-Arab peace process. Last year, the bipartisan Iraq Study Group recommended talks with the two countries.

Mr. Bush rejected the recommendations. But in February, the United States joined a gathering of regional diplomats in Baghdad that included Iran and Syria for talks about Iraq.

Visiting Monday in neighboring Lebanon, Ms. Pelosi shrugged off White House criticism of her trip to Syria, noting that Republican lawmakers on Sunday met with Mr. Assad without comment from the Bush administration. "I think that it was an excellent idea for them to go," she said. "And I think it's an excellent idea for us to go as well."

She said she hoped to rebuild lost confidence between Washington and Damascus, and will tell Syrian leaders that Israel will talk peace with them only if Syria stops supporting Palestinian militants. She has said she will also talk to the Syrians about Iraq, their role in Lebanon and their support for the Hezbollah militant group.

"We have no illusions, but we have great hope," said Ms. Pelosi, who met earlier yesterday with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in the West Bank city of Ramallah.

Relations between the United States and Syria reached a low point in early 2005, when Washington withdrew its ambassador to Damascus to protest the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. Many Lebanese blamed Syria -- which had troops in Lebanon at the time -- for the assassination. Damascus denied involvement.

Washington has since succeeded in largely isolating Damascus, with its European and Arab allies shunning Mr. Assad. The last high-ranking U.S. official to visit Syria was then-Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage in January 2005.

Graphic

PHOTO: Hussein Malla/Associated Press: U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi enters inside the historic Omayyad Mosque during her tour of downtown Damascus, Syria, yesterday.

Load-Date: April 4, 2007

France will be put to test over Hezbollah

Belfast News Letter (Northern Ireland)

August 30, 2006 Wednesday

Ulster Edition

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Section: LETTERS; Pg. 23

Length: 177 words

Body

THAT Israel's security is now dependent on the French-led United Nations troops in southern Lebanon is ironic given France's Second World War Vichy government record of sending Jews to Nazi concentration camps.

Israeli troops went into Lebanon only after being attacked by Hezbollah, and two soldiers kidnapped. Having been denounced by many world governments, including France, the Israelis must now come to terms with the knowledge that their security is dependent on the capability of the French to disarm Hezbollah.

In 2004, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution that the Hezbollah terrorists be disarmed. And nothing has happened!

The pitifully slow arrival of French troops and the ambiguity around rules of engagement does not build confidence in the ceasefire holding. As weapons pour in from Iran and Syria to rearm the terrorists, the French, with their caustic criticism of the USA, will find their "grandstanding" fully tested.

The men, women and children of Israel will be the big losers if they fall short.

Councillor Robin Newton MLA DUP,

East Belfast

Load-Date: September 2, 2006

**The deadly game of power politics in Lebanon in hyregoes in hyregoes in
hyregoes**

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

August 1, 2006 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. A8

Length: 217 words

Byline: Ralph Rushton, Vancouver Sun

Body

Re: So, what other choice does Israel have?, Barbara Yaffe, July 29

Apparently I'm anti-Semitic despite some of my best friends being Jewish. Why? Because I disagree with the Israeli government, which seems hell-bent on destroying Lebanon's rebuilt infrastructure at a cost of many hundreds of lives.

When Barbara Yaffe's arguments in support of the Israeli administration's destructive policies start to look shaky, she rolls out the old chestnut: accusations of anti-Semitism. Well, I don't much care for Saudi Arabia's treatment of women, so I guess I'm anti-Islamic. While we're at it, I don't like the Pope's stance on birth control, so make me a hater of Catholics, too.

Should Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Ohmert invite Hezbollah for "tough talks"? Absolutely. It worked for the British government when it began a secret dialogue with the Irish Republican Army after 30 years of violence, and led to a lasting peace. It worked in South Africa when the apartheid government opened talks with the African National Congress and finally allowed one-man, one-vote.

It takes great political courage to do the unthinkable in order to resolve a lasting crisis. It takes moral and intellectual laziness to throw out glib accusations of racism and anti-Semitism at those whose opinions differ.

Ralph Rushton

Vancouver

Load-Date: August 1, 2006

France will be put to test over Hezbollah

Belfast News Letter (Northern Ireland)

August 30, 2006 Wednesday

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The men, women and children of Israel will be the big losers if they fall short.

Councillor Robin Newton MLA DUP,

East Belfast

Load-Date: September 11, 2006

Much too much; LETTERS

Daily Mail (London)

July 31, 2006 Monday

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Section: ED IRE; Pg. 57

Length: 245 words

Body

WITHOUT warning, the Harrier jets streak in low along the River Foyle, banking sharply over the Brandywell before unleashing their missiles at the sprawling Creggan estate.

The shock of the explosions is followed, for a few seconds, by an unearthly silence and then by the rumble of raining masonry and the screams of the wounded. Terrified men, women and children run in every direction but, as the jets turn for another attack, there is nowhere to hide.

A pall of black smoke indicates that a similar fate has befallen the Bogside and the air is heavy with the nauseating smell of roasting human flesh.

A suave RAF spokesman is already on the radio telling the world that only legitimate military targets were hit.

Preposterous, of course! At no time during Britain's dirty war against the IRA did the thought of bombing nationalist Derry ever cross even the most hawkish military mind, not even for a fraction of a second.

But this is precisely what is happening in southern Lebanon even as I write.

No one questions the Israelis' genuine fear of the indiscriminate Hezbollah rockets, nor challenges their right to take proportionate action.

What horrifies the world is the utter disproportionality of the Israelis' actions destroying entire villages, slaughtering children, cutting thousands off from the basic necessities of human life.

That, and the inherently racist assumption that every Israeli life is worth at least 10 Lebanese lives.

FERGUS MCGRATH, Drumcondra, Dublin 9

Load-Date: July 31, 2006

Inside Today

The Gazette (Montreal)

November 8, 2006 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A2

Length: 664 words

Byline: The Gazette

Body

United Church hopes it prays to advertise

The United Church launched a \$10.5-million campaign to bolster its dwindling congregations yesterday, featuring cheeky ads and a flashy new website. One print ad, to appear this month, shows a bobble-head Jesus on a dashboard, and asks readers to decide whether the idea is funny - or a "ticket to hell." Details, Page A17

Louvre to fete Quebec's 400th

The Louvre will mark the 400th anniversary of the founding of Quebec by lending 276 works in its collection to the province's museum of fine arts from June to October 2008, it was announced yesterday in Paris. Details, Page A13

ICAO: No money to Hezbollah

Money raised at a United Nations agency benefit concert for Lebanon next month won't fund reconstruction efforts by Hezbollah, the Shiite group Canada considers a terrorist organization, organizers said yesterday. Details, Page A7

Pimping pays big, court told

Luring young women into the sex trade has become so lucrative in Montreal, many criminals prefer that to dealing drugs, a police detective told a hearing yesterday for a former metro cop convicted of living off the avails of prostitution. Details, Page A8

Saddam appeals for unity

A subdued Saddam Hussein, sentenced to hang for crimes against humanity, walked into a courtroom yesterday for another case and called on warring Iraqis to let bygones be bygones. In sectarian violence, at least 14 people were killed when mortar shells struck a Baghdad cafe. Details, Page A22

Chemicals impair kids' brains

Industrial chemicals have impaired the brain development of children, knocked down IQs, shortened attention spans and triggered behaviour problems, says a new report that calls for better regulation of 201 chemicals with neurotoxic effects.

Inside Today

Details, Page A21

Hopeful harvest in West Bank

For six years, Jewish settlers would regularly attack Palestinian farmers during the harvest season. Now, the Israeli military, spurred by a Supreme Court ruling, is offering protection. Details, Page A22

Business

SkiBromont's bragging rights

With three new runs, SkiBromont now has the "largest lit ski area in North America," president Charles Desourdy said yesterday. "We make about 90 per cent of our snow. It's our biggest expense after salaries." Details, Page B1

VIPs turns out for Canon

Canon Canada Inc. opened a new office in St. Laurent yesterday in an event attended by politicians and hundreds of its clients and partners - and one Las Vegas entertainer. Details, Page B3

Sports

Roy heading to puck heaven

Patrick Roy will take the weekend off from shepherding his junior Quebec Remparts to savour his induction into the Hockey Hall of Fame after his stellar NHL goaltending career. Details, Page C1

Jackie Parker was CFL great

Skinny legs and all, Jackie Parker became one of the greatest CFL players of all time, leaving behind a legion of friends and fans who remembered him fondly yesterday after his death at age 74 from throat cancer. Details, Page C5

ARTS & LIFE

Mushrooms mushrooming

They're tasty. They're easy to cook. They're good for us. What's not to like about mushrooms? No wonder they're gaining in popularity. Details, Page D1

Artcirq performers hone skills

Members of the Nunavut circus troupe Artcirq have been participating in workshops in Montreal in what has been the first visit to the southern part of Canada by most of the performers. Details, Page D5

- today's columnists

The Tories have come a long way on the environment - all downhill.

BAGNALL, OPINION, A29

JAMES MENNIE on municipal finances:

Budget could push Park Ave. off course. MONTREAL, A8

L. IAN MacDONALD on climate change:

Tory-NDP deal could help both parties. OPINION, A29

PETER HADEKEL's En Ville:

Inside Today

ACE's Milton has hands full with decisions. BUSINESS, B1

LESLEY CHESTERMAN's Eater's Digest:

Goat-cheese-stuffed "postage stamps" recipe. LIFE, D3

JULIAN ARMSTRONG's Best Buys:

Local broccoli and spinach plentiful - and cheap. LIFE, D4

DOUG CAMILLI on St. Bono:

Irish rocker is ready to lecture Australian leader. ARTS, D7

Graphic

Photo: (Bobble-Head Jesus)

Load-Date: November 8, 2006

End of Document

Princeton student leaves friend behind in Lebanon

University Wire

August 4, 2006 Friday

Copyright 2006 The Daily Princetonian via U-Wire

Length: 660 words

Byline: By Julia Osellame, The Daily Princetonian; **SOURCE:** Princeton

Dateline: PRINCETON, N.J.

Body

Callie Lefevre sat down to breakfast and broke into tears. The carefree vacationers around her, the lavish breakfast before her -- it was just too much to handle after what had happened.

Her friends were still trapped.

Only hours earlier, Lefevre and her friend, Emily Norris, had arrived in Cyprus. The two young women, both sophomores at Princeton, had fled to the island nation from Beirut, where they had been studying Arabic for the summer. They had been evacuated by bus to Damascus, where they then caught a flight to Cyprus.

Norris and Lefevre were just two of several Princeton students trapped in Beirut when the Israel Defense Forces began their bombardment of Lebanon in retaliation for Hezbollah attacks across the border.

They joined thousands of Westerners traveling or living in the region who, over the course of the past three weeks, would seek a means to get out of the war zone.

This is the story of their journey.

The stirrings of war

It was supposed to be a day like any other. On Thursday, July 13, about two weeks into their six-week language program at the American University of Beirut, Norris and Lefevre were to go to class as they always did.

Though the sounds of bombs that woke Norris that morning were, of course, unsettling, they didn't seem to pose any direct threat, she recounted. People agreed that it would pass soon enough. It was the Middle East, after all. Violence was cyclical here. Just as the artillery shells and fighter planes came, they would eventually go away.

Lefevre, too, was unconcerned. Having been in Beirut two years earlier when a similar situation occurred and then quieted down, she went to class in a cheerful mood, ready to enjoy another day in Lebanon.

On campus, class proceeded as usual, until the students slowly realized the gravity of the looming crisis that was steadily unraveling around them. One professor did not arrive to class because the building he lived beside, home to Hezbollah's al-Manar television station, was bombed.

"Hopefully he's still alive," Norris said last week. Neither she nor any of her classmates had heard from their professor since July 12, the day before the bombing began.

Princeton student leaves friend behind in Lebanon

Still, Lefevre remained unconvinced of the threat of imminent danger. "Leaving seemed ridiculous to me," she remembered thinking. The university was a safe haven for the students in Beirut and anyone living off campus was told to move onto its grounds.

To Lefevre, this was just going to be another event that would add to an already incredible story of her time in Lebanon.

"I felt like we were living in the safest place in Lebanon," she said.

Though it still appeared safe to venture out to the hookah bars that night, the students' jokes and conversation were betrayed by an undertone of nervous laughter. Feelings were mixed. Some believed the growing conflict would end soon; others hoped that family farther south would be protected from the increasingly bold air strikes.

Then, Lefevre said, "it all started to change so quickly."

Waking up to bombs again on Friday morning was "probably the most frightening feeling in the world," Norris said.

Nevertheless, both young women went to class again that day. Students were there, but their professors were not. In a school meeting they were reassured that classes would begin again on Monday.

To calm everyone's jitters and pass the unoccupied time, Norris suggested that they all watch a Disney movie in Arabic. They turned on "The Lion King."

Later that day, in an email sent to Nancy Coffin, her first year Arabic teacher at Princeton, Lefevre said the break from class made the experience feel more like a North American snow day, and not the beginnings of a war in the Mideast.

Hopeful that the situation would resolve itself, Norris and Lefevre went to the beach with friends that afternoon and dinner in the evening. On the beach the girls suntanned and passed time while they admired the beauty of Beirut.

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Load-Date: August 4, 2006

Former Israeli Official Guilty of Sexual Misconduct

The New York Times
February 1, 2007 Thursday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 10

Length: 666 words

Byline: By GREG MYRE

Dateline: JERUSALEM, Jan. 31

Body

An Israeli court convicted a former justice minister, Haim Ramon, on Wednesday of charges that he forcibly kissed a young **female** soldier in a highly publicized case that added to the aura of scandal surrounding the country's leadership.

In the wake of the guilty verdict in the Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court, speculation was widespread that Prime Minister Ehud Olmert would soon reshuffle his cabinet.

Mr. Ramon resigned after he was indicted in August, and his duties were taken over by Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni on an interim basis. With Mr. Ramon's conviction, Mr. Olmert may seek broader changes in an attempt to re-energize his government, which has been dragged down by scandal and criticism of its handling of the war with **Hezbollah** in Lebanon last summer.

The court ruled a week after the president of Israel, Moshe Katsav, suspended himself for three months from his largely ceremonial post while prosecutors considered possible charges of rape and sexual assault. The Justice Ministry says such charges are likely, but prosecutors have not decided. Mr. Katsav has left his official residence in Jerusalem and is living in southern Israel.

Prosecutions of prominent figures on sexual misconduct charges had been rare in Israel's macho culture. But that changed in 1998 with the passage of a sexual harassment law. In recent years, several such cases have occurred, including the 2001 conviction of Yitzhak Mordechai, a former defense minister and transportation minister.

Mr. Ramon, 56 and divorced, was charged with kissing a 21-year-old soldier at a government office on July 12, the day the war between Israel and **Hezbollah** began.

Mr. Ramon said the woman flirted with him at an office gathering, and asked to have her picture taken with him. In court, Mr. Ramon's lawyers showed a photograph of the two hugging as they posed for the camera. In his testimony, Mr. Ramon also acknowledged the kiss, but said it was consensual.

However, the soldier said that Mr. Ramon had kissed her against her will, and the three-judge panel concurred.

"This was not a kiss of affection," said Judge Hayuta Kochan, who read the unanimous verdict. "This has all the elements of sexual crime."

Former Israeli Official Guilty of Sexual Misconduct

Photographers and video camera operators swarmed around a silent Mr. Ramon as he left the courthouse with his girlfriend. He is to be sentenced in about three weeks, though he said on Wednesday that he would appeal. He could receive a maximum sentence of three years, but Israeli legal commentators said they thought it was unlikely that he would be imprisoned.

Mr. Ramon has been a legislator for more than two decades and was a leading figure in the center-left Labor Party.

When the former prime minister, Ariel Sharon, abandoned his conservative Likud Party and created the centrist Kadima Party at the end of 2005, Mr. Ramon was among the Labor legislators who defected to join him.

Mr. Sharon had a stroke in January 2006, but the new party captured the Israeli parliamentary polls in March. Mr. Ramon was considered a confidant and important ally of Mr. Olmert.

In another development, Mr. Olmert has asked security officials to examine the possibility of re-routing part of Israel's West Bank separation barrier to bring two additional Jewish settlements inside its walls, his office said Wednesday.

The newspaper Haaretz reported Wednesday that Mr. Olmert had already approved the change. But Mr. Olmert's office said he had only asked for a review, and on his own could not overturn the cabinet's decision on the route of the barrier.

If the proposed route was ultimately approved, it would put about 20,000 additional Palestinians on the Israeli side of the barrier, according to the Haaretz report.

Israel says it is erecting the barrier to protect against suicide bombings and other attacks. But much of the international community opposes it, and the International Court of Justice, in a nonbinding ruling in 2004, said parts built in the West Bank violated international law.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo: Haim Ramon, the former Israeli justice minister, and his girlfriend left the Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court yesterday after he was found guilty. (Photo by Ariel Schalit/Associated Press)

Load-Date: February 1, 2007

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Israeli police commissioner steps down; Panel criticized him over 1999 crime case

The International Herald Tribune

February 20, 2007 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 5

Length: 644 words

Byline: Steven Erlanger - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

The Israeli police commissioner resigned after an investigative committee severely criticized his actions in a 1999 case involving an Israeli crime family.

The commissioner, Moshe Karadi, whose term expires in August, said Sunday that he was resigning immediately to "set a personal example" and spare the police the harm of a scandal. He insisted that the allegations against him were untrue.

Avi Dichter, the minister for public security, said he was accepting the resignation and would appoint Yaakov Ganot, the current head of the Prison Service, as the new police commissioner. Dichter said he would also remove the deputy police commissioner, even though he was not mentioned in the report, and offer him Ganot's job.

"The police must and can become better," Dichter said.

While the case is an old one, the resignation of Karadi is the latest scandal in an Israel reeling from accusations of illegal behavior among those in high office. The cases range from a possible rape charge against the current president, Moshe Katsav, to allegations of corruption by the current prime minister, Ehud Olmert, and by his suspended office director, currently under house arrest as part of a burgeoning investigation into the tax authority. The finance minister, Abraham Hirschson, is being investigated in another case involving embezzlement at a nonprofit organization.

Olmert's predecessor, Ariel Sharon, was widely suspected of political corruption and Sharon's son, Omri, has been sentenced to jail, although he is free because his father is in a coma.

Last month, Haim Ramon, a former justice minister, was found guilty by a court of indecent behavior, for kissing a young **female** soldier against her will. Allegations of illegal behavior have been made against top religious figures as well.

While the spate of investigations is seen by many here as a backlash against a tradition of political corruption, especially in fund-raising, the country's gloomy introspection has been worsened by the army's performance during the war against **Hezbollah** last summer.

Israeli police commissioner steps down Panel criticized him over 1999 crime case

The chief of staff of the Israeli military resigned last month over failures during the war, and three Israeli soldiers captured by Hamas and **Hezbollah** remain in captivity.

A three-member investigating panel found in a report issued Sunday that in 1999, when he was head of Israel's southern district, Karadi failed to pursue an investigation into close ties between police officers and a crime family in the south.

In 1999, a suspected crime boss, Pinchas Buhbut, was murdered while in a hospital by a uniformed policeman working for a rival crime family, the Perinians. Buhbut was recovering from an assassination attempt and was supposed to be under police guard.

A year later, three months after he had left the police, the murderer, Tzachi Ben-Or, was arrested for a robbery and offered to testify. His offer was declined, and a judge, not informed of the Buhbut murder, released him to house arrest. Ben-Or later fled the country and was murdered himself, in Mexico in 2004.

Karadi was accused by the investigators of promoting a police commander in the southern district who was suspected of hushing up the case for the Perinian family.

The whole affair only came to light in August 2005, when it was cleared for publication.

Only one of the three committee members demanded that Karadi resign immediately; the two others decided that, because his record as police commissioner was clean, he could finish his term.

But Karadi's term has been marked by some embarrassments, including charges of police brutality during the pullout of Israeli settlers from Gaza in 2005, failures to solve some murders and the escape of a convicted serial rapist, Benny Sela, from police custody. While finally recaptured, Sela's days on the run became a hot topic on Israeli news programs and talk shows, which made fun of the police.

Load-Date: February 25, 2007

How Canada can help contain the Iranian threat

National Post (f/k/a The Financial Post) (Canada)

February 15, 2007 Thursday

National Edition

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Section: ISSUES & IDEAS; Pg. A20

Length: 723 words

Byline: DAVID HARRIS AND SAYEH HASSAN, National Post

Body

Iran is an increasing danger to global security, and it demands the serious attention of Stephen Harper and his government.

In recent years, Tehran has expanded its sponsorship of terror in the Middle East through its proxies in Lebanon, Syria and the Palestinian Authority; undertaken aggressive foreign operations through Hezbollah, from Europe to South America; grossly violated the rights of its citizens, especially women and students; curtailed press freedoms; and murdered a Canadian, Zahra Kazemi. Earlier this month, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad defiantly boasted that his theocracy now operates 3,000 centrifuges at its Natanz nuclear facility. This could well mean sufficient weapons-grade uranium for an atomic bomb by year-end.

Once such weapons become available, the regime will likely share them with its Hezbollah proxies, whose sympathizers and agents are active all over the world, including in Canada. Meanwhile, other countries in the Middle East will seek their own nuclear capabilities in an attempt to deter an apocalyptic aggressor.

As a Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) signatory, Canada must recognize that Iran's nuclear enrichment and bomb-design program will destroy the foundations upon which the NPT was established. The Treaty's stature as a guarantor of international peace and stability has already been seriously eroded, thanks largely to proliferation of nuclear weapons by Pakistan and North Korea. The world is at a pivotal point, and action must be taken to enforce the NPT before Iran triggers a cataclysm.

Canada has a unique opportunity by constructively confronting Iran. From intelligence reports, we know Iran's troubled economy and needlessly provocative foreign policies have emboldened its student activists and political opposition. This is the stuff of leverage. Canada can bring additional pressure by imposing economic sanctions, and immediately suspending its \$300-million in annual bilateral trade with Iran.

Ottawa should block Canadian investment in Iran's oil and gas fields, and ban Iranian bankers from Canada's financial markets. Canadian investors and public sector pension fund managers should be strongly encouraged to divest from Iran and from companies doing business with the regime. As demonstrated with apartheid-era South Africa, economic sanctions work.

In addition, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's Supreme Leader, former Iranian president Hashemi Rafsanjani, and their children are thought to have millions of dollars invested in Canada. Some of this money could well have been misappropriated from Iranians. The Harper government should freeze such Canadian based assets.

How Canada can help contain the Iranian threat

Moreover, a travel ban should be imposed on all of Iran's state officials and their kin. Iranians who desire freedom will come to know that Canadians will not stand by and allow the Islamist regime's officials to prosper while their people suffer and the world is held hostage to the ayatollahs' belligerence. Finally, if there is to be hope for avoiding war, Canada must support Iranians who want change. Ms. Kazemi was not the brutal theocracy's

lone victim: Students, journalists, women and writers are regularly arrested, tortured, raped and executed. Victims are held for years under barbaric conditions, without hope of rescue by an independent judiciary. And those who try to speak up are targeted for abuse. Canadian officials at the UN Human Rights Council and other international bodies must press Iran immediately to release political prisoners. Ottawa should actively assist Iranian activists in Canada to publish names of such prisoners, as a means of securing their release.

In years to come, Canadians will look back on the coming months and reflect whether the international community showed sufficient resolve to avert a catastrophe. By keeping all options on the table, and working decisively with our allies, Prime Minister Stephen Harper can help ensure that the international community's efforts will not be found wanting. In truth, he -- and we -- have no choice. - David Harris is a lawyer, senior fellow for national security at the Canadian Coalition for Democracies (CCD), and former Canadian Security and Intelligence Service chief of strategic planning. He is counsel to the CCD. Sayeh Hassan is an articling student and a democracy activist who was born in Iran.

Graphic

Color Photo :: (See hardcopy for Photo Description) ;

Load-Date: February 15, 2007

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Lopsidedness of the war on terror

The Philadelphia Inquirer

August 17, 2006 Thursday

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

Found on Philly.com

Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. A19

Length: 637 words

Body

Linda Chavez

is chairman of the Center for Equal Opportunity in Washington

We are just weeks away from the fifth anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks, and yet we have quickly forgotten the lessons of that terrible day. We understood then that a group of Islamic fanatics had declared war on the United States and that our only option was to defeat them.

Barely five years later, we seem to have lost our resolve, though our enemies haven't lost theirs, as the interrupted plot to blow up U.S.-bound airplanes in Britain demonstrates all too well. So what are the chances we will ultimately prevail?

First, it's important we understand who the enemy is and why he has targeted us. We are not fighting a war on terror, despite the nearly universal shorthand most of us have adopted. The terrorists who flew airplanes into American buildings, blew up hotels and nightclubs killing Western tourists in Bali and Kenya, bombed trains in Spain and England, and sent missiles and suicide bombers into Israel are fighting a religious war.

In their view, we are infidels who must be converted or killed.

There is no room in their ideology for peaceful co-existence or detente. And they are willing to sacrifice their own lives - and, most important, the lives of their children - in order to kill as many of us as possible.

We have never faced an enemy like this before. Even the Soviet Union at its most ruthless was not as pernicious a threat.

The Soviets wanted territory and power, but they acted rationally. Mutual Assured Destruction worked as an effective nuclear deterrent because the Soviets would never have sacrificed their own lives just to kill us. However, the Islamists are perfectly willing to pile up body after body of fellow Muslims so long as they can maximize the body count of dead Christians and Jews. The difference is that the Soviets wanted their reward here on Earth, while Islamic extremists don't expect theirs until they die.

Lopsidedness of the war on terror

In the face of this deadly purpose, we in the West seem ill-equipped for battle. Rather than single-mindedly tracking down those who want to kill us, we worry that we might be infringing on their civil liberties. When we do take action, as Israel did in attacking Hezbollah in Lebanon, we become paralyzed with remorse when innocent bystanders die, as they do in every war.

Yet our enemies think nothing of strapping explosives onto the chests of their own women and children in order to kill us. How many times have we heard the mothers of suicide bombers praise their children's martyrdom and boast of those they sent to the grave, while we shed tears at the loss of innocent life?

This is an asymmetrical war, not because we have more sophisticated weapons and they have only crude methods with which to fight, but because the moral constraints are so lopsided. Can you envision Hezbollah expressing regret and sorrow if one of their rockets had hit an Israeli target killing two dozen women and children, as Israel did when its bombs killed 28 (not the 54 originally reported) in Qana, Lebanon? We cannot, and should not, adopt their perverted morality, but we should recognize the imbalance for what it is.

Unless we learn to see our enemies for who they are, we cannot hope to win this war. We've got to stop treating our own government as the enemy. We have to quit worrying about whether the rest of the world will love us when we take actions to protect ourselves. We have to give up the illusion that if we just retreat from the world or abandon Israel, the Islamist fanatics will leave us alone.

We must recognize that it took most of a century to defeat communism and that it may take much longer to vanquish Islamofascism. Our best hope for victory may well be that radical Islam, like the Soviet Union, will begin to collapse from within.

Contact Linda Chavez at lvchavez@ceousa.org.

Load-Date: August 17, 2006

Olmert and Abdullah: In Pursuit of a Mirage

New York Sun (Archive)

April 2, 2007 Monday

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Section: FOREIGN; Pg. 6

Length: 686 words

Byline: YOUSSEF IBRAHIM

Body

Prime Minister Olmert is misleading his country when he speaks of a Saudi peace plan for Israel and the Palestinian Arabs that does not exist and of meetings with Saudi leaders that no one, least of all the Saudis, has proposed.

Similarly, Secretary of State Rice's latest round of shuttle diplomacy, during which she crisscrossed the Middle East in pursuit of her own nonexistent peace plan, confirms that America's foreign policy is running on empty.

America is facing some pretty serious problems in the Middle East: a war on Islamic terror; the Iraqi mess; Iran's quest for nuclear weapons; oil prices rising on the Iranian capture of British sailors; and the disintegration of Afghanistan.

For Ms. Rice to push all these existential challenges aside in favor of bridging gaps between a nonexistent Palestinian Arab entity and an Israeli prime minister whose approval rating is hovering around 20% is disingenuous - particularly as she is doing so based on a pie-in-the-sky Saudi peace plan.

Even before the Arab League summit last week in Riyadh, which revived the same lame 2002 Saudi peace proposal - under which the Arab states would officially recognize Israel in exchange for the "right of return" of some 4 million Arabs who left Palestine in 1948 - Mr. Olmert was sounding giddy.

Desperate for some success after his disastrous conduct of last summer's war with Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Israeli leader said in multiple interviews that he looked "very favorably" on the "active role" Saudi Arabia is playing in the Arab-Israeli dispute. He told Time magazine on Thursday that the Saudi king, Abdullah, would be "very surprised" to hear his opinion of the Saudi peace plan.

But King Abdullah has never proposed a meeting with Mr. Olmert. In fact, Saudi officials, including the foreign minister, Prince Saud al-Faisal, have made it very clear that this is a take it or leave it proposition that includes nothing up close and personal - no handshakes and no face-to-face meetings.

The Saudis and other Arabs believed, quite correctly, that there was no way the Israelis, including the optimistic Mr. Olmert, could accept a plan that would threaten the Jewish character of Israel with a sudden infusion of Muslim Palestinian Arabs.

As this delusional peace talk was being bandied about, Israeli security and military officials were warning that Hamas is building up arms, rockets, fighters, and ammunition in Gaza, complete with Iranian training in Hezbollah-style guerrilla warfare, which Israel was introduced to last summer in Lebanon - in the war Mr. Olmert lost.

Olmert and Abdullah: In Pursuit of a Mirage

Meanwhile, at the Arab League summit in Riyadh, a group of Arab leaders who should have shown great concern about a resurgent Iran, a huge war in Iraq, Sunni-Shiite bloodletting, and a looming civil war in Lebanon instead found nothing better to do than focus on an impossible plan for peace with Israel - a peace they do not wish to see.

There is a lot to be said here for the power of delusion among Arabs, Americans, and Israelis. The only people who seemed properly focused on reality were the Muslim fundamentalists and their preachers.

In a debate broadcast March 20 on Lebanon's New TV, three prominent Arab fundamentalist leaders debated the merits of suicide bombings and the killing of civilians.

The most prominent among them, Sheik Gamal al-Banna of Egypt, said, "Martyrdom operations in Palestine, in particular, are justified." He explained that in Israel, there is no such thing as a civilian, as all Israelis, including women and children, are part of a military society.

Sheik Banna, who is a major theoretician for the genocidal Muslim Brotherhood, said: "When I say 'soldiers,' the entire Israeli people is recruited. The women are the most vicious of them all. Therefore, this is justified."

He also said suicide bombers are heroes and martyrs. "I consider this to be martyrdom," he said. "Even if they harm a woman, all the women serve in the army. All the men serve in the army. Only the small children remain, and the fact is that these are only very rarely harmed. I believe that these are martyrdom operations, and are necessary."

Load-Date: April 2, 2007

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Australian (Australia)

August 15, 2006 Tuesday

All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Letters; Pg. 13

Length: 2545 words

Body

MATP

Gas in private cars is nothing more than political hot air

MOST TALKED ABOUT

LPG CONVERSION

THE Howard Government's decision to subsidise LPG tanks in private cars proves conclusively it has a finer feel for political expediency than economic rationality. Whingeing Australia, with some of the cheapest petrol in the world, seems to be the only country whose citizens expect its government to do something about the global phenomenon of rising crude oil prices.

Cross-subsidisation, which was once regarded as reprehensible in everything from telcos to electricity generation, is now back in vogue. Ordinary taxpayers -- you and I -- will be paying for our neighbours to cram their car boots with a gross cylinder that will save them a few cents a kilometre. Even worse, in a second-level subsidy, Australia's gas is being given away.

Wisely, this country adopted world parity pricing for liquid fuel. Now, charge and tax LPG at its energy-equivalent value, and let's see who thinks gas in private vehicles is anything more than political hot air.

Geoffrey Luck

Mittagong, NSW

A QUESTION for John Howard: how will LPG conversion subsidies relieve pressure on my household budget? My family drives low-consumption Toyota Corolla and Hyundai Getz cars. Why should our taxes subsidise people who buy large cars to convert to LPG? They already have a strong market price signal to do so, but you set aside your alleged faith in markets in favour of distortionary intervention with no community benefit.

Michael Cunningham

West End, Qld

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

JOHN Howard should be congratulated for responding to skyrocketing petrol prices with a raft of subsidies to promote LPG conversion and ethanol fuels.

But what's also needed is federal Government funding to improve public transport options to give families a viable alternative to their cars. Sadly, Australia is one of few countries in the developed world where the federal government doesn't contribute funds to public transport infrastructure. Even the Bush administration is investing billions of dollars in partnership with the states to boost public transport usage.

It's time the Howard Government started sharing the costs with the states to build new -- and expand existing -- train services, particularly in outer metropolitan areas where the rising cost of fuel is hurting families most.

Ben Smith

Environment Victoria

IT'S undoubtedly good politics but \$2000 to convert a car to LPG is just encouraging people to continue to buy fuel-guzzling, climate-changing big cars and 4WDs, subsidised by those of us who tried to do the right thing by the planet when we bought a small economical car, most of which won't be able to be converted.

The subsidy is just rewarding people who didn't give a damn about the environment. The analogy would be, in the case of rising electricity costs, giving a rebate to people who bought heaters instead of rewarding people who spent their money on insulation.

Gordon Drennan

Burton, SA

ARGUMENTS for mandating ethanol in Australian petrol are yet another exercise in agrarian boondoggle. The Biofuels Taskforce Report indicated that the world price for ethanol was about 42c per litre, compared with locally produced ethanol priced above the mid-60c per litre range. Despite production subsidies and crude oil prices above \$US75 per barrel, locally produced ethanol is still barely competitive. Mandating ethanol as a low-powered petrol additive would be completely unnecessary if imported ethanol received equal tax treatment with locally produced ethanol.

Ian Farrow

Hampton, Vic

YOUR editorial ("Breaking free on oil", 14/8) on alternative fuels is correct but only goes part of the way. It is futile talking about new technologies unless there is a policy that ensures their widespread use. This requires governments to lead by example. By mandating that all their vehicle fleet purchases after a certain date are either LPG or diesel-powered, both the state and federal governments could have a dramatic impact on fuel useage. Moreover, all these appropriately fuelled cars would start being available on the used-car market in about three years. The cascading effect would be significant.

The problem of replacing conventional fuel tanks with LPG ones without the use of extra tanks that use up boot space has recently been solved. A few years ago a successful campaign was started to eliminate leaded fuel. We may not completely eliminate conventional unleaded fuels, but we can come close. Let's face it, half of the cars in Europe run on diesel, why can't ours? The savings could be dramatic.

Edmond Beniacar

St Ives, NSW

RAILWAYS were critical to the early development of Australia, and in this time of energy and infrastructure crisis, railways will again be the practical solution to the nation's transport woes.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Who in the future will be able to afford to run a motor vehicle? Subsiding LPG conversions is just an example of using one credit card to pay off another.

Robert Dow

Darra, Qld

UN should seek to broker a

redrawing of Israel's borders

YOUR scepticism about the effectiveness of the UN ceasefire in Lebanon ("Ceasefire leaves a region at risk", Editorial, 14/8) is understandable without a peace settlement based on general acceptance of the state of Israel and a Palestinian state at peace alongside it.

The hawks in Israel choose to rely on military and technological edge, assisted by the US, to keep their enemies at bay, while the extremists in Iran and the Arab world refuse to deal with Israel and are waiting for the day when their own resources and sheer numbers might serve to crush the Israeli state. These elements on both sides share your editorial's disparaging view of the UN and its possible role in the peace process.

What is clearly needed, initially, in Lebanon is a robust UN force to act alongside elements of the Lebanese army, with the sophisticated technical back-up needed to disarm and remove all offensive Hezbollah weaponry, such as rocket launchers, leaving Hezbollah with a purely defensive and civilian role.

Attempts to circumvent these restraints by moving such weaponry to the Golan Heights area, the Occupied Territories or Gaza should be prevented by a similar UN military presence. Meanwhile, the UN should broker a redrawing of Israel's present borders, together with a peace settlement between Israel and its neighbours.

This exceptionally difficult peace road will require massive international commitment and support, a resolutely supportive US administration (after the mid-term congressional elections?), and a willingness on the part of the Arab world to accept what has clearly become a tragic outcome for the Palestinian people.

The terrorists will hate it.

John Piper

Waverton, NSW

THE ceasefire deal brokered by the UN in Lebanon is doomed to fail, for the simple reason that goodwill does not exist on both sides ("Israel goes on attack in hours before truce", 14/8).

All that has happened is that the terrorist group Hezbollah has been moved from southern Lebanon to central and northern Lebanon, ie, north of the Litani River. While this may be a minor victory for Israel, it is only a short-term one.

Hezbollah will now be provided with better and longer range missiles by its supporters in Iran and Syria so that it can continue with its indiscriminate attacks on Israeli civilians.

And thought should also be given to the effect the relocation of the so-called "Army of God" will have on the non-Muslim Lebanese population into whose area it will now move as part of the negotiated ceasefire.

Another horrific civil war is inevitable in the time-honoured "Land of the Cedars", unless and until such time as Hezbollah is totally disarmed and thereby eliminated as a rogue military force in Lebanon.

Sadly, for Lebanon and peace-loving Lebanese people, this is unlikely to occur.

Michael J. Gamble

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Belmont, Vic

Tighten access to aircraft

NEW airport security measures which include limiting what passengers are able to take into the aircraft cabin are, of course, only part of the security equation.

What I'd like to see are massive improvements in the screening of all airport workers who have access to both baggage and aircraft holds. It would take only a few seconds for someone to slip something into a bag or the aircraft hold, with possible disastrous consequences. The screening of workers needs to be complemented by additional fail-safe mechanisms ensuring that no one is allowed to perform unsupervised activities in and around any aircraft.

Can anyone reassure me this is happening?

Roy Stall

Mount Claremont, WA

Indigenous cattlemen

I ENJOYED Nicolas Rothwell's illuminating and powerful account of steps to create a viable indigenous cattle industry in the Northern Territory ("Aborigines may live the dream on the land at last", 12-13/8).

It is, however, important to note that Glen McLaren and William Cooper's *Distance, Drought and Dispossession: A History of the Northern Territory Pastoral Industry* was published five years ago. Its findings have been known for some time.

While I agree with Rothwell's assessment of the book's considerable value, I cannot support his view that academic historians have "predictably attempted to ignore" it. It has, in fact, been quite frequently referred to in other scholarship on aspects of Northern Territory history.

The "newly opened archives" to which Rothwell refers are those of the Northern Territory Pastoral Lessees Association. McLaren and Cooper make it very clear that their work aims to examine Aboriginal involvement in the cattle industry "from the cattlemen's perspective".

David Carment

Professor of history

Charles Darwin University, Darwin, NT

Soaring cost of land

I READ with interest your report on rising land values and restricted land supply in our cities ("States to blame on house prices, says Costello", 14/8).

I wonder how many of those who make planning decisions (ministers and bureaucrats) are "cafe latte" opponents of new development, and how many of them entered the real estate market back when land was three times average earnings? It would be useful for the rest of us who don't make planning decisions to know, even when there is no hint of impropriety, just what kind of benefits can accrue to those who do. Then we can make more informed decisions about how much planning power should be ceded to them.

Nick Wills-Johnson

Victoria Park, WA

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Maybe the men are at fault

MEDICAL psychologist Dietrich Klusmann ("Libido lags for ladies who get lucky in love", Worldwide, 14/8) believes that, having found a man, a woman keeps her sexual "resources" scarce in order to keep him interested. Did anyone happen to ask these "lucky" ladies in secure relationships just why their libidos might be lagging? There couldn't be any correlation with the study's other finding that men's performance on the "tenderness" scale fell off just as quickly, could there?

I'd like to make the outrageous suggestion that sometimes women do like sex, just not the sex they're getting.

Veronica Edwards

Nedlands, WA

Stem cell researchers

SCIENTISTS who threaten to leave Australia if they do not win the ethical debate about the appropriate use of human embryos are in effect bullying the public and politicians to give them what they want ("Stem scientist joins the exodus", 12-13/8). These scientists hide their demands behind support of the Lockhart Committee's recommendations as if these were beyond challenge.

The recommendations of that committee were in direct opposition to the scientific and ethical position of the great majority of submissions received. The most significant of these recommendations approves the deliberate creation of human embryos so that, when they are in the process of early development (as we all once were), they can be stripped of stem cells and destroyed in the process.

Another radical recommendation is that, in order to overcome the reluctance of women to donate their eggs for this purpose, cloned human embryos (that is, human embryos with one parent only) be grown in animal eggs.

Unfortunately, Australian legislation already allows research scientists to do destructive experimentation on embryos which are excess from IVF procedures. Deliberately creating human beings, whether through fertilisation or cloning procedures, to be destroyed for some hoped-for future benefit of others, is going one step too far. The onus for demonstrating the acceptability of departing from accepted standards for the treatment of human subjects in any medical or experimental procedure is squarely on those scientists who advocate it.

Carolyn Mongan

Campbell, ACT

WHEN first elected, John Howard rightly called for an end to the political correctness of the Hawke-Keating era. Will he now move against the religious correctness which is sending eminent stem cell scientists overseas? Please, Prime Minister, lives, including my own, depend on you.

Adam Johnston

Davidson, NSW

FIRST BYTE

letters@theaustralian.com.au

In this time of heightened aviation security, I certainly understand why metal knives have been replaced by plastic ones on aircraft, but can anyone tell me why glass wine bottles are still in use?

JP Ryan

West Moonah, Tas

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We hand a win to terrorists whenever we refer to them as such; they want to instil terror in us. Let's call them sickos, weirdos or psychopaths.

Barrie Smillie

Duffy, ACT

Whilst John Howard is no doubt alert to the British terrorist threat, he must be alarmed at its appalling timing, 18 months away from his election.

Bill Carpenter

Bowral, NSW

So the PM, who would never "cut and run", has done just that by withdrawing the migration bill from the Senate.

John X. Berlin

Maclean, NSW

With Labor still holding 60 of the 89 seats in the Queensland parliament, Premier Peter Beattie has no need to call an early general election. However, with 10 of his MPs indicating that they will not be standing at the next election, maybe he is hoping to trim the deadwood on his own side six or nine months ahead of time.

Peter Wall

Ascot, Qld

Now that a truce has been reached between Israel and Hezbollah, I hope the letter writers and other antagonists of the conflict follow suit.

Henry Herzog

Elwood, Vic

The most frightening aspect of a US preacher's decision to dedicate his church to Tom Jones because of the singer's "soulful, spiritual and supernatural" voice ("Up with the Jones", Worldwide, 14/8) is that he may actually believe what he said.

Norm Neill

Leichhardt, NSW

On behalf of all teachers, I thank Judith Wheeldon for describing so succinctly the complex job of teaching ("It's a proposal without any merit", 12-13/8).

Susan Cole

Ulverstone, Tas

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

GPO Box 4162, Sydney, NSW, 2001 Fax: 02 9288 3077

E-mail: letters@theaustralian.com.au (no attachments)

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[gallery](#)

Townsville Bulletin (Australia)

August 12, 2006 Saturday

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Section: WEEKEND EXTRA; Pg. 46

Length: 250 words

Body

An orangutan grips the fence of his cage at Night Safari in Thailand's northern Chiang Mai province

A girl prays for the atomic bomb victims of Hiroshima before the cenotaph at the Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima

A rider pulls his motorcycle onto the main drag at the Black Hills Motor Classic motorcycle rally in Sturgis, South Dakota

Beachgoers play volleyball on a beach in the Israeli main commercial capital Tel Aviv. The beaches of Israel's main commercial have been filled despite the threat by [Hezbollah](#)

Australian artist Nike Savvas stands in her installation Atomic: full of love, full of wonder, formed with 50,000 spray-painted foam balls, at the Art Gallery of New South Wales

A Uruguayan gaucho is unseated by an untamed horse after a 'yerra', a typical festivity in the Uruguayan country, where young bulls are castrated and branded during the winter

Spain's Patxi Usobiaga celebrates as he manages to complete the course during the finals of the men's lead competition in the Singapore series of the UIAA's Climbing World Cup

A Guarani Bolivian mother and her daughter watch a parade after the inauguration of the country's first constituent assembly

Kate Ziegler of the US dives in for the start of the [women's](#) 800m freestyle final during the USA Swimming National Championships in Irvine, California

A woman wears a traditional ethnic minority dress as she walks in a parade to mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of the provincial government in Duyun, southeast China's Guizhou province

Load-Date: August 12, 2006

**Another resignation over comment: LIBERAL PARTY: Ignatieff accused
Israel of war crime**

The Vancouver Province (British Columbia)

October 15, 2006 Sunday

FINAL C Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A31

Length: 250 words

Byline: CanWest News Service

Dateline: TORONTO

Body

TORONTO -- Michael Ignatieff's assertion that Israel committed a war crime in Lebanon so disgusted the wife of prominent Liberal MP Irwin Cotler that she has announced she is quitting the party.

Ariela Cotler said in an interview yesterday she feels the candidates for the federal Liberal leadership are guilty of placing Israel and the Lebanese terrorist organization Hezbollah on equal moral footing.

In an open letter to Mr. Ignatieff, parts of which were published yesterday in the National Post, Mrs. Cotler expressed her "hurt and disappointment" over the comments by the leadership front-runner. On a French-language talk show broadcast last Sunday, Mr. Ignatieff called the deaths last July of 28 civilians in the Lebanese village of Qana following an Israeli bombing a "war crime."

"I have been an active, involved and contributing member of the Liberal Party until now, and I have decided to give up my membership precisely because of expressions such as the one we heard from you," she wrote.

"I was hoping that you would be able to distinguish between a country who tried to protect its civilians from a terrorist organization, and a terrorist organization who used its own women and children as human shields in Qana, and in other parts of southern Lebanon."

Mr. Ignatieff said yesterday he regrets the decision by Mrs. Cotler, whose husband was the justice minister in Paul Martin's Liberal government. Earlier this week one of his key organizers in Ontario resigned over the same statement.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Michael Ignatieff

Another resignation over comment: LIBERAL PARTY: Ignatieff accused Israel of war crime

Load-Date: October 15, 2006

End of Document

Forgotten lessons

South China Morning Post

January 11, 2007 Thursday

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Section: FEATURES; Behind the News; Pg. 14

Length: 1488 words

Byline: History suggests that Israel's refusal to talk peace with Syria could lead to another conflict over the Golan Heights, writes Ben Lynfield

Body

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's calls on Israel to resume peace negotiations, and Israel's reluctance to do so, are evoking an unpleasant sense of déjà vu for some Israelis.

Yossi Sarid, a former education minister and opposition leader who retired from politics last year, was a young activist in the ruling Labour Party in the early 1970s, when an acquaintance asked him to convey a peace feeler from Egyptian president Anwar Sadat to Israeli prime minister Golda Meir.

"I came to her and told her, 'Sadat is willing to negotiate'," Mr Sarid recalled. "I was certain she would be delighted. Instead, she stared at me with cold eyes, and said, 'This is nothing new. Do you know what he wants? We will have to give him all of the Sinai.'" Meir said she was not willing to part with that territory, which Israel captured from Egypt during the 1967 Middle East war, when it also occupied Syria's Golan Heights, a strategic plateau overlooking the Sea of Galilee. Mr Sarid said he disagreed with Meir and told her Israel should return all of Sinai for a peace deal.

Had Israel responded to Sadat's overtures, the lives of thousands of soldiers it lost when it was taken by surprise by the Egyptian and Syrian armies in 1973 could have been spared, Mr Sarid said. Eventually, in 1978, a year after Sadat made a dramatic visit to Jerusalem, Israel agreed to do what Meir had refused: return all of the Sinai as part of peace arrangements with Egypt.

"We are in exactly the same situation today," Mr Sarid said of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's refusal to respond to Syria's overtures. "There is a danger of a war with Syria - not necessarily an all-out war, but rather attrition, limited attacks and all kinds of actions the Syrians know how to carry out by proxy."

While Mr Olmert visits Beijing this week to discuss trade and matters related to Middle East peace efforts, Mr Sarid said the Israeli army's failure to win a decisive victory in last summer's war with Hezbollah might have pushed the Syrians towards concluding that if they could not regain the Golan Heights by negotiations, a military option might work.

"I think their appetite has been heightened and that they have the impression that a limited action may catalyse a diplomatic process," Mr Sarid said.

Forgotten lessons

The sense that Israel was edging towards further conflict prompted a leading Haaretz newspaper columnist, Uzi Benziman, to headline a recent column "You, Me and the Next War". That is the title of a play written a year after Israel's victory in 1967, predicting more fighting and more deaths.

Since the summer, Mr Assad has used the language of both confrontation and peace in referring to the future of Israeli-Syrian relations. In recent weeks, he and his foreign minister, Walid Muallem, have stressed in pronouncements to the western media that they are ready to reach a settlement with the Israelis, if only Mr Olmert's government would respond.

"Many voices are being raised in Israel" for dialogue with Damascus, Mr Assad said last month. "So, I say to Olmert, let him try and see if we are bluffing."

Mr Muallem said that Syria was ready to resume talks over the Golan Heights that broke down seven years ago "without preconditions".

Although Israeli analysts diverged over whether Mr Assad was genuinely interested in reaching a peace settlement, the Israeli government made it clear it was unimpressed by the messages from Damascus. The reluctance to engage mirrored the stance of the Bush administration in the face of the recent bipartisan Baker-Hamilton report urging a US dialogue with Syria.

"Israel has peace with two of its neighbours, Egypt and Jordan, and is interested in expanding the circle of peace to include Lebanon and Syria," said foreign ministry spokesman Mark Regev. "The question is whether there is a real possibility of peace with Syria. We are very cautious. Our analysis is that Syria is cynically exploiting the Israel card in order to reduce international pressure on Damascus."

In particular, Mr Regev said, Israel believed Syria wanted to show it was open to peace with Israel in order to take the international heat off it for what a UN investigation claimed was its involvement in the assassination two years ago of former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri.

Mr Regev said Syria's alliance with Iran and its support for the fundamentalist Hamas movement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and for Hezbollah in Lebanon showed it was not really interested in peace.

But Israeli proponents of talks with the Syrians said Damascus should be engaged precisely in order to pull the rug out from under Iran and the radical groups. "There will be no greater blow to Hezbollah and Iran than a peace deal with Syria," said Yariv Oppenheimer, head of the dovish Peace Now group.

Domestic politics might be part of the explanation for Israel's wariness. Serious negotiations and the territorial price Israel would have to pay for peace by returning the Golan would shake up Mr Olmert's ruling coalition.

His ally, the extreme right-wing Yisrael Beiteinu Party, opposed relinquishing the heights to Syria.

"Our position is to make peace in exchange for peace, not peace in exchange for territory," said Yisrael Beiteinu spokeswoman Irena Etinger. She said Israel should not negotiate with Syria until it "pulls out of the axis of evil" and stopped supplying Hezbollah and Hamas.

A poll published in the Yediot Ahronot newspaper last month showed that 67 per cent of Israelis favoured entering talks with Syria, but an almost equal number opposed returning the Golan Heights.

Shaul Arieli, a reserve brigadier-general and member of Israel's Council for Peace and Security, said the government should be leading public opinion towards a withdrawal from the Golan Heights. He said the chances of a war with Syria were high - not immediately but perhaps within five years or so - unless the Golan was relinquished. The Assad regime's legitimacy was bound up with its ability to restore the Golan to Syria, he said.

Mr Arieli rejected the idea that Mr Assad was wedded to his alliance with Iran. "He is dying to free himself of the Iranian embrace, but he cannot do so without receiving the Golan Heights," he said. To achieve peace, Mr Arieli advocated negotiations on the basis of a 2002 Arab League plan that called for a full Israeli withdrawal from all

Forgotten lessons

territories captured during the 1967 war in exchange for Arab recognition of Israel and normalisation of relations with it.

The Syrian state-controlled media, for its part, had not moderated its tone in line with Mr Assad's overtures.

"For tens of years until today, we have suffered and continue to suffer without interruption from the crimes of the colonialists, particularly the British and Americans and their Jewish Zionist agents, who destroy our homeland and kill the sons of our nation without distinguishing between combatant and non-combatant, between old men, children and women," an article in the official Tishreen newspaper said on Sunday. It went on to accuse Britain of "removing the scalps" of natives in the countries it colonised, linking the practice to contemporary actions by the US and Britain in Iraq and Israeli practices in the Gaza Strip.

In the view of Tel Aviv University Middle East specialist Bruce Maddy-Weitzman, the Syrian regime regarded its survival as being bound up with a hard-line Arab nationalist ideology. Mr Assad's recent statements calling for talks "are rhetoric to impress the United States and Europe. The Syrians want a half-open door to everyone. I don't see here a harbinger of a great strategic shift," he said. By contrast, he said, Sadat did make a strategic decision to orient Egypt towards the west in the early 1970s, including expelling thousands of Soviet advisers a year before launching the 1973 war.

"He needed a war to undertake the shift because no one took him seriously," Dr Maddy-Weitzman said. Although he didn't believe the Syrians were seeking a peace treaty, Dr Maddy-Weitzman said Mr Assad's overtures should be examined and that contacts between the two countries could help reduce tensions.

Yaacov Amidror, former head of the Israeli army's research and assessment division, was dismissive of those who advocated that Israel returned the Golan out of fear there would be a war. He said Syria was in a much weaker position from which to make war than Egypt was in 1973. "It has no Soviet support, it would have to fight alone, and it does not have Saudi Arabia willing to use the oil weapon," he said.

But for Mr Sarid, the memories of Meir's blunder were still vivid. He recalled that he had recently returned from studying in the US when he brought the Egyptian peace feeler to her attention and urged that Sinai be handed back. "After that conversation, she asked a lot of people: 'What's happened to Yossi? What did he study over there?'" Mr Sarid said.

Graphic

Credit: AFP; An Israeli soldier patrols Mount Hermon in the Golan Heights.

Load-Date: January 11, 2007

LETTERS FROM READERS

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

August 7, 2006 Monday

THIRD EDITION

Copyright 2006 St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Inc.

Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. B8

Length: 1569 words

Body

Raunchy: A floater's view of behavior on the river

Regarding "Raunchy on the river" (July 30): A group of about 15 friends and I were floating recently. The harassment was so ridiculous that we don't want to go back to that spot. We are all 21 years old or older. At the camp site, park rangers literally were hiding in the woods with night-vision goggles in the middle of the night to spy on us. I would understand that behavior if we were being rowdy, doing drugs or causing a disturbance, but all we were doing was playing guitars around a campfire. We like clean fun, and, yes, we do drink. It was an invasion of our privacy to be watched constantly.

I could see if they had received complaints about us, but we were the only people at the walk-up campsites, so we were not disturbing anyone.

Yes, some people are vile and irresponsible. But constantly invading privacy and watching campers or floaters is not the solution. In fact, it often is the cause of the problem. These young adults are going to party whether we like it or not. Every person needs time to do his own thing and have a little freedom. Why are we changing this country with laws that make us less free? Our country's new motto should be "America, home of the law-makers."

Casey Govero | St. Louis

Education as mandate

Regarding "The proper duties of a school board" (Aug. 1): If Jim Fox attended St. Louis Public Schools board meetings and got involved from a pro-education vantage point, he would understand that the current board, under the presidency of Veronica O'Brien, takes public education as a mandate to this community.

If Mr. Fox is interested in the well-being of students, why has he not questioned the use of "scripted instruction" for students in four core subjects? Could it be that Mr. Fox is more interested in adding negativism in hopes of undermining the enormous task before the board? Is questioning and insulting the board the level to which we, citizens and commentators, have fallen? If so, get a copy of the circus route at City Hall, not at the Board of Education.

James Wiswall | St. Louis Teacher, Cleveland High School

Seeking justice

LETTERS FROM READERS

It should come as no surprise to the Catholic school teachers of the Archdiocese of St. Louis that their bishops have continued to ignore their pleas for social and economic justice in the workplace ("Teachers union plugs away, despite lack of recognition," July 28). Witness how the church regards the service of a woman who has dedicated her entire life to the church: A 64-year-old nun is required to beg for a job in the private sector when her teaching position is eliminated for economic reasons. When a Catholic nun in the Archdiocese is treated this way, should lay teachers expect anything better of their church leaders?

Mary Reinhardt | St. Louis

Supporting harmony

In "Primary candidates II" (July 31), an endorsement for the Missouri Senate's 4th District, the Post-Dispatch said my role on the Board of Aldermen was "divisive." Now we should discuss issues that have an impact on the 4th District.

I am opposed to the wasteful war in Iraq, which drains sorely needed resources from our citizens, fosters super-high gasoline prices and wastes human life. I am opposed to taking homeowners' property by eminent domain. I am opposed to the sale of Forest Park and Fairgrounds Park. I am opposed to the reversal of Roe v. Wade. I am opposed to taking resources from the public school system to divert to private interests.

I support the U.S. National Health Insurance Act and restoration of the Medicaid cuts because I believe that health care is a human right. I continue to support affirmative action in employment for African-Americans, other minorities and women. I support project labor agreements, a living wage, increasing the minimum wage and collective bargaining for public employees. I support stem cell research and a new Mississippi River bridge with an affirmative action component; both would create economic stimulus for our region. I support equality for the gay, lesbian and transgendered community. I support building social and political relationships that will lead to black, brown and white people living in peace, love and harmony, like brothers and sisters ought to live.

Kenneth Jones | St. Louis

Art restoration

I was amazed to learn that Webster Groves plans to replace the apples and the World War II memorial in its "Wedge" park with a "Back Flip" sculpture by Allan Jones.

Mr. Jones is a pop artist famous for his exhibition of erotic sculptures. His art generally is thought to be anti-feminine. It does not belong in the Wedge.

It seems inappropriate that a town that has a female mayor and boasts of a worldwide university founded by women would allow this sculpture to be installed. Even if the item itself is relatively benign, it will draw attention to the artist and imply a measure of respect for his work, which includes a lot of things I wouldn't let my underage children look at.

The WWII sculpture should stay. And the apples are OK, too.

Connie Abeln | Pacific

Animals in need

Regarding "Horribly abused dog said to be recovering" (July 30). Again we hear about an atrocity committed by a human being on a defenseless animal. Charlotte, a Chihuahua found with a wire tie around her neck, is the latest innocent victim. Much public outrage and offers to adopt ensued.

Are people aware of the hundreds of animals such as this in area shelters? Why does it take headline news to make people want to adopt one of these animals? If they cannot adopt Charlotte, many other animals need homes.

LETTERS FROM READERS

Joan Becker | Richmond Heights

Learn from mistakes

Eric Mink's commentary "Finally, the networks are mad as (heck)" (Aug. 2), about networks shying away from broadcasting certain shows for fear of large fines, misses the most important aspect of this story. Like an out-of-control child, the networks created this problem and now must live with the consequences.

Without restrictions, networks will air shows with whatever content brings in money or makes their political or social point. That's to their shame because this robs the public of opportunities to see valuable shows, such as World War II veterans speaking from the hearts. Don't blame the parents for putting a curfew on the kids. Blame the kids and hope they learn from their mistakes.

Mark Davidson | Webster Groves

Vermin eradication

People are wailing about "civilian" Lebanese casualties. Israel aims at military targets, and civilian casualties are either accidental or the result of Hezbollah embedding its assets in civilian areas. Meanwhile, Israeli civilians are intentionally targeted by Hezbollah. Hezbollah uses munitions loaded with ball bearings that are intended to inflict maximum suffering on civilians, contrary to the Geneva conventions.

Since our Supreme Court thinks it should be running foreign policy, maybe it should tell Hezbollah and Hamas to obey the Geneva conventions regarding weapons and the treatment of kidnapped Israeli soldiers.

A fundamental difference is that Israel, the United States and their allies target the enemy and try to avoid the innocent; terrorists target civilians and attempt to maximize the suffering of the innocent to achieve a political end. We need to wake up and eradicate these vermin.

Tom Jeffrey | St. Louis County

Long-range view

Democrats said, "The president has destroyed personal freedom for thousands of citizens and, after four years of war, has no idea where this conflict is going." That was 1864, in the middle of the 1864 election.

Pressure from Democrats came within an eyelash of getting Abraham Lincoln removed from the ballot. They screamed, "Remove the troops now." Attacks on Mr. Lincoln were so vicious I can't repeat them. But Mr. Lincoln had a long-range view. So does President George W. Bush. Think of what Iraq could be: a democracy in the middle of Islamic dictatorships. What a miracle. What a great thing for peace in this world. But it never will happen if Democrats have their way. Democrats always want to cut and run. Remember Vietnam?

Bob Strain | Ellisville

Compensation coming?

While I find AmerenUE's letters and advertisements in response to the extended power outages commendable, they fall woefully short of an adequate response to those who were without power.

Ameren should issue a credit on future bills to all households affected by the storms; \$100 per day of lost power seems reasonable. That's less than what people had to pay for hotels, restaurant meals, ice, laundromats, lost food, etc., but it would be an acknowledgment of the additional expenses, hassle and inconvenience. If so, those who waited the longest for restored power would reap the greatest compensation for their trouble.

Those who were last to have power restored should be first next time.

Carol A. Truesdale | Glendale

LETTERS FROM READERS

Courage breeds hope

Watching morning television in Perth, Western Australia, I heard of the utterly selfless actions of skydiver Robert Cook, who helped a young Australian woman survive a horrible plane crash.

I ended up in tears at his actions. How brave he was at such a young age and how kind he was. I am sure his family, while devastated, must be proud.

In this day and age where selfishness is rewarded, where "me, me, me" is the norm, it is gratifying to hear of the courage from one person to help another in surely the most dreadful moments of their lives. There is hope for us all.

Patricia Cross | Perth, Australia

Notes

OPINION

Load-Date: August 7, 2006

End of Document

Who's afraid of Shirin Ebadi?

The International Herald Tribune

August 16, 2006 Wednesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 6

Length: 294 words

Body

Under cover of the international furor over its nuclear activities and its support for Hezbollah, Iran is trying to silence its most prominent human-rights activist, and, by extension, all of the Iranians who speak for fundamental rights.

Shirin Ebadi, the lawyer who won the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize, has been threatened with arrest unless she closes the Center for Defense of Human Rights in Tehran.

The center provides free legal representation to journalists, students, and dissidents who face prosecution for peaceful assembly and criticizing the government. Ebadi and the center's lawyers have represented Iran's leading dissident, Akbar Ganji. Most recently, Ebadi has been defending women who say they were beaten and detained by the police for demonstrating for women's rights in June.

One of the center's co-founders, Abdolfattah Soltani, spent several months in prison last year, and in July drew a five-year sentence on charges of opposing the state and disclosing confidential information to diplomats. He is free awaiting the outcome of his appeal, but there is no timetable for the decision.

In the meantime, other prominent Iranians are languishing in prison, among them, Ali Akbar Mousavi Khoini, a former member of Parliament, who was arrested in June as he prepared to take part in the women's rights demonstration, and Ramin Jahanbegloo, one of Iran's best-known scholars, who was arbitrarily arrested in April.

The European Union recently expressed alarm at the deterioration of human rights in Iran, as have Human Rights Watch and other nongovernmental organizations. The United States and Europe need to engage with Iran. But they also need to make clear that Tehran's poor treatment of its citizens as well as its nuclear ambitions are unacceptable.

Load-Date: August 16, 2006

Terror in paradise

Ottawa Citizen

August 14, 2006 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A10

Length: 280 words

Byline: The Ottawa Citizen

Body

As war rages in South Lebanon and civil strife destroys Iraq, another sectarian conflict, once thought nearly resolved, has flared up almost unnoticed.

Sri Lanka is again witnessing violent confrontation between government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, who, claiming to speak for a minority Hindu community, say they are fighting for their own state in the north of this tear drop island off the bottom tip of India.

The escalation is clear. The Tigers tried to dry-gulch a good chunk of the northern part of the island as they dammed a reservoir. Government forces are believed responsible for the summary execution of 17 legitimate aid workers, 16 of them Tamil, one Muslim, and four of them women -- this despite the fact that a few months ago the two sides were observing a negotiated ceasefire, brokered by Norwegian diplomats, that seemed to hold much promise.

Because news coverage is scanty -- cameras are focused on the Middle East instead -- little is really known about what is going on on the ground in Sri Lanka. We do know, though, that the Tamil Tigers are a terror group. They have the ignominious distinction of having pioneered suicide bombing. They have no qualms about attacking civilians or of extorting funds out of people in the Tamil diaspora to continue their armed struggle.

The Sri Lankan government must, of course, punish soldiers who deliberately commit atrocities when fighting the Tigers, but Sri Lanka will not find true and lasting peace as long as the Tigers, much like Hezbollah in Lebanon, are able to hold their country hostage. Terror can never be rewarded. The Tigers need to find other ways to express their political grievances.

Load-Date: August 14, 2006

INSIDE

The New York Times
August 28, 2006 Monday
Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2006 The New York Times Company

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

Length: 282 words

Body

Google and eBay, Partners

Google has been competing more directly with eBay in various businesses, like online payment and phone calls. But today eBay plans to announce that it has hired Google to sell ads on Web pages seen outside the United States. PAGE A10

SPECIAL TODAY

U.S. Open Preview

The United States Open, which begins today in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park in Queens, will be the final event for Andre Agassi, who will retire after his 21st Open. A look at his career, the fashions and the field, with a spectator's guide. SECTION F

Kidnapped Journalists Freed

Militants in Gaza released a correspondent and a cameraman for Fox News after holding them for 13 days. The two journalists said they had been forced at gunpoint to declare that they had converted to Islam.

In Lebanon, the leader of Hezbollah said it would ignore what he called Israel's provocations. PAGE A3

Rumsfeld on Missile Defense

Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld said that while the United States' ballistic missile defense system was becoming more capable, he wanted to see a successful full-scale test before declaring it able to shoot down a missile. PAGE A10

How Popular Is Forbes.com?

Forbes.com, the more provocative sibling of Forbes magazine, draws plenty of traffic with stories about billionaire heiresses, topless beaches and why career women make bad spouses. But a close look at the traffic figures Forbes.com uses raises questions about the site's actual performance. BUSINESS DAY, PAGE C1

Television Celebrates Its Best at the 58th Emmy Awards

Kiefer Sutherland accepts his Emmy as outstanding actor in a drama series for "24," the counterterrorism suspense show on Fox. THE ARTS, PAGE E1

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos (Photo by Chris Carlson/Associated Press)

Load-Date: August 28, 2006

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Who's Afraid of Shirin Ebadi?

The New York Times

August 15, 2006 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2006 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 1; Editorial Desk; Pg. 18

Length: 297 words

Body

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The European Union recently expressed alarm at the deterioration of human rights in Iran, as have Human Rights Watch and other nongovernmental organizations. The United States and Europe need to engage with Iran. But they also need to make clear that Tehran's poor treatment of its citizens as well as its nuclear ambitions are unacceptable.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Load-Date: August 15, 2006

Objective analysis requires applying rules to everyone

The Star Phoenix (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)

October 27, 2006 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: FORUM; Pg. A11

Length: 263 words

Byline: Devin Ens, The StarPhoenix

Body

Prime Minister Stephen Harper's rhetorical contention that Michael Ignatieff is "anti-Israel" is as shallow and ignorant as U.S. President George Bush's claim that anyone who opposes American foreign policy supports terror. They both paint a picture of good guys versus bad guys instead of looking at the actions of parties involved.

To clarify: "terrorism" is the use or threat of violence against civilians to achieve political aims. Almost all states and many non-state actors have used it at one time or another (Hiroshima and 9/11 both are examples).

Although there is evidence that Hezbollah has been involved in acts of terror, the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers, with the demand that Israel release Palestinian women and children from its prisons, is not such an act. Why? Because soldiers are a military target. However, Israel's response of bombing Lebanese civilians would seem to constitute an act of terror.

This is a distinction which must be recognized by anyone who wishes to adhere to a fair, objective analysis of armed conflict.

Similarly, the issue of what constitutes a "war crime" must be approached with attention to the act. It is irrelevant whether the actor is an ally of ours.

To suggest that Israel has committed war crimes in its assault on Lebanon has nothing to do with being "anti-Israel" and everything to do with trying to promote a fair, objective and consistent application of interly recognized rules of engagement in the analysis of a conflict.

There is no rule of law if we are only prepared to accuse some of crimes and not others.

Devin Ens

Saskatoon

Load-Date: October 27, 2006

Inside knowledge

The West Australian (Perth)

August 11, 2006 Friday

METRO

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Section: SPORT; Pg. 55

Length: 260 words

Byline: DAVE HUGHES

Body

Don't despair if you dipped out on a ticket for the Ashes Test at the WACA Ground in December. There's hope for you yet.

It is common knowledge the match is a sell-out, but that only applies for the first four days. Not a single ticket has been sold for day five.

Cricket Australia has a policy of not selling any tickets for the final day until it is certain play will occur.

"Refunds are a cumbersome and expensive process," confirmed WACA chief Tony Dodemaide. "Lord's never sell tickets in advance for day five and nor do we."

The last series in England was really tight, so there's hope yet. If there's a fifth day, tickets will be available at the gate.

Smashed all over

The Israel cricket team was this week forced to move a European championship match to a Royal Air Force base to duck protesters.

Israel's second division championship match against Guernsey, scheduled for Glasgow, was moved 240km to Lossiemouth to avoid the likelihood of the contest being disrupted by protests against the conflict with Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The Israelis copped a five-wicket thrashing from the islanders.

Ask yourself this

What is the name of the ACT women's team in the Australian Hockey League? Answer below

He said what?

"Like an elephant attempting to hurdle, down he went - slowly."

Inside knowledge

COMMENTATOR JONATHAN AGNEW ON INZAMAM-UL-HAQ FALLING ON HIS STUMPS DURING THE THIRD TEST.

Seeing is believing

And this is what Agnew saw - Inzamam gets down and dirty.

On this day in . . . 1991

John Daly, starting as ninth alternate, won the US PGA.

How'd you go?

The Canberra Labor Club Strikers.

Graphic

And this is what Agnew saw - Inzamam gets down and dirty.

Load-Date: August 11, 2006

After the War, An Israeli City Starts Over

The New York Times

August 20, 2006 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2006 The New York Times Company

Section: Section 1; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 6; THE MIDEAST CRISIS: HOMECOMING

Length: 701 words

Byline: By DINA KRAFT

Dateline: KIRYAT SHMONA, Israel, Aug. 18

Body

Members of the Babalsky family take turns using the Katyusha rocket that smashed through their roof as a footrest as they reorganize their household belongings on their front lawn.

"It's so difficult mentally and physically now that we need to start over again," said Rachel Babalsky, 50. "It's a lot of work with lots of expenses to pay."

It has been a bittersweet homecoming for the people of Kiryat Shmona and the surrounding area, which was attacked by about 1,000 Hezbollah rockets over the past few weeks. Many who fled the fighting began trickling back into town after the cease-fire took effect Monday, joining those who had stayed behind in bomb shelters.

Residents have begun surveying the damage, sweeping shattered glass and hauling chunks of concrete to garbage bins while wondering out loud whether they would ever feel safe again in this town, just two miles from the border with Lebanon.

In the Bialik neighborhood, made up largely of Jewish families who immigrated from Iraq, Morocco and Iran, entire blocks were damaged by rockets and mortar shells.

The Babalsky home was among those that took a direct hit, the remaining red clay tiles of its roof left to dangle from wooden rafters. On the veranda below, boxes of birthday cards and school projects lay under a thick layer of soot next to a pair of dead pigeons.

The white concrete walls of some houses were pockmarked with deep holes from rocket shrapnel. Some yards were stacked high with broken wooden rafters. Chipped roof tiles, shattered glass and window screens were strewn on lawns among children's bicycles and flowering purple bougainvillea.

"Our house was shelled so don't ask me how I am," Carmella Raz, 50, fumed to a neighbor, Esther Yehuda, as they stood in a kitchen under a shattered roof. "I'm a mess. This hurts so much. We've all been in different places staying with different people and now we have to fix everything, but who has the energy for all this?"

Ms. Raz, a nursery school teacher, said she could not imagine returning to her job. "How can I deal with small children when I am in this kind of mood?" she asked.

After the War, An Israeli City Starts Over

A building engineer has declared her second floor uninhabitable because of damage to the roof. Her family will live in a hotel until the damage is repaired.

The two women exchanged stories of how they got through the war.

"Every day I cried and wanted to go home," said Ms. Yehuda, a small-framed woman with jet black hair tucked under a white kerchief.

She moved around the country, spending time with her children in central and southern Israel. Her daughter, Hedva Rakanpor, 32, was on the road for the month with her baby son.

"It was an extremely depressing unwanted vacation," Ms. Rakanpor said.

Those who stayed behind in Kiryat Shmona were usually those with the least means to leave, including the elderly, disabled and immigrants without relatives elsewhere or money for hotels.

Some who stayed, like the Younes family, spent long stretches in the public underground bomb shelter of their low-income housing bloc. "You are always frustrated just sitting there," said Eva Younes, 37. "It's not a normal situation, being so overcome by fear."

The Youneses, a Christian Lebanese family, moved here six years ago after Israel withdrew its forces from southern Lebanon. They feared revenge attacks because Ms. Younes's husband fought in the South Lebanese militia alongside Israel against Hezbollah. The couple and their three children spent long, stifling nights underground not knowing the fate of their relatives still in Lebanon.

Hussein Ogbah, 26, from the northern Arab village of Kfar Tuba, was out getting pizza and taking a drive with his wife on Friday, relieved to be out of the house he shares with his extended family after almost a month barely venturing outside.

"There was a lot of tension in the house," he said. "And we were afraid the war would keep growing."

In Kiryat Shmona, Shoshana Friedman, 53, showed a government assessor the damage to her home, mostly shattered windows and bent door frames.

"In the rest of Israel, people are going back to their normal lives," she said. "But here it will take time."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo: Rachel Babalsky, resting her foot on a Katyusha rocket that crashed through her roof, has begun to pick up the pieces of her damaged home. (Photo by Michael Kamber for The New York Times)

Load-Date: August 20, 2006

AP editors vote Iraq War top story of 2006

Lincoln Journal Star (Nebraska)

January 2, 2007 Tuesday

City Edition

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Section: A; Pg. 5

Length: 769 words

Byline: DAVID CRARY, The Associated Press

Body

NEW YORK - The convoluted, increasingly costly war in Iraq was chosen the top story of 2006 by U.S. editors and news directors in The Associated Press' annual vote, followed closely by the U.S. election, in which debate over Iraq played a pivotal role.

The war received 176 first-place votes out of 242 ballots cast. The election, in which Democrats seized control of Congress, received 46 first-place votes and was the overwhelming pick for the No. 2 story.

Last year's top story was Hurricane Katrina and the other devastating Gulf Coast storms. The Iraq war finished third in that poll, was runner-up in 2004 and the No. 1 story in 2003, while the buildup to the war was 2002's top story.

Here are 2006's top 10 stories, as voted by AP members. There was a tie for seventh place:

1. IRAQ: What started in 2003 as a supposedly straightforward drive to topple Saddam Hussein deteriorated during 2006 into a dismayingly complex and savage struggle, with Iraqis by the thousands killed in sectarian reprisal attacks and the U.S. military death toll exceeding 3,000. President Bush dropped talk of "staying the course" but balked at embracing many of the key suggestions of a bipartisan study group; Iraqi authorities struggled to assert control and avoid fracture.

2. U.S. ELECTION: Unhappiness with events in Iraq was one of the driving forces behind the Democrats' surge in the Nov. 7 election. They took over the House with a large majority, gained a narrow edge in the Senate and advanced in statehouses nationwide. Nancy Pelosi, assailed by the Republicans as a "San Francisco liberal" during the campaign, will become the first female speaker of the House.

3. NUCLEAR STANDOFFS: The United States and its allies were frustrated in their efforts to rein in nuclear programs in North Korea and Iran. North Korea tested a nuclear bomb in October, and Iran - despite a threat of sanctions - pushed ahead with plans to bring its first nuclear power plant on line in late 2007.

4. ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION: Congress tried to confront the influx of illegal immigrants from Latin America, but the effort collapsed amid deep divisions over whether to stress a crackdown or include provisions to help some illegal immigrants work toward citizenship. The get-tough approach triggered huge protests by immigrants-rights supporters.

AP editors vote Iraq War top story of 2006

5. **SCANDALS IN CONGRESS:** Several Republican congressmen were brought down by scandals, including Mark Foley, who resigned over sexually explicit messages sent to male pages, and Randy Cunningham, who pleaded guilty to accepting bribes from defense contractors. House Majority Leader Tom Delay resigned after being indicted on campaign finance charges in Texas, and Ohio's Bob Ney pleaded guilty in connection with the probe of lobbyist Jack Abramoff.

6. **SADDAM CONVICTED:** Saddam Hussein was convicted in the slaying of 148 Shiite Muslims, including children, following an assassination attempt against him in 1982. He was hanged on Friday.

7. **MIDEAST FIGHTING:** Israel and the Lebanon-based Hezbollah militia fought a monthlong war in the summer; more than 900 people were killed and much of southern Lebanon was battered. Lebanon's Western-backed government emerged more embattled than ever, while Hezbollah claimed increased popular support.

7. **RUMSFELD RESIGNS:** As conditions worsened in Iraq, President Bush publicly stuck by his defense secretary. But a day after the midterm elections gave Democrats control of Congress, Bush announced Donald Rumsfeld's departure. Though his brusque style initially won some admiring reviews, Rumsfeld was seen as underestimating Iraq's challenges while alienating the military brass and members of Congress.

9. **AIRLINER PLOT:** British authorities said they narrowly thwarted a terrorist plot to bomb several jets over the Atlantic. The disclosure led to tough new restrictions on the contents of carry-on luggage.

10. **DISASTER IN DARFUR:** Violence worsened in Sudan's Darfur region, where fighting between rebels and government forces has killed more than 200,000 people. The United Nations approved a 20,000-strong peacekeeping force, but Sudan blocked its deployment.

Just missing out on the Top 10 was mounting concern over climate change and global warming, highlighted by the release of Al Gore's movie "An Inconvenient Truth" and alarming new warnings from many scientists.

Several voters remarked on how Iraq - and its ripple effects - dominated the year.

"All news paled in comparison to the developments in the Middle East, which are beginning to be felt in every community," wrote Ken Stickney of The News-Star at Monroe, La.

Load-Date: January 6, 2007

In Brief

The Australian (Australia)

September 1, 2006 Friday

All-round First Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 10

Length: 303 words

Body

MATP

Blasts hit 22 Thai banks

BANGKOK: Suspected Islamic militants staged near-simultaneous bombings at 22 banks in southern Thailand's Yala province yesterday, killing two people and injuring 28. The homemade bombs, triggered by mobile phone signals, were placed in rubbish bins, at newspaper stands and near seats where customers wait for service. A review of closed-circuit TV footage showed that some of the explosives were planted by women, police said. More than 1500 people have been killed in Thailand's Muslim insurgency since early 2004, most of them in the Muslim-dominated provinces of Yala, Narathiwat and Pattani.

Leaving Iraq a defeat: Bush

NASHVILLE: As Iraq battled to contain mounting violence that has killed almost 200 people in the past five days, US President George W. Bush said pulling out US troops now would be a "major defeat". At a political fundraiser in Nashville, Tennessee, yesterday, Mr Bush said leaving Iraq at this stage would damage his nation's credibility, playing down hopes that the 141,000 US servicemen and women deployed would be able to go home soon. Earlier, US General George Casey, head of the coalition forces in Iraq, said his forces would remain there for at least another year.

Israel to pull out 'entirely'

JERUSALEM: Israeli troops transferred control over a portion of the border to troops in Lebanon for the first time late yesterday. At the time of the ceasefire two weeks ago, which ended 34 days of fighting between Israel and Hezbollah guerillas, Israeli troops occupied a security zone 30km inside Lebanon. It has been slowly transferring control of that zone to Lebanese and UN troops since then. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said Israel had agreed to pull out of southern Lebanon "entirely" once 5000 UN peacekeepers and 16,000 Lebanese troops were deployed.

Load-Date: August 31, 2006

Israeli police chief steps down; Country reeling after allegations of official misconduct

The International Herald Tribune

February 19, 2007 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 770 words

Byline: Steven Erlanger - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

The Israeli police commissioner resigned Sunday after an investigative committee severely criticized his actions in a 1999 case involving an Israeli crime family.

The commissioner, Moshe Karadi, whose term expires in August, said he was resigning immediately to "set a personal example" and spare the police the harm of a scandal. He insisted that the allegations against him were untrue.

Avi Dichter, the Minister for Public Security, said he was accepting the resignation and would appoint Yaakov Ganot, the current head of the Prison Service, as the new commissioner. Dichter said he would also remove the deputy commissioner, even though he was not mentioned in the report, and offer him the prison job.

"The police must and can become better," Dichter said.

While the case is an old one, the resignation of Karadi is the latest scandal in an Israel reeling from accusations of illegal behavior among those in high office. The cases range from a possible rape charge against the current president, Moshe Katsav, to allegations of corruption by the current prime minister, Ehud Olmert, and by his suspended office director, currently under house arrest as part of a burgeoning investigation into the tax authority. The finance minister, Abraham Hirschson, is being investigated in another case involving embezzlement at a nonprofit organization.

Olmert's predecessor, Ariel Sharon, was widely suspected of political corruption and Sharon's son, Omri, has been sentenced to jail, although he is free because his father is in a coma.

Last month, former Justice Minister Haim Ramon was found guilty by a court of indecent behavior for kissing a young **female** soldier against her will, and there have been allegations of illegal behavior made against top religious figures, as well.

While the spate of investigations is seen by many here as a backlash against a tradition of political corruption, especially in political fundraising, the country's gloomy introspection has been worsened by the army's performance during the war last summer against **Hezbollah**.

Israeli police chief steps down Country reeling after allegations of official misconduct

The chief of staff of the Israeli military resigned last month over failures during the war, and three Israeli soldiers captured by Hamas and Hezbollah remain in captivity.

A three-member investigating panel found in a report issued Sunday that in 1999, when Karadi was head of Israel's southern district, he failed to pursue an investigation into close ties between policemen and a crime family in the south.

In 1999, a suspected crime boss, Pinchas Buhbut, was murdered while in a hospital by a uniformed policeman working for a rival crime family, the Perinians. Buhbut was recovering from an assassination attempt and was supposed to be under police guard.

A year later, three months after he had left the police, the murderer, Tzachi Ben-Or, was arrested for a robbery and offered to testify. His offer was declined, and a judge, not informed of the Buhbut murder, released him to house arrest. Ben-Or later fled the country and was murdered himself, in Mexico in 2004.

Karadi was accused by the investigators of promoting a police commander in the southern district who was suspected of hushing up the case for the Perinian family.

The whole affair only came to light in August 2005 when it was cleared for publication.

Only one of the three committee members demanded that Karadi resign immediately; the two others decided that, because his record as police commissioner was clean, he could finish his term.

But Karadi's term has been marked by some embarrassments, including charges of police brutality during the pullout of Israeli settlers from Gaza in 2005, failures to solve some murders and the escape of a convicted serial rapist, Benny Sela, from police custody. While finally recaptured, Sela's days on the run became a hot topic on Israeli news programs and talk shows, which made fun of the police.

The report issued Sunday also criticized numerous other top police officials, recommending, for example, that the Jerusalem police chief, Ilan Franco, not be promoted to commissioner.

Vardi Zeiler, a retired judge, headed the inquiry. He said that firing Karadi would "highlight a clear norm for generations to come" and added that if the panel's "suspicions are correct, this is the beginning of a very corrupt police force, and the infiltration of underworld figures to the police, which corrupts the police and the regime."

Dichter's appointments were already being seen as controversial. Ganot was tried for bribery and cleared on a split vote, and the man Dichter said he would appoint as deputy commissioner, Mickey Levy, is known to be close to Olmert.

Load-Date: February 20, 2007

Israeli jets attack before hiatus: Outrage over Qana 'massacre' prompts Israel to suspend bombings

The Vancouver Province (British Columbia)

July 31, 2006 Monday

FINAL CC Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A6

Length: 674 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: BEIRUT

Body

BEIRUT -- Israeli planes struck suspected guerrilla positions in eastern Lebanon near the border with Syria early today, despite a 48-hour suspension announced a few hours earlier, security officials said.

Israeli jets carried out two raids at about 1:30 a.m. near the village of Yanta, about five kilometres from the Syrian border, the officials said.

Israel announced a 48-hour halt in aerial attacks yesterday around midnight that was believed to be effective immediately. But early today an Israeli army spokesman said the pause in overflights began at 2 a.m. local time.

Israeli officials earlier left open the possibility that Israel might hit targets to stop imminent attacks on Israel, and that the suspension could last less than 48 hours if the military completes its inquiry into yesterday's incident in Qana before then.

It was not known what was hit in the Yanta area, where radical Syrian-backed Palestinian factions maintain bases in the mountains abutting the Syrian border.

The Israeli aerial suspension came hours after an Israeli air strike killed at least 56 civilians, most of them women and children, in the southern Lebanese town of Qana, sparking an international uproar and fuelling demands for a ceasefire.

Shortly before the suspension, Israeli planes attacked for the second time in the last few days a road between Lebanon and Syria just outside the Lebanese border post at Masnaa, severing the main artery between the two capitals.

The Israeli military confirmed a highway attack near Syria, but said it knew of no others.

The army said that the temporary cessation of aerial activity would allow the opening of corridors for 24 hours for Lebanese civilians who want to leave south Lebanon for the north and would maintain land, sea and air corridors for humanitarian assistance.

Israeli jets attack before hiatus: Outrage over Qana 'massacre' prompts Israel to suspend bombings

The attack on Qana brought Lebanon's death toll to more than 510 and pushed American peace efforts to a crucial juncture, as fury at the U.S. flared in Lebanon. The Beirut government said it would no longer negotiate over a U.S. peace package without an unconditional ceasefire.

At the UN, the Security Council approved a statement expressing "extreme shock and distress" at the bloodshed and calling for an end to violence, stopping short of a demand for an immediate ceasefire.

In Qana, workers pulled dirt-covered bodies of young boys and girls -- dressed in the shorts and T-shirts they'd been sleeping in -- out of the mangled wreckage of the three-storey building. Bodies were carried in blankets and sheets, one decorated with Raggedy Ann and Andy drawings.

Two extended families, the Shalhoub and the Hashems, had gathered together in the house for shelter from another night of Israeli bombardment in the border area when the 1 a.m. strike brought the building down.

"I was so afraid. There was dirt and rocks and I couldn't see. Everything was black," said 13-year-old Noor Hashem, who survived, although her five siblings did not. She was pulled out of the ruins by her uncle, whose wife and five children also died.

Israel apologized for the deaths but blamed Hezbollah guerrillas, saying they had fired rockets into northern Israel from near the building.

The UN Security Council held an emergency meeting to debate a resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire -- a step Washington has stood nearly alone at the council in refusing until the disarmament of Hezbollah is assured.

In a jab at the U.S., UN chief Kofi Annan told the council in unusually frank terms that he was "deeply dismayed" his previous calls for a halt were ignored. "Action is needed now before many more children, women and men become casualties of a conflict over which they have no control," he said.

After news of the deaths emerged, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice phoned Lebanese Prime Minister Fuad Saniora and said she would stay in Jerusalem to continue work on a peace package, rather than make a planned visit yesterday to Beirut. Saniora said he told her not to come. Rice decided to cut her Mideast trip short and return to Washington this morning.

Graphic

Colour Photo: The Associated Press; A Lebanese Red Cross volunteer offers comfort to Jeinab Shalhoub, 66, who lost many members of her extended family in a building, in background, that was bombed by Israelis yesterday at the village of Qana, southern Lebanon.;

Colour Photo: The Associated Press; An Israeli soldier takes a position yesterday behind a cement wall along the border between Lebanon and northern Israel.

Load-Date: July 31, 2006

In Brief

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

August 1, 2006 Tuesday

FINAL C Edition

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Section: SPORTS; Pg. F5; In Brief

Length: 731 words

Byline: Vancouver Sun; News Services

Body

VISITING DUST DEVILS HAMMER C'S

The visiting Tri-City Dust Devils scored in each of the first four innings en route to an 8-1 walloping of the Vancouver Canadians at Nat Bailey Stadium on Monday night. The C's managed to score in the bottom of the fourth, but stranded 11 baserunners in the game.

MILWAUKEE'S MAGLOIRE BLAZES NEW TRAIL

NEW YORK -- The Portland Trail Blazers acquired all-star centre Jamaal Magloire from the Milwaukee Bucks on Monday for Steve Blake, Brian Skinner and Ha Seung-Jin. Magloire, a 28-year-old Toronto native, started all 82 games for the Bucks last season, averaging 9.2 points and a team-leading 9.5 rebounds per game.

BERRY NAMED ASSISTANT COACH of moose

Brad Berry is a new assistant coach with the Manitoba Moose, the Vancouver Canucks announced Monday. Berry, 41, joins former Winnipeg Jets teammate Scott Arniel behind the Moose bench. It is the first professional coaching assignment for Berry, after six seasons as a coach with the University of North Dakota Fighting Sioux. Berry played 241 games in the NHL from 1986-1994.

GUSHUE to HEADLINE CONTINENTAL CUP

WINNIPEG -- Olympic men's curling champion Brad Gushue of St. John's will headline the North American team at the 2006 Continental Cup of Curling Nov. 23-26 in Chilliwack. All the medallists from the Olympics will participate in the Ryder Cup-styled event, which pits the North American team against Europe over four days of play. The North American team also includes foursomes skipped by Calgary's Shannon Kleibrink, the women's bronze medallist, world silver medallists Jean-Michel Menard from Gatineau, Que., and world bronze medallist Kelly Scott of Kelowna.

BALAZS STAGES DRAMATIC COMEBACK

MAGOG, Que. -- Zsofi Balazs of Toronto made a splash in her debut at the Canadian open-water swim championship as the 16-year-old came from behind to win the women's 10-km race Monday. Balazs grabbed the

In Brief

lead on the eighth of 10 laps to earn the win in two hours, 13 minutes and nine seconds. Veteran Karley Stutzel of Victoria was second at 2:15:50, while Tara Ivanitz of Vernon was third in 2:17:12.

GERMANY SETS FREESTYLE RELAY RECORD

BUDAPEST, Hungary -- Germany set a world record in the women's 400-metre freestyle relay at the European swimming championships on Monday. The time was three minutes, 35.22 seconds. The previous record was held by Australia in 3:35.94, set at the 2004 Athens Olympics.

CANADA BEATS DEFENDING CHAMPION U.S.

TAIPEI, Taiwan -- Kate Psota of Burlington, Ont., hit a go-ahead two-run single in the fourth inning and threw three shutout innings for the save as Canada beat the defending champion U.S. 5-2 Monday in its Women's World Cup baseball opener. Starter Martine Nadeau of Quebec City gave up two runs on five hits and a walk in four innings of work to earn the win. Canada plays Cuba today.

WAR AFFECTS ISRAELI, LEBANESE TEAMS

NYON, Switzerland -- Two Israeli clubs in the UEFA Cup will play their "home" qualifying matches in neutral countries. UEFA said Monday it made the decision in view of the security situation in the region, where Israel is fighting Hezbollah. Hapoel Tel-Aviv FC plays its home tie against Domzale of Slovenia on Aug. 8, and Bnei Yehuda Tel-Aviv is at home to Lokomotiv Sofia of Bulgaria on Aug. 10.

- Lebanon pulled out of soccer's 2007 Asian Cup citing the conflict between Hezbollah and Israel, the Asian Football Confederation said. The Lebanese Football Association sent a withdrawal letter to the Kuala Lumpur-based AFC yesterday, saying it was unable to proceed "due to the tragic circumstances our country and people are passing through." Lebanon was next scheduled to visit Bahrain on Aug. 16 before facing Australia in Adelaide on Aug. 31.

ROONEY, RONALDO GET REACQUAINTED

MANCHESTER -- Thirty days after his World Cup ended in shameful dismissal against Portugal, Wayne Rooney renewed acquaintances with his nemesis Cristiano Ronaldo and returned to action as Manchester United captain in a 45-minute appearance against Macclesfield Town.

GRAMANTIK GETS PERMANENT GIG

OTTAWA -- Athletics Canada took the interim tag out of head coach Les Gramantik's title. Also Monday, track and field's governing body named Martin Goulet chief high performance officer. Gramantik, who was named interim head coach in September 2005, coached for Canada at three Olympic Games, five Commonwealth Games, eight world championships and two Pan American Games.

Load-Date: August 1, 2006

Saudi Arabia's moment of redemption?; Moderating Islam

The International Herald Tribune

September 2, 2006 Saturday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 6

Length: 1258 words

Byline: Afshin Molavi

Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

Flush with cash from high oil prices, ascendant in its battle with homegrown jihadists, buoyed by a newly robust private sector and entry into the World Trade Organization, and led by a popular, reform-minded king, Saudi Arabia has sputtered to life. After the dark days of the 1990s, marked by stagnation, drift and policy paralysis, the kingdom faces a brighter future.

As custodian of Islam's two holiest shrines, Mecca and Medina, and a heavyweight in councils of Islamic states, Saudi Arabia is a natural leader of a Muslim world in tumult. As the kingdom gets its own house in order, it's time it moved to assertively shape a more moderate, prosperous Muslim world.

King Abdullah clearly sees himself in this role. Last December, at the meeting of the Organization of Islamic Conference, he called on his fellow Muslim leaders to emulate "the radiant beacon" of medieval Islamic civilization a time of scholarship, moderation and wise jurisprudence that proved to be the "decisive catalyst in bringing enlightenment to the dark ages."

Abdullah decried today's extremist bloodletting as the act of miscreants and said he looks forward to "the spread of moderation that embodies the Islamic concept of tolerance" and the success of "Muslim inventors and industrialists, to an advanced Muslim technology, and Muslim youth who work for their life just as they work for the Hereafter, without excess or negligence, without any kind of extremism."

Few paid heed to Abdullah's speech at the time. It was drowned out in the headlines when President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran called for Israel to be wiped off the map. Today, across the Muslim world, Ahmadinejad's defiant speeches and incendiary rhetoric have made him a hero to many. Abdullah's voice of moderation barely registers a ripple. But the world should watch Abdullah closely. If his words are backed up with real action, Saudi Arabia could help transform a troubled swath of lands encompassing nearly one-fifth of humanity.

So far, Saudi Arabia's power to shape the Muslim world has mostly been exercised in damaging ways. The kingdom has used its clout and riches to fund a web of nongovernmental organizations, charities and religious schools that purvey the views of its intolerant Wahabbist establishment, poisoning seminaries and scholars from Bangladesh to Belgium.

Meanwhile, as the government looked the other way, private Saudi funds found their way into the coffers of Al Qaeda and Hamas. And Saudi Arabia's support for the Taliban a brutal, backward, deviant government that did a disservice to Islam should blacken the pages of Saudi history for many years.

Saudi Arabia 's moment of redemption? Moderating Islam

Teachers in Saudi Arabia's own schools both Saudis and the Syrians, Egyptians and Palestinians who came to the kingdom as radical Islamist "refugees" from their secular establishments at home purveyed a noxious blend of anti-Semitism, anti-Shiism and anti-Americanism that infected a generation of Saudis.

This indoctrination, coupled with the failings of modernity and anger at U.S. policies, helped produce 15 young Saudis willing to fly suicide missions into American towers, thousands of Saudis willing to do battle in Iraq and a lingering sense of anti-Shiism that could cause lasting instability in the kingdom.

Saudi Arabia's unwillingness even today to meaningfully challenge the entrenched Wahabbi establishment that dominates religious discourse in Mecca, the beating heart of the Islamic world, means that a city that could potentially be a lodestar of Islamic cosmopolitanism is instead a barren field of religious reactionaries. Western capitals may quietly applaud when Saudi religious scholars blast Hezbollah, but we should understand where such reaction comes from: a twisted anti-Shiite view of the world that will come back to bite the kingdom.

*

A year after the accession of King Abdullah, however, a new day seems to be dawning for Saudi Arabia. Citizens are pushing for and receiving more freedoms, a genuine civil-society space is emerging, newspaper opinion pages are experiencing a renaissance, the powers of the notorious religious police have been curbed, princely corruption is on the wane, and the economy is booming (and reforming).

Meanwhile, Abdullah has reached out to traditionally marginalized groups: women, disenchanted youth, the urban poor, liberal intellectuals, and Shiite, Sufi and Ismaeli minorities. He has been hailed by many Saudis as the "people's king." For the first time in several years, Saudis harbor hopes for a better future.

Amid today's crises the recent fighting in Lebanon, the showdown with the West over Iran's nuclear program, the war for Iraq's future, and the rising sense of Sunni-Shiite tension regionally Saudi Arabia plays potentially pivotal roles.

Riyadh is the only Arab capital that has meaningful influence over Tehran, and it also holds significant sway in Damascus. Its alliances with the Sunni tribes of Iraq could play a key role in gathering intelligence on Sunni insurgents, and its religious legitimacy makes it a potential arbiter of peace between Sunni and Shiite.

Saudi Arabia also has a strong voice in Japan and China two key markets for Saudi oil. And Abdullah's recent visit to Turkey marks a milestone, the Atatürkian-secularist state meeting the royalist-religious one on the field of pragmatism.

*

For Saudi Arabia to be an effective pan-Islamic leader, however, it must avoid alliances and decisions that make it look like a status-quo Sunni power protecting its narrow interests as the Cairo-Amman-Riyadh axis blaming Hezbollah for the war suggested. Attacking Hezbollah "adventurism," as the Saudis called it, won praise in Washington, but in Muslim popular opinion, it made Saudi Arabia look, at best, like a Sunni old-guard heavyweight protecting its interests; at worst, a U.S. lackey.

Riyadh also needs to find ways to reach out to Shiite communities across the region, in much the same way that it has done with some measure of effectiveness at home.

Saudi Arabia must also avoid a "cold war" with Iran. Like it or not, Iran's leaders have won a measure of respect on the Arab and Muslim street that Saudi Arabia could hardly match. Iran also remains a natural regional power, despite long-standing attempts to isolate it.

The Muslim world faces a critical moment in its history: The wheel could turn either toward greater Shiite-Sunni tension, a mounting standoff with the Western world, rising extremism and geopolitical rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia, or toward enacting the principles of moderation and prosperity outlined by Abdullah at the Mecca summit meeting.

Saudi Arabia 's moment of redemption? Moderating Islam

To enact those principles, Saudi Arabia should lead the way in promoting a new web of institutions that tackle the serious problems facing the Muslim world: unemployment and underemployment; religious intolerance; Shiite-Sunni tension; women's rights; human rights. It must also continue to strengthen its network of relationships with senior Iranian officials, cultivated over the past seven years.

What is standing in the way is the same Wahabbi religious establishment that helped create many of the problems in the first place. The Al-Saud rulers, wedded to this Wahabbi religious establishment in an old bargain of power dating back nearly three centuries, will never fulfill their potential to lead the Muslim world unless they effectively marginalize those voices.

Afshin Molavi is a fellow at the New America Foundation. He lived and worked in Saudi Arabia as a reporter in the 1990s.

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Load-Date: September 3, 2006

End of Document

News Summary

The New York Times
December 5, 2006 Tuesday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 3; Metropolitan Desk; Pg. 2

Length: 748 words

Body

INTERNATIONAL A3-17

Bush Accepts Resignation From Ambassador to U.N.

President Bush accepted the resignation of the American ambassador to the United Nations, John R. Bolton, conceding that the envoy could not win Senate confirmation and signaling that the administration is unwilling to make another end-run around Congressional opponents to keep Mr. Bolton in his job. A1

The announcement of Mr.

Bolton's resignation was greeted by United Nations officials with relief, while diplomats from other nations offered mixed assessments of his effectiveness during his 17 months as ambassador. A17

Israel Counters Abuse Claims

Israel's military, which has been accused of abuses in its war against Hezbollah, has declassified photographs, video images and prisoner interrogations to buttress its accusation that Hezbollah systematically fired from civilian neighborhoods and took cover in those areas to shield itself from attack. A1

More U.S. Advisers for Iraqis

American commanders in Iraq are shifting thousands of combat troops into advisory positions with Iraqi units. Commanders say they believe a major influx of American advisers can add spine and muscle to Iraqi units that will help them to move into the lead in improving security. A6

Four Americans were killed when a military helicopter suffered mechanical failures while flying over a lake in Anbar Province in western Iraq and made an emergency landing on the shore, American military officials said. A6

NATIONAL A18-25

Court Hears Arguments On Racial Integration

News Summary

By the time the Supreme Court finished hearing arguments on the student-assignment plans that two urban school systems use to maintain racial integration, the only question was how far the court would go in ruling such plans unconstitutional. A1

NASA Announces Moon Base

NASA announced plans for a permanent base on the Moon, to be started soon after astronauts return there around 2020. A1

A Focus on Paid Sick Days

With the Democratic Congress expected to move quickly to raise the minimum wage, many Democrats, women's organizations and liberal groups plan to fight on another workplace issue: paid sick days. A18

New Post for Recovery Efforts

Amid criticism that New Orleans's recovery is lagging over a year after Hurricane Katrina, Mayor C. Ray Nagin appointed an executive director for recovery management to lead the rebuilding efforts. A24

Trucker Guilty of 19 Deaths

A truck driver was found guilty of all charges and faces possible execution in the deaths of 19 illegal immigrants who suffocated in his airless trailer in South Texas in 2003. A20

Renewed Fears Over Medicare

Pharmacists and advocates for older Americans say they are worried that tens of thousands of low-income Medicare beneficiaries will again have trouble getting medications next month. A24

NEW YORK/REGION B1-6

Amid Shimmering Casinos, 4 Died on Dark Streets

Atlantic City has experienced both boom and bust in the 25 years since legalized gambling helped transform it into a popular destination for weekend slots players. But alongside the shimmering casinos, an underground economy also caters to the addicted, like the four crack-addled prostitutes found dead in a ditch just beyond the city limits. A1

E. Coli Linked to Taco Bell

At least 39 people in central New Jersey and on Long Island were infected with E. coli bacteria in an outbreak of food poisoning last month that epidemiologists have traced to the Taco Bell chain, health officials said. A1

Unequal Property Taxes

Disparities in New York City real property taxes have widened in the 25 years since the state overhauled its tax system under court pressure, an analysis has found. B1

BUSINESS DAY C1-14

Concerns in S.E.C. Inquiry

Congressional investigators have found that a second official at the Securities and Exchange Commission had expressed concerns about how the agency was conducting its inquiry into a prominent hedge fund. C1

Financial Custodians Merge

News Summary

Bank of New York and Mellon Financial of Pittsburgh have agreed to merge in a \$16.5 billion deal that will create a securities-processing powerhouse in a little-noticed corner of the financial world. C1

OBITUARIES B7

Robert Volpe

A painter and a police officer who put his skills to use as the New York City Police Department's one-man art-theft squad, he was 63. B7

EDITORIAL A26-27

Editorials: Losing the good war; Mr. Bolton resigns; collapse of a cholesterol drug; signs of energy.

Columns: Thomas B. Edsall, Nicholas D. Kristof.

Crossword E2

TV Listings E13

Weather D8

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Load-Date: December 5, 2006

End of Document

Brainpower: America's #1 enemy

University Wire

August 9, 2006 Wednesday

Copyright 2006 Scroll via U-Wire

Section: COLUMN

Length: 687 words

Byline: By Peter Nguyen, Scroll; **SOURCE:** BYU-Idaho

Dateline: REXBURG, Idaho

Body

The thing is, it takes too much brainpower for me to figure out how the conflict with Israel and Hezbollah affects me. It actually hurts my brain when I have to think about it. It's so much easier to make base opinions on feelings rather than fact.

See, the problem with the news isn't that it's complicated. The problem lies with these East Coast intellectual elitists who write the news. They think they're so smart just because they graduated from high school. They think they're so cultured because they watch CNN and read The New York Times.

The only thing I feel the New York Times is good for is to wrap fish and to clean windows. How many trees had to die for those fish to be wrapped?

To paraphrase Stephen Colbert, I don't trust newspapers, - too much fact, not enough heart. The only thing I trust is my heart and my gut. Just think about how much better the world would be right now if everyone would just think with their heart instead of their brain.

Now, some of you are going to say it's not physiologically possible to think with your heart. That's because you're relying on facts; try using something reliable like feelings. My feelings tell me that anything is possible if I put in enough heart.

Now the brain isn't all bad, I mean, the autonomic nervous system is pretty neat and it does provide a good skull cushion for football players. But other than that, using your brain is what led us to global warming and the Democratic Party - they're both super annoying and you can't get rid of them.

I also feel BYU-Idaho is a great testament to the magical things that can happen if people would just think with their heart instead of their brain. I have never been more proud to be around such a unified group of students who have said "no" to fact and "yes" to feelings.

If you were to search your heart, feelings would beat facts every time in an argument. Facts have to be backed up with sourcing and logic. With feelings, it's all you. I'd like to see someone use facts against this statement: "I feel George W. Bush is the best president the United States has ever had." If you were to use facts to argue with the way I feel about George Bush, I would just reply with, "I don't feel that your facts are true."

When you use your heart, you'll never lose an argument.

Brainpower: America 's #1 enemy

The BYU-I student body's commitment to feelings over fact and heart over brain is evident when reading Scroll. Take, for example, the letters to the editor. Typically, the letters we receive don't have anything to do with our news reporting, world events or the weekly Scroll editor's opinion called the editorial.

Instead, in one instance, students chose to react to a guy who was trying to get a rise out of women. These letters don't resort to logical discussion, instead they are filled with things I can wrap my brain around like passion and drama.

Luckily for all of us, finding logic in Scroll editorials is like finding a hair in your soup. It's rare that it happens and nobody likes it.

This week's attempt in promoting the brain comes from Leslie Bardsley and Stephanie Long.

First, Ms. Bardsley, if you start asking students to put more thought into their education instead of skating through, you might as well ask them to start voting. We both know that is not going to happen.

Second, Ms. Long, your attempt to reasonably justify the Israeli war on Hezbollah is a mistake. We don't need reasons. They're terrorists! The emotions that word conjures up is enough to justify anything and everything.

Instead, you need to follow the example of President Bush. Never justify your actions with facts, only feelings. While I'm sure he has plenty of facts, the heart is so much more convincing. For example he uses the traumatic events of 9/11 for everything and so should you. Don't confuse us with your logical justifications.

Only the prideful use facts.

So, I applaud everyone who decided to uphold the universal language of pathos by writing letters to the editor about how BYU-I girls are prettier than EFY girls. World events don't concern us BYU-I students. We should just leave that to people who like to think.

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Load-Date: August 9, 2006

Tarnished legacy clouds Sharon's 79th birthday

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

February 25, 2007 Sunday

FIRST EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A10

Length: 692 words

Byline: By Craig Nelson Cox News Service

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Ariel Sharon, still bedridden and deep in a coma after a massive stroke nearly 14 months ago, turns 79 on Tuesday.

Israelis will mark the former prime minister's birthday with sadness at the unlikelihood that Sharon will ever recover. Few, however, will be nostalgic.

Sharon's legacy no longer seems quite as shiny as the image of the endearing paterfamilias of his latter years suggests.

Israel's government is awash in charges of corruption and sexual scandal. Its vaunted military and intelligence services are under investigation after last summer's disappointing performance against Lebanon's radical Islamic Hezbollah militants. Hamas, an organization sworn to Israel's destruction, is a leading political and military force in the Palestinian territories.

The blame for these predicaments falls partly - and in some instances, mainly - on Sharon, said analysts and ordinary Israelis.

"I don't miss Sharon" exclaimed Nuriel Zarifi, 35, a Jerusalem coffee shop owner who said he had supported Sharon but now regretted it. "Look at Gaza! Look at Lebanon! Look at the corruption! I feel cheated."

Sharon's legacy is clouded in part by the scent of corruption that tinged his ascent to the premiership in the 1990s and lingered after he was elected prime minister in 2001.

His eldest son, Omri, 42, pleaded guilty last year of illegally raising more than \$1.3 million for his father's campaign for leadership of the Likud Party in 1999.

Sharon's youngest son, Gilad, 36, was investigated but never indicted on charges of bribe-taking, though he admitted to destroying documents and tape recordings sought as potential evidence by an Israeli court.

Sharon himself was the subject of at least three corruption investigations in his premiership, though charges were never filed.

Tarnished legacy clouds Sharon's 79th birthday

"In terms of proper government, the Sharon era will be remembered as a very dark era, and the damage he caused is still being felt," said Barak Calev, head of the legal department of the non-profit, non-partisan Movement for Quality Government in Israel.

Indeed, since Sharon suffered a stroke and lapsed into a coma, investigations of his political heirs and appointees has reinforced the impression that under his rule, insider dealing and conflicts of interest were normal, and loyalty was valued more highly than competence or rectitude.

The list includes his former deputy and protégé, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, who is under investigation about his role in the privatization of a bank two years ago when he was finance minister.

Moshe Karadi, Israel's chief of police, resigned last week after an independent commission accused him of failing to investigate the department's links to organized crime.

And President Moshe Katsav vacated his official residence last month to fight almost certain indictment on charges of rape and abuse of power. Another official, former justice minister Haim Ramon, was convicted of sexual misconduct for forcibly kissing a **female** soldier.

"Sharon and all his family were responsible for the deterioration of public standards and values that you see in Israel today," said Eyal Naveh, a professor of history at Tel Aviv University.

Sharon's political and military image has also suffered since his illness. Rocket firings from Gaza, the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers and the war with **Hezbollah** have taken their toll.

Though out of power and bedridden, Sharon shares partial blame for the war's failures because of appointments to the military command made while he was still in power, said Efraim Inbar, director the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies in Ramat Gan.

But the reassessment of Sharon's legacy does not mean he is held in wide disrepute.

When he is eulogized, Sharon is likely to be remembered as the last of Israel's charismatic, powerful leaders - a man with a strategic vision.

He was "a hero in the 1972 Yom Kippur war, promoted settlements in the 1970s and 1980s and defeated (Palestinian leader Yasser) Arafat in the 2001-2005 terror war," Steinberg said.

"Regardless of what he has done, he will be remembered as the last founding father of the generation present at the creation of the state. Everyone else is their son," Naveh said.

Graphic

PHOTO

PHOTO - Former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has been in a coma since a stroke nearly 14 months ago. Getty Images

Load-Date: June 26, 2007

Israel's moral dilemma

University Wire

January 23, 2007 Tuesday

Copyright 2007 Cornell Daily Sun via U-Wire

Section: COLUMN

Length: 1161 words

Byline: By Ben Birnbaum, Cornell Daily Sun; **SOURCE:** Cornell U.

Dateline: ITHACA, N.Y.

Body

I had never been in a bomb shelter before winter break. By the end of my two weeks in Israel, I had visited several.

I was there with 500 other Jewish student volunteers to paint the drab, claustrophobic shelters that thousands of Israeli families called home for weeks this summer as 4,000 rockets rained down on the northern part of the country during its war with Hezbollah in southern Lebanon.

We painted flowers, we painted animals -- anything to make the spaces less threatening to the children who will spend several more weeks in them when -- and it is only a matter of when -- Hezbollah decides it's in its interest (or Iran's) to start Round Two.

I hope I'm wrong. Because Round One was painful and bloody enough for the people of both countries. And as bad as they were for my friends and family in Israel, they were far worse for the people of Lebanon.

While the Lebanese civilian toll was relatively low for a 34-day conflict in one of the world's most densely populated countries -- NATO's Kosovo campaign claimed more civilian lives per day -- hundreds still died who didn't deserve to.

Few went so far as to accuse Israel of targeting innocent Lebanese, asserting rather that the Israel Defense Forces simply didn't exhibit enough "caution" in its pursuit of Hezbollah.

Fair enough. I think we all can agree that invading armies operating in areas with innocent people around should exercise the utmost caution. And surely however much caution one shows, it is always possible to exercise more.

Yet what these critics conveniently forgot or ignored was that in today's wars, caution comes at a price. In war, as in life, there are tradeoffs.

In the wars of yesteryear, where uniformed armies fought other uniformed armies on battlefields far removed from civilian areas, the tradeoff was simple: Kill or be killed. Caution, in short, was rarely necessary.

In the wars of today, where uniformed armies fight bands of Islamist radicals who wear no uniforms and operate out of civilian areas, the calculus is different. Every degree of caution exercised protecting the other side's civilians is likely to entail greater danger to one's own civilians, not to mention the brave soldiers protecting them.

Israel 's moral dilemma

Today's ethical soldiers and commanders face excruciating moral dilemmas, many of which they must resolve in the blink of an eye. Do I shoot this guy who's running toward me with what looks like a gun even though I'm not sure? Do we launch a missile at the car of this suicide bomber on his way to a blow up a bus if it entails inadvertently killing two or three civilians?

Who is a civilian, anyway? Are all people to be divided between civilians and combatants? If so, what do we consider the man who shelters combatants or keeps munitions in his basement? How about the terror group's spiritual leaders, who bless and inspire violence but don't necessarily order or take part in it?

I pose these questions not because I have the answers, but because there are none. Reasonable people of great moral fiber can and will disagree.

Al Qaeda et al are unbothered by these questions, a clear tactical advantage. In their eyes, the enemy is one, and all its people deserving targets -- soldiers, men, women, children, babies.

While we in the world of civilized democracies can ill afford to stoop to their level, there is a limit to how much of our own blood we should be willing to spill to protect the other side's blood. To paraphrase a line in fellow columnist Ari Rabkin's fall column "Death and the Innocents Abroad," I suspect that those who enjoin us to avoid civilian casualties 'at all costs' don't realize how high 'all costs' could be."

Even the Israel Defense Forces, who have waged counter-terrorism operations with more caution than any army in history -- I challenge anyone to provide me with a counter-example -- still operates by a principle that should animate the armies of every sovereign nation: The lives of one's own citizens take precedence over the lives of other nations' citizens.

A grisly tradeoff, I admit. Stark in its win-lose calculus. It's why this country and others should avoid war whenever possible and strive for win-win diplomacy. And yet most of us know in our hearts that there have always been and will always be situations in which war really is the only option to preserve peace and justice. That means, unfortunately, that innocent people will continue to die -- that is, until either we have refined the perfect weapons or our enemies have stopped using civilians as shields,

And in the age of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, the stakes are higher than ever. Even the most principled leaders may be forced to make decisions that allow innumerable thousands of innocent people to die in one fell swoop in order to prevent an equal number of their own citizens from suffering the same fate.

It's a decision that has been made at least once in our country's history ...

At the end of World War II, President Truman ordered atomic weapons to be dropped on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to facilitate a Japanese surrender. About 200,000 people were killed, but the bombs had their intended effect. Japan waved the white flag, and the planned invasion of the mainland was averted, saving as many American (and Japanese) lives as the bomb had ended.

And it's a decision that could be forced upon another country (guess who) sooner than you think ...

Over the past few months, even in the face of economic sanctions and international isolation, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has edged his country closer to nuclear weapons as he continues threatening that the Jewish State will be "wiped off the map."

Recent reports suggest that Israel is preparing an air campaign to destroy Iran's reactors before the country reaches the technologically crucial "point of no return".

This shouldn't surprise anyone. In 1982, Israel launched a successful air attack on Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor. And yet, a strike on Iran would be infinitely more difficult. The Iranians, having learned from Iraq's mistakes, have dispersed their nuclear facilities throughout the country. It raises many strategic questions

Israel 's moral dilemma

And moral ones. Many of Iran's facilities are near civilian areas. A strike would result in the deaths of thousands, maybe tens of thousands.

And yet the alternative could be much worse. A nuclear-armed missile that hits the heart of Tel Aviv would kill two million people. A retaliatory strike on Iran would kill millions more.

Those who would tell Israel not to execute such a strike are essentially asking it to play Russian Roulette with its existence.

It may do just that, deciding that the political, military, and moral costs of a strike outweigh the risk of staying put and hoping for the best. And yet only Israel has the right to make that decision

The choice will be strategically excruciating. It will be morally troubling. And it will be made by the time you finish finals.

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Load-Date: January 23, 2007

End of Document

Starred quality

Guardian.com

August 18, 2006

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theguardian

Length: 1458 words

Highlight: Welcome to the Wrap, Guardian Unlimited's digest of the best of the day's papers.

Body

NEW GRADE STARS IN A-LEVEL DEBATE

How many 18-year-olds actually need the Clearing supplements that bulge from the Independent and the Guardian today? Judging from their A-level results, it is hard to imagine that many have failed to get their grades.

Here are some of the statistics highlighted by the Times: 24.1% of candidates achieved an A grade, and As are now over a fifth of all passes; 57% of pupils sitting further maths got an A; and one 18-year-old was awarded 10 of them. Yes, 10. She is going to read natural sciences at Cambridge.

Happily for the papers, one of the top performers - and there are a lot of them - was a red-haired model called Lily Cole, who is also going to Cambridge (though she has deferred her entry until next year, so that she can earn more money first). The Star takes a special interest in Mel Slade, Theo Walcott's girlfriend, who refused to divulge her grades but said they were "really good". Ms Slade has AS-levels in psychology, biology and chemistry and an A-level in critical thinking, which ought to serve her well in her encounters with the tabloids.

The Wrap was alarmed, however, to see that that Telegraph's front page carried no pictures of clever young women from an independent girls' school - still less Lily Cole. Time was when you could rely on the Telegraph to splash with a photo of an attractive female, no matter how flimsy the peg. What do we have instead? Salman Rushdie, Steven Gerrard, Admiral Byng (a sailor who was shot on the quarterdeck after failing to retake Minorca in 1757 and may be pardoned) and five young men from a boys' grammar in Barnet, north London. Something is clearly amiss at the paper.

The Telegraph is pleased that clever pupils are apparently choosing tougher subjects because they realise it will give them an edge in university applications. It also welcomes the rise in maths entries - achieved, say sceptics, through reducing the content that has to be learned - but says the fall in chemistry and physics is alarming.

"The most striking aspect of these statistics is that the proportion of top grades awarded has not only risen but surged by the second largest amount in four decades. Even the most dedicated defender of the status quo should admit that there is no obvious educational explanation," says the Times. "A levels should distinguish between the impressive and the exceptional, but are failing to do so." The answer, it says, is to create an A-starred grade.

Starred quality

The Guardian disagrees, saying such a grade could "fuel exam neurosis" and it would be better to release pupils' coursework marks to universities. "Performance in exams almost certainly is stronger than 10 or 20 years ago, but that is not the same as saying that pupils are now brighter or better educated," says the Guardian. "Technique can substitute for understanding, as Irwin demonstrates to his pupils in Alan Bennett's play *The History Boys*."

- * Record passes revive calls for review of exam system

- * The wrong row

- * Telegraph: Science first

- * Sun: Three As at the age of 11

- * Times: Top-heavy

UK PLANS TO REPATRIATE 500 CHILDREN

The rest of today's leads run the gambit. John Prescott's dismissal of George Bush's Middle Eastern policy as "crap" is echoed on the front of the Independent by several other Labour MPs and the mayor of London, Ken Livingstone. The paper admits its own editorial would have delivered a slightly more sophisticated analysis, but says the deputy PM's remark is a "refreshing antidote to the spin culture". Mr Prescott will be pleased.

The Guardian reports on plans to repatriate 500 Vietnamese children who sought asylum in Britain back to their home country. None have relatives here and many are thought to have been smuggled into the country for prostitution or to work in nail parlours or cannabis factories. The Home Office is also considering returning children from Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo, the paper says. In the past, unaccompanied minors have been allowed to stay until they are 18.

The FT splashes with news of a 10bn deal to replace Saudi Arabia's fighter jets with 72 Eurofighters. It will "extend Britain's biggest export deal for 25 years", the paper says, and is a major boost for BAE Systems and its European partners EADS and Finmeccanica.

After ripping apart David Cameron's views on foreign policy and the terror threat, the Telegraph finds the Tory leader's latest policy venture more to its liking. The Conservatives are considering a revival of the right-to-buy scheme championed by Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s, the paper reports. Council tenants would be able to convert their rent or housing benefit into mortgage payments.

Doubts creep in ("Where would they find the money to repair the roof?") but the paper nonetheless describes it as a "bold idea".

- * 500 children face forcible repatriation

- * Independent: Labour agrees: Bush is crap

- * FT: Saudis in \$19bn Eurofighter deal

- * Telegraph: Tory plans to expand home ownership

LEBANESE ARMY ENTERS BORDER ZONE

The Times watches Lebanese troops head towards the border with Israel for the first time in 40 years. "In the 1970s the area was largely under the control of Palestinian guerrillas, in the 1980s Israel occupied much of the region and in the 1990s and until yesterday it was governed by *Hizbullah*," the paper reports. "Under orders to secure the Lebanese-Israeli border and disarm anyone with an unauthorised weapon, Brigadier General Charles Sheikhani said that his troops were up to the job."

Starred quality

Locals - and some of the soldiers themselves - were more sceptical. "Frankly I doubt our being here is going to make much difference," an army lorry driver says. "I know the army. It is not in control of this area."

* **Hizbullah** fighters vanish as Lebanese army rolls in

* Times: Under-equipped, under pressure

BALCONY TRAGEDY FATHER 'WANTS TO DIE'

The Daily Mail, in particular, has harsh words for the British father who fell from a balcony in Crete this week with his son and daughter. The six-year-old boy died instantly, but the two-year-old girl and her father survived.

"The callous act by 32-year-old [John] Hogan, whose suicide attempt came after wife Natasha said she was leaving him, has shocked Britons and Greeks alike," the paper says. He is likely to be charged with murder and attempted murder.

Mr Hogan, who has told hospital staff he wants to die, had reportedly taken anti-depressants and alcohol before the incident and the Mail says the family has a history of mental illness.

* Father under police guard after fall which killed son

* Mail: 'I wish I'd died': self pity of suicide father

NO NEW WATER BANS IN PIPELINE

Good news in the Telegraph. Thanks to householders' prudence - even in areas where there is no hosepipe ban - and the recent cooler weather, the worst of the drought is over. No new hosepipe bans are likely to be introduced, according to Water UK, which does not venture to say when the existing ones might be lifted. But the news that catastrophe has been averted is not enough to mollify the Telegraph.

"The British are a gardening people," the paper ruminates mournfully. "We enjoy the rhythm of the seasons; the fresh air and exercise of digging, mowing and weeding do us good. Water companies, which have failed to marshal supplies, now say that no worse measures need be taken against consumers.

"It is too late for hundreds of garden centres, which have gone bust after seeing business literally drying up. This is a further sadness, for a visit to the garden centre has become for many almost a religious ritual. To sniff the damp compost of a thousand tempting plants refreshes the soul. ... Hosepipe banners have a lot to answer for."

Meanwhile, on the letters page, readers are grappling with new and alarming problems quite unrelated to the issue of what to pack in a carry-on.

"Sir - We have been invaded by a new (to us) type of spider - elongated body; pinhead when young; half an inch when mature; long, jointed spindly legs. They vibrate madly when approached. They seem immune to insecticides. Any suggestions on permanent eradication?"

" Sir - We have been invaded by a new (to us) type of spider - elongated body; pinhead when young; half an inch when mature; long, jointed spindly legs. They vibrate madly when approached. They seem immune to insecticides. Any suggestions on permanent eradication?"

* Telegraph: Letters

COMING UP ON GUARDIAN UNLIMITED TODAY

Budget airline Ryanair has issued the government with a seven-day "ultimatum" to restore airport security measures to normal levels or risk being sued for compensation.

A 22-year-old man will appear in court charged over the attempted firebombing of a mosque.

Starred quality

A 1.5bn wave of new hospitals will be built under the private finance initiative (PFI), the government has announced.

Load-Date: August 18, 2006

End of Document

How many more must they kill?; But Blair and Bush still refuse to act

Birmingham Post
July 31, 2006, Monday
First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 660 words

Byline: Jonathan Walker and Emma Pinch

Body

Tony Blair was under growing pressure to stand up to George Bush last night after 37 children were killed in an Israeli bombing raid on Lebanon.

One of his staunchest allies, Birmingham MP Khalid Mah-mood, described Britain's stance as "outrageous" and called for the Government to urge the US to take action to stop the bloodshed.

"It is outrageous that we are standing by and watching this go on," he said. "Enough is enough and we need to be far more vocal in calling for Israel to stop."

Mr Mahmood (Lab Perry Barr), one of the few Muslim MPs in the Commons, has generally supported the British Government's foreign policy, including the close alliance with the United States.

His comments followed reports that the Cabinet is split over the Middle East crisis, with Jack Straw, the Leader of the Commons and former Foreign Secretary, attacking Israel's "disproportionate" offensive.

Mr Blair's spokesman denied the Cabinet was divided yesterday. He said the Prime Minister did not endorse or criticise Mr Straw's remarks.

But Mr Blair and President George Bush have refused to call for an immediate ceasefire, arguing that Hezbollah's rocket attacks on Israel must end for any peace agreement to be sustainable.

At least 60 civilians, 37 of them children, died in an Israeli air-strike on the town of Qana in southern Lebanon.

Last night Mr Blair described the destruction of Qana as "an absolutely tragic situation" and called for an immediate United Nations resolution to halt the Middle East bloodshed.

Mr Mahmood said: "We cannot continue saying we are working towards peace in the Middle East and allow things like this to go on.

"I think Jack Straw has hit the nail on the head. We need more people to raise the issue, and the Prime Minister to take the lead.

"I think it is deliberate targeting of women and children. We have to condemn it and put a stop to it.

How many more must they kill? But Blair and Bush still refuse to act

"It is true that only the United States really has the power to make it stop, but if Britain spoke out I think the US would listen.

"I wholly condemn the attacks by Hezbollah on innocent people in Israel, but equally we must condemn attacks by Israel on innocent people in Lebanon."

Meanwhile Selly Oak MP Dr Lynne Jones was one of nine Birmingham women deported from Israel yesterday on a mission to build peaceful links between Britain's second city and that of Ramallah.

She described their treatment as "quite appalling" and claimed the refusal was a clumsy bid by the Israelis to screen from public view what was happening in Palestine.

The women were taking books and money raised by Birmingham's Ramallah Twinning Committee to create a library at a refugee camp. The MP had joined the group after a similar peace visit by the group, which included Yvonne Washbrook, president of Birmingham Trades Council, and Salma Iqbal, a Respect Coalition candidate in the last Birmingham City Council elections, was turned away last year.

The Israeli embassy was informed of their detailed itinerary, flights and passport numbers beforehand to facilitate access into the country. But on arrival at Tel Aviv airport at 3.45am yesterday the group, after interrogation, were sent to a detention centre then put on a flight home.

Dr Jones said: "I find it horrendous that the Israeli authorities can deny entry to what should be an independent Palestinian state, so we can't get there to see what they are doing.

"First they said they did not know anything about our trip, and when challenged they changed their tune. We were in constant contact with the British Embassy and the Israeli Foreign Affairs Ministry and the Ministry of the Interior, and it was clear they had all the details about our trip.

She said they were kept for 11 hours with only water to drink, and the interrogation had reduced one of their group to tears.

"I will come again on parliamentary business if I can and I will look for the opportunity to confront the people behind this outrageous decision," she said.

Reports, Page 7

Perspective, Page 11

Graphic

A civil defence worker carries the body of a child recovered from the rubble of a demolished building after the attack on the village of Qana in Lebanon' Deported from Israel: Lynne Jones and Salma Iqbal

Load-Date: July 31, 2006

News Summary

The New York Times
September 14, 2006 Thursday
Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2006 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 3; Metropolitan Desk; Pg. 2

Length: 743 words

Body

INTERNATIONAL A3-17

90 Killed or Found Dead On a Grim Day in Baghdad

Nearly 90 Iraqis were killed or found dead in Baghdad, an Iraqi Interior Ministry official said, making for a particularly grim day even amid the intense sectarian violence that has gripped the capital. A10

Shooting at Montreal College

A man carrying an automatic rifle shot and killed a woman and wounded 19 other people, several critically, at the campus of a junior college in Montreal. The gunman died after exchanging shots with police. A17

Resistance to Rape Law

The Pakistani government has run into difficulties, including a postponed vote, in its efforts to pass a law to end the worst abuses suffered by women who report rape or are accused of adultery under an Islamic ordinance. A8

Report Criticizes Hezbollah

Amnesty International accused Hezbollah of war crimes and "serious violations of international humanitarian law" during the Lebanon war. In August the group criticized Israel's behavior during the war. A17

Chinese Storm Claims Disputed

China's emergency response to Typhoon Saomai in August was trumpeted as a triumph. But an internal report by the official New China News Agency, compiled in the days after the storm and intended just for the authorities, bluntly contradicted the official picture. A3

NATIONAL A18-25

Some Movement Is Seen On National Security Plans

The White House took a critical step in its effort to get Congressional blessing for President Bush's domestic eavesdropping program, but it ran into increasingly fierce resistance from leading Republicans over its plan to try terror suspects being held at Guantanamo Bay. A1

News Summary

Pet Projects Rule Is Delayed

Leaders of the House of Representatives postponed consideration of a rule requiring individual lawmakers to sign their names to some of the pet projects they tuck into major tax and spending bills. A22

Big-Box Wage Rule Fails

The first efforts to impose minimum-wage regulations on big-box stores like Wal-Mart unraveled in Chicago, as its City Council fell three votes short of overriding Mayor Richard M. Daley's veto of the measure. A18

Push to Repeal Military Law

Gay rights groups are making the biggest push in nearly a decade to repeal a 1993 law, known as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," that bars openly gay people from serving in the military. A18

Border Fence Plan in House

House Republicans announced that they would move swiftly to pass legislation requiring the Bush administration to build 700 miles of fencing along the Mexican border to help stem the flow of illegal immigrants and drugs. A24

NEW YORK/REGION B1-6

An Immigrant's Tale Turns Out to Be Just That

Genealogical researchers have uncovered the truth about Annie Moore, the immigrant memorialized by bronze statues in New York Harbor and in Ireland. She was indeed the first immigrant to set foot on Ellis Island -- but she did not, as legend has it, go to Texas, marry a descendant of the Irish liberator Daniel O'Connell and die under the wheels of a streetcar. A1

A Letter From a Priest

A letter written in 1984 by Msgr. Charles M. Kavanagh, the former chief fund-raiser for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York, to the parents of a man who accuses the priest of abusing him as a teenager has resurfaced. The man says the letter shows that Monsignor Kavanagh touched him in a sexual manner. B1

Thoughts on Longevity

Asian women in Bergen County, N.J., -- who live longer than any other ethnic subgroup of people anywhere in the nation, according to federal statistics -- attribute their longevity to a healthy diet, belief in God and their close-knit communities. B1

OBITUARIES D8

Governor Ann Richards

The former governor of Texas, a witty and flamboyant Democrat who went from homemaker to national political celebrity, she was 73. D8

BUSINESS DAY C1-14

Interior Department Ethics

The Interior Department's inspector general, Earl E. Devaney, responsible for investigating abuses and overseeing operations, accused the top officials at the agency of tolerating widespread ethical failures. A1

Google Founders' Charity

The founders of Google, the popular search engine company, have set up a philanthropy, giving it seed money of about \$1 billion. But unlike most charities, this one will be for-profit. A1

News Summary

Business Digest C2

EDITORIAL A26-27

Editorials: Port security won't bankrupt us; extreme tuberculosis; Verlyn Klinkenborg on the death of a farmer.

Columns: David Brooks, Bob Herbert.

Bridge: E9

TV Listings: E11

Crossword: E8

Weather: D7

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Load-Date: September 14, 2006

End of Document

Pelosi tours market in Damascus

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

April 4, 2007 Wednesday

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Length: 755 words

Byline: Zeina Karam Associated Press

Body

DAMASCUS, Syria -- House Speaker Nancy Pelosi mingled with Syrians in a market and made the sign of the cross at a Christian tomb Tuesday in a visit to hard-line Syria that was criticized by President Bush.

Bush said the visit sends mixed signals to Syria's government, which his administration accuses of supporting terrorism. The United States says Syria allows Iraqi Sunni insurgents to operate from its territory, backs the Hezbollah and Hamas militant groups and is trying to destabilize the Lebanese government. Syria denies the allegations.

Pelosi's visit to Syria was the latest challenge to the White House by congressional Democrats, who are taking a more assertive role in influencing policy in the Middle East and the Iraq war. The Bush administration has resisted calls for direct talks to help ease the crisis in Iraq and make progress in the Israel-Palestinian peace process.

Soon after Pelosi's arrival in Damascus, Bush criticized her visit.

"A lot of people have gone to see President Assad ... and yet we haven't seen action. He hasn't responded," he told reporters at a Rose Garden news conference. "Sending delegations doesn't work. It's simply been counterproductive."

Pelosi, a California Democrat, did not comment on Bush's remarks before heading from the airport to Damascus' historic Old City. She was scheduled to meet President Bashar Assad on Wednesday.

Wearing a flowered head scarf and a black abaya robe, Pelosi visited the 8th-century Omayyad Mosque, shaking hands with Syrian women inside and watching men in a religion class sitting cross-legged on the floor.

She stopped at an elaborate tomb, said to contain the head of John the Baptist, and made the sign of the cross. About 10 percent of Syria's 18 million people are Christian.

At the nearby outdoor Bazouriyeh market, Syrians crowded around, offering her dried figs and nuts and chatting with her. She strolled past shops selling olive oil soaps, spices and herbs, and at one point bought some coconut sweets and eyed jewelry and carpets.

Democrats have argued that the U.S. should engage its top rivals in the Mideast -- Iran and Syria -- to make headway in easing crises in Iraq, Lebanon and the Israeli-Arab peace process. Last year, the bipartisan Iraq Study Group recommended talks with the two countries.

Pelosi tours market in Damascus

Bush rejected the recommendations. But in February, the U.S. joined a gathering of regional diplomats in Baghdad that included Iran and Syria for talks on Iraq.

Visiting neighboring Lebanon on Monday, Pelosi shrugged off White House criticism of her trip to Syria, noting that Republican lawmakers met Assad on Sunday without comment from the Bush administration.

"I think that it was an excellent idea for them to go," she said. "And I think it's an excellent idea for us to go as well."

She said she hoped to rebuild lost confidence between Washington and Damascus and will tell Syrian leaders that Israel will talk peace with them only if Syria stops supporting Palestinian militants. She has said she will also talk to the Syrians about Iraq, their role in Lebanon and their support for the Hezbollah militant group.

"We have no illusions but we have great hope," said Pelosi, who met with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in the West Bank city of Ramallah earlier Tuesday.

Relations between the U.S. and Syria reached a low point in early 2005 when Washington withdrew its ambassador to Damascus to protest the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. Many Lebanese blamed Syria -- which had troops in Lebanon at the time -- for the assassination. Damascus denied involvement.

Washington has since succeeded in largely isolating Damascus, with its European and Arab allies shunning Assad. The last high-ranking U.S. official to visit Syria was then-Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage in January 2005.

The isolation, however, has begun to crumble in recent months, with visits by U.S. lawmakers and some European officials.

Syria treated Pelosi's visit as a diplomatic victory. "Welcome Dialogue," proclaimed a front-page headline in one state-run newspaper next to a photo of Pelosi.

Syria's ambassador to the U.S., Imad Moustapha, described the visit as a "positive step" but said "it does not necessarily mean that the U.S. administration would suddenly change its position."

In comments to the state-run Al-Thawra daily published Tuesday, he said the visit should be a "reminder that even though we might disagree on politics, we should remain diplomatically engaged in dialogue to reach some understandings."

Load-Date: April 4, 2007

Labouring for dignity of dead as bombs fall nearby

The Irish Times
July 31, 2006 Monday

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Section: WORLD; Qana Bombing; Pg. 8

Length: 1391 words

Byline: Lara Marlowe in Qana

Body

There are only two families in the Karheiba neighbourhood on the outskirts of Qana: the Hashems and the Shalhoub. So all of the more than 54 people who died yesterday - buried alive, crushed and suffocated in the basement of Abbas Hashem's unfinished house - bore the same two family names.

The house was at the edge of town, clinging to a hillside. As shown by the drying tobacco leaves, the olive trees on the terraces, and the plough outside, the Hashems and Shalhoub are farmers. They thought their wives, children and disabled would be safe in the Hashems' basement.

Mohamed Ali Shalhoub was the first man I saw carried out on a stretcher when I arrived with civil defence workers from Tyre at 8.30am. He was writhing with pain, but I was able to speak to him six hours later in a hospital in Tyre.

"We were sleeping when the first bomb hit at one in the morning," Shalhoub said. "I was thrown across the room. I fell on my face and my legs were buried under the rubble."

His wife, Rebab, herself wounded, used her hands to free the couple's four-year-old son, then freed her husband.

Mohamed is a paraplegic, so Rebab dragged him outside and placed him under a tree. For 7¼ hours, he lay there with a broken leg and badly bruised face. "I could hear Israeli planes and helicopters and drones the whole time," he said.

"There were explosions 150 metres away. I was waiting to be hit again."

Doctors put Mohamed, Rebab and little Hassan Shalhoub in the same hospital room, and the wife listened, interjecting: "May God destroy Israel."

Though Rebab saved their son, Hassan, three close relatives were killed: the couple's six-year-old daughter, Mohamed's brother and his paraplegic sister. "If the Israelis had not continued bombing around us, we could have saved half the children," Rebab said.

About two-thirds of more than 25 bodies I saw dug out of the rubble were children. One dead girl, aged about four, looked normal except that the backside of her trousers, was soaked in blood. Another child had its face smashed flat. Several had severe gashes on their head and blood matted in their hair.

Labouring for dignity of dead as bombs fall nearby

A driver showed me something he considered supernatural. In the back of an ambulance a little boy with a bloodied face lay beside a woman. The child died with his index finger pointing, the gesture Muslims make when they say, "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet."

The deaths of the children deeply shocked the Lebanese. "Twenty dead children, 20 dead children," a woman wailed in a house on the rubble-strewn path between the ambulances and bomb site. She stuffed belongings into a hold-all, and her teenage son, sobbing, pulled his grandfather by the arm. Having survived almost three weeks of war, they were taking their chances to flee throughout the bombardment outside.

Flies and wasps swarmed around the bodies. Rescuers tried to maintain some dignity for the dead. When a blanket slipped off a dead woman being carried away on a stretcher, I glimpsed her pretty face and gold jewellery. A civil defence worker put two women's handbags and a bundle of clothing in an ambulance in the hope that relatives would identify the belongings in the morgue.

The whole time Israeli aircraft roared overhead, dropping bombs in the surrounding countryside, elsewhere in the town, and on the road to Tyre. From time to time a drone whined overhead. Lebanese particularly fear these pilotless aircraft, which relay images in real time and guide weapons. In 1996, the last time Israel massacred civilians at Qana, a UN peacekeepers' video refuted Israel's denial that a drone was present during the bombardment.

If there are good guys in Lebanon, they are the civil defence workers who risk their lives to rescue the wounded.

Yesterday they laboured in just a few square metres, beneath the buckling ceiling of the basement, blown open on to the hillside. The ceiling and the weight of the three-storey building risked collapsing on the rescue workers at any moment. They had to give up before retrieving all the bodies, and the army moved in with heavy equipment.

As the press army now based in Tyre braved the bombardment to drive up to Qana, Naim Rakka, a civil defence worker, lost his temper with a journalist. "I am fed up being asked the same silly questions over and over," he shouted. " 'What's your name? How old are you? What did you see?' We are sick of being used as guinea pigs for Israeli weapons."

A civil defence worker who was one of the first on the scene of the 1996 Qana massacre recalled seeing dozens of children cut into pieces by Israel's proximity shells then. "My heart is black like this shirt," he said, pulling the fabric from under his flak jacket. "It no longer feels emotion."

The outcry that followed the 1996 massacre forced Israel to stop its "Operation Grapes of Wrath". There was speculation yesterday that the deaths in Abbas Hashem's basement might speed up an end to this war.

Ahmad Abu al-Shebeb, the Palestinian imam in a white scull cap, had come from Tyre to watch the rescue. "Rashidiyeh (the main Palestinian refugee camp in Tyre) was bombed a week ago," Shebeb said. "They destroyed seven houses and a bakery and wounded 10 people."

If, as the Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, promised yesterday, Israel suddenly allows humanitarian aid to reach Qana, the aid workers will not find many takers.

The war has displaced 800,000 people, most of them from the south, and Qana is a ghost town.

Just off the main square, I found white-haired Youssef Bourji, a blacksmith, and his wife, Aliya, sitting out the bombardment in the shade of their great arbour.

"I stayed here through 1978, 1982, 1993 and 1996," Bourji said. "I'd rather die at home than die of hunger and thirst somewhere else."

"Our children fled to Beirut," Aliya said. "When the bombing gets too close, we go inside and wait for it to end."

Labouring for dignity of dead as bombs fall nearby

We heard a half-dozen outgoing rockers, and decided it was time to head back through the broken glass and rubble, the bomb craters and tangles of downed power lines.

At Tyre government hospital, I found Mohamed Kassem Shalhoub, a skinny construction worker with a boxer's nose whom I'd seen carried out that morning with a broken arm and bloodied face.

He lost his five children, wife, mother, two uncles and their families in the bombing. "I heard people screaming, 'Stop the bleeding! Pull my son out of the rubble!'," he said with extraordinary calm. "I managed to pull three people out."

Mohamed Kassem repeated a thought I heard voiced several times yesterday: "The Israelis tried to fight mujahideen at Maroun al Ras and Bint Jbeil, and they lost. So they take revenge by bombing children."

After yesterday's massacre, the thirst for revenge is on Hizbullah's side. On Saturday night Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah, the group's leader, threatened to fire longer-range missiles at towns in central Israel. Yesterday he swore that Israel "will assume the consequences of the massacres of Qana and elsewhere", and promised that the Qana bombing "will not remain unpunished".

Support for Hizbullah is tied up with religious fervour among the Shia of southern Lebanon. After listing his dead relatives Mohamed Kassem Shalhoub said: "We have an example to follow in Imam Hussein and we are all ready for Hassan Nasrallah."

His eyes welled with tears when I asked what he would do without his wife and children: "I have a god, I don't know what to do. He took my family, he will take care of me . . ."

Halla Shalhoub lay half-delirious in hospital, her head wrapped in bandages. "I lost my two little girls, 1½ and 3½. My two little girls will go to heaven, Thank God. I have memorised much of the Koran. To die with honour is better, Imam Hussein will see to it we will win."

The only survivor who talked of politics was Mohamed Ali Shalhoub, the paraplegic.

"I am not a fighter", he said. "My sister was sleeping beside me and she was also paralysed. Most of the children were under the age of 10. Are these people resistance?" he asked angrily. "Is this the new Middle East that the US is preaching?"

"This is what they want for Iraq, Palestine, and Lebanon. The terrorism is coming from America."

Shalhoub understood the Israelis' strategy. "They are bombing civilians because they want to revolt against the resistance. If they kill us to the last person, we will still support the resistance. We will not be humiliated."

Load-Date: July 31, 2006

Guardian Weekly: This week: The roundup

Guardian Weekly

February 9, 2007 Friday

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*The***GuardianWeekly**

Section: Pg. 2

Length: 674 words

Body

Americas

Tourists' fears dent US economy

The world's holiday destinations saw more visitors in 2006 than in any previous year, according to a UN report. A total of 842 million people cast off fears of terrorism, bird flu and rising oil prices and went on holiday, with Africa seeing the largest percentage increase. But, according to a US travel industry report, the US has suffered a 17% drop in tourism since 9/11. The report estimates this has cost the country \$1bn in lost revenue and almost 200,000 jobs.

The real thing for Coke's secrets

Joya Williams, a former secretary at Coca-Cola in Atlanta, faces up to 10 years in jail for plotting to cash in on one of the business world's fiercest rivalries by stealing vials of new cola products and offering them to Coke's arch-competitor, Pepsi, for \$1.5m.

Weather kills 14 in Florida

Thunderstorms and a tornado killed 14 people in central Florida. Up to 500 homes and buildings were destroyed.

Diplomatic gaffe in Grenada

The inauguration of a Chinese-financed stadium in Grenada was marred when the Royal Grenada Police Band performed Taiwan's national anthem.

Mine explosions in Colombia kill 18

Explosions killed at least 18 workers in a Colombian coal mine in Norte de Santander province. A further 13 were feared dead.

Sidney Sheldon dies

Sidney Sheldon, the author, playwright, screenwriter and director, died at the age of 89. He was best known for his racy blockbuster novels.

Europe

Fury over Turkey murder suspect

Outrage at the murder of the Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink deepened after the media showed "hero-treatment" images of the teenage suspect, Ogun Samast, posing with the Turkish flag and security officials after his arrest.

Founder of Spoleto festival dies

The Italian composer Gian Carlo Menotti, who was renowned for his melodious operas, including Amahl and the Night Visitors, and who founded the Spoleto festival in 1957, has died at the age of 95.

Germany issues warrants for CIA

Arrest warrants were issued for 13 suspected CIA agents over the alleged kidnapping of a German citizen of Lebanese descent. Khaled al-Masri was released in Albania after five months when the CIA discovered it had the wrong person.

Judge claims Russia poisoned him

Luzius Wildhaber, the former president of the European court of human rights, claimed he was poisoned on a visit to Russia in October. The judge has been the subject of persistent criticism from Russia for upholding a series of complaints by Chechen human rights campaigners.

Kosovo on path to independence

The majority Albanian province of Kosovo was put on the path to independent statehood by an international blueprint that redraws the map of the Balkans and in effect strips Serbia of sovereignty over a region it regards as its Jerusalem. The plan was rejected by Serbian leaders in Belgrade. Talks on the province's future start next week.

Asia/Pacific

Jakarta floods worst for five years

Floods have killed at least 29 people in Jakarta and made 340,000 home less. Officials fear that water contamination could bring disease in a city already struggling with a surge in cases of dengue fever.

Japan cuts bluefin quota

Japan has agreed to cut its quota of Atlantic bluefin tuna by almost a quarter over the next four years, in the latest attempt to save the fish from commercial extinction.

Africa

Cholera outbreak in Harare

Nineteen people have contracted cholera in Harare. It is the Zimbabwean capital's first outbreak in a year. The victims were said to be from poor eastern areas, where residents had been without clean running water and were using unsafe wells.

Middle East

Former Israeli minister convicted

A former Israeli justice minister, Haim Ramon, was convicted of sexual misconduct for forcibly kissing a 21-year-old **female** soldier, the latest in a string of government scandals. He resigned after being charged.

Lebanese factions rearm

Gun sales in Lebanon have tripled since the standoff between the government and the **Hizbullah**-led opposition began two months ago, prompting concern that political factions are rearming.

Load-Date: March 1, 2007

End of Document

Women human shields killed in Gaza

The Evening Standard (London)

November 3, 2006 Friday

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London Evening Standard

Section: B MERGE; Pg. 8

Length: 275 words

Body

NICHOLAS CECIL TWO Palestinian women were killed today after acting as human shields to protect 60 gunmen holed up in a Gaza mosque under fire from Israeli troops.

At least six other women were injured after Israeli soldiers opened fire towards the mosque in the town of Beit Hanoun.

The deaths threatened to spark more violence in the Middle East just months after the bloody conflict between Hezbollah guerrillas in Lebanon and Israel which left more than a thousand dead, mainly Lebanese civilians.

Hopes of peace between Israel and the Palestinian authorities were also dealt a blow.

The two women were killed as a 19-hour stand-off at the al-Nasir mosque ended with all of the gunmen escaping.

The gunmen were cornered by the Israeli army in Beit Hanoun last night. It was the third day of what has been the largest Israeli operation in the Gaza Strip in months, to put a stop to militants firing rockets into Israel.

Hamas radio broadcast a call for Palestinian women to form a human shield around the mosque.

Around 50 women, all of them veiled, had marched to encircle the building.

Army authorities said soldiers had fired at armed men but said it was investigating whether soldiers had also shot the women. In the confusion, the gunmen escaped.

Witnesses said army bulldozers demolished a wall at the mosque.

The roof of the mosque, one of the oldest in Gaza according to locals, collapsed.

Earlier, an Israeli air strike killed four Hamas militants in northern Gaza.

Six home-made missiles were fired at the Israeli town of Sderot from Gaza yesterday.

Women human shields killed in Gaza

At least 22 Palestinians have been killed in this three-day offensive, more than half of them militants.

Graphic

FLEEING IN TERROR: TWO PALESTINIAN **WOMEN** LIE DEAD AFTER AN ISRAELI TANK FIRED ON HUMAN SHIELDS OUTSIDE A MOSQUE IN BEIT HANOUN TODAY

Load-Date: December 1, 2006

End of Document

Middle East Crisis - People in Ireland have role to play

Irish News

August 1, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: Pg. 12

Length: 312 words

Byline: Valerie Robinson Southern Correspondent

Body

A Lebanese man has said the Irish public has a role to play in bringing the crisis in the Middle East to an end.

Nabil Bu Haidar, who is based at the Islamic Cultural Centre in Dublin, said he has been horrified by images of children's bodies being pulled from rubble of buildings destroyed by Israeli missiles.

The centre has condemned the Israeli offensive against Lebanon as "barbaric" and expressed concern at the response of the international community.

It has also accused the US government of giving "the aggressor the free hand to continue the killing of civilians and destroying the infrastructure" of Lebanon.

The centre has urged Irish people to join an effort to help those suffering.

Mr Bu Haidar, whose family is mainly in south Lebanon and whose brother-in-law was seriously injured in a missile strike, said Israel had launched "an illegal war".

"Whatever about arms against arms, this war is against private civilians," he said. "It is against the women and children and the economy. How would the Irish feel if they learned that 10 Irish children had been killed in Lebanon? They would be outraged. This is how we feel about learning that our children are being killed.

"This war is not about two Israeli soldiers being kidnapped. It is about power and money and greed.

"People have no electricity, no food, no showers. They cannot sleep because of the attacks. There is no shelter and no medical supplies. In another week, this will have turned into a major international crisis. Children will be starving."

Mr Bu Haidar expressed sorrow at the deaths of Israelis at the hands of Hezbollah. He called on Irish people to lobby politicians to seek an international solution.

Meanwhile, Green Party TD Paul Gogarty welcomed assurances from the Irish government that it would refuse landing permission at Shannon for any US flights carrying arms for use in the conflict.

Load-Date: August 1, 2006

Middle East Crisis - People in Ireland have role to play

End of Document

Wimmin at war

The Sunday Times (London)

August 13, 2006

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Section: FEATURES; News Review; Pg. 1

Length: 3075 words

Byline: Sarah Baxter

Body

It is 25 years since the Greenham Common protests began. Sarah Baxter was there, but now asks why feminist ideals have become twisted into support for groups like Hezbollah

When Ann Pettitt, the mother of two young children, and her friends set off in August 25 years ago on a 120-mile trek from Cardiff to the little known American air base at Greenham Common in Berkshire, they gave themselves the ambitious name of "Women for Life on Earth". Their numbers were tiny but the stakes, they felt, were dauntingly high.

The cold war world was bristling with Soviet and American nuclear weapons, posing the threat of mutual assured destruction (Mad). In a dramatic escalation of the arms race between the superpowers, shiny new cruise missiles were due to be delivered to Greenham, placing Britain's green and pleasant land in the bull's eye for targeting by the Soviet Union.

The modest peace march was largely ignored by the media, so on arrival at the base the women decided to borrow the eye-catching tactics of the suffragette movement.

They chained themselves to the gates of Greenham and dared the police to remove them. Sympathisers began to turn up bearing makeshift tents, clothing and pots and pans. Many came and went but others stayed. Thus was the women's peace camp born a quarter of a century ago this month and a new chapter in the history of feminism opened.

"I was motivated by fear and terror," Pettitt recalled last week. "I was the mother of a two-year-old and a four-year-old and weapons of mass destruction were the ultimate denial of the fact that I'd created life. There was such brinkmanship, I really thought that nuclear weapons might be used."

Mercifully, they weren't. President Ronald Reagan once blurted out in front of a live microphone that the bombing of Russia was going to begin in 15 minutes, but it was nothing more than a tasteless joke. In hindsight Reagan's hardline negotiating stance helped to bring about the collapse of the Soviet Union. By the end of the 1980s the Berlin Wall was down and the velvet revolutions in eastern Europe were under way.

The peace movement lost a foe in Reagan but has gone on to find new friends in today's Stop the War movement. Women pushing their children in buggies bearing the familiar symbol of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament marched last weekend alongside banners proclaiming "We are all Hezbollah now" and Muslim extremists chanting "Oh Jew, the army of Muhammad will return."

Wimmin at war

For Linda Grant, the novelist, who says that "feminism" is the one "ism" she has not given up on, it was a shocking sight: "What you're seeing is an alliance of what used to be the far left with various Muslim groups and that poses real problems. Saturday's march was not a peace march in the way that the Ban the Bomb marches were. Seeing young and old white women holding Hezbollah placards showed that it's a very different anti war movement to Greenham. Part of it feels the wrong side is winning."

As a supporter of the peace movement in the 1980s, I could never have imagined that many of the same crowd I hung out with then would today be standing shoulder-to-shoulder with militantly anti-feminist Islamic fundamentalist groups, whose views on women make western patriarchy look like a Greenham peace picnic.

Nor would I have predicted that today's feminists would be so indulgent towards Iran, a theocratic nation where it is an act of resistance to show an inch or two of female hair beneath the veil and whose president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, is not joking about his murderous intentions towards Israel and the Jews.

On the defining issue of our times, the rise of Islamic extremism, what is left of the sisterhood has almost nothing to say. Instead of "I am woman, hear me roar", there is a loud silence, punctuated only by remonstrations against Tony Blair and George Bush - "the world's number one terrorist" as the marchers would have it.

Women are perfectly entitled to oppose the war in Iraq or to feel that Israel is brutally overreacting to Hezbollah's provocation. But where is the parallel, equally vital debate about how to combat Islamic fundamentalism? And why don't more peace-loving feminists regard it as a threat?

Kira Cochrane, 29, is the new editor of The Guardian women's page, the bible of the Greenham years, where so many women writers made their names by staking out positions on the peace movement. She has noticed that today's feminists are inclined to keep quiet about the march of radical Islam. "There's a great fear of tackling the subject because of cultural relativism. People are scared of being called racist," Cochrane observes.

Whatever the merits of unilateral nuclear disarmament, women were a lot braver a quarter of a century ago. Pettitt remembers how "we tried to crash the top table at Greenham. You had to be rude to interrupt because you're never going to be invited to speak".

I had just left university in the early 1980s when I got swept up in the peace movement. My Saturday afternoons were often spent marching from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square and on the day when cruise missiles arrived in Britain, I rushed to a protest outside the Houses of Parliament, was arrested by the police, dragged into a black maria van and shoved overnight into a south London police cell. It was nothing compared to what the women of Greenham Common endured, but I felt like a heroine when the next day my male boss at Penguin Books, where I worked as a junior copywriter, paid my fine.

I was a bit sniffy about the all-women's peace camp because I was partial to men and disliked much of the mumbo-jumbo surrounding it. In her forthcoming memoir, *Walking to Greenham* (published by Honno), Pettitt writes about the "delightful irony" of liberated women using "emblems of conformist democracy" such as knitting needles and wool to protest against war, but I used to see the ghastly spider webs and children's mittens tied to the razor wire on the perimeter fence and shudder.

Nevertheless, I attended several "embrace the base" demonstrations in support of the women who had put the issue of nuclear disarmament so defiantly on the map. I went on to get a job at Virago, the feminist publisher, and marvelled at the way the "peace wimmin" had energised the brand new field of women's studies, sparking lively debates on the virtues and vices of separatism from men and the extent to which nuclear weapons were "boys' toys" (a tricky one in the age of Margaret Thatcher, Britain's first woman prime minister).

Later, as a journalist, I broke into the base with a group of Greenham women, stood somewhat pointlessly on top of the silos where the cruise missiles were stored and went on to become friends with one of the peace campers, who had been abused as a child and had found comfort in the new "family" she had made living in the rough and ready "benders" constructed of branches and plastic sheeting.

Wimmin at war

It is now largely forgotten that Greenham inspired many women to free themselves from the narrow world in which they had been brought up to live instead in ways which we take for granted today.

Looking back I think I was wrong about Reagan and too sympathetic towards the Soviet Union. There were plenty of fellow travellers in the peace movement who were cheering on the Soviet Union under their breath. I can remember making a lot of silly excuses about it myself. But the fear of mutual assured destruction was genuine enough. As long as it worked, Mad was a plausible strategy. Were it to fail, the results would be catastrophic. As President Dwight Eisenhower said after the testing of the hydrogen bomb in the 1950s: "Atomic war will destroy civilisation." If war came, "you might as well go out and shoot everyone you see and then shoot yourself".

The situation today is very different. Writing in The Wall Street Journal last week, Bernard Lewis, the noted scholar of Islam, pointed out that Iran's messianic rulers are not constrained by such fears. According to their theology, the day of judgment will be glorious. "At the end of time there will be general destruction anyway," Lewis writes. "What matters will be the final destination of the dead - hell for the infidels and heaven for the believers. For people with this mindset, Mad is not a constraint, it is an inducement."

Hassan Nasrallah, the Shi'ite cleric who leads Hezbollah, Iran's proxy in Lebanon, regularly issues bloodcurdling threats against the Jews. "If they (the Jews) all gather in Israel," he has said, "it will save us the trouble of going after them on a worldwide basis."

For some on the left such words are merely understandable hyperbole, provoked by decades of Israeli ill-treatment of the Palestinians, but I prefer to take Islamic fundamentalists at their word when they spout insults about Jews being the descendants of "pigs and apes" and launch their chillingly apocalyptic tirades.

Why? Because they not only talk centuries-old nonsense about the place of women in society, but they also purposely oppress the female sex whenever they are given the chance. As regards their treatment of women, there is no discernible difference between their acts and their words.

In my own life I have been lucky enough not to experience a great deal of sexism.

The 1980s and 1990s were decades of progress for western career women and working mothers. But I felt how it was to be invisible when I interviewed Hamas militants and clerics many years ago in Gaza. They were very courteous and helpful and I tried to be respectful by covering my hair with a black scarf. But they never looked me in the eye or addressed me directly. I would ask the questions; they would answer the male photographer who accompanied me.

Phyllis Chesler, 65, the writer and a founder feminist in the 1960s, has experienced some of the more disturbing aspects of Muslim patriarchy at first hand.

In the summer of 1961 Chesler married Ali, her western-educated college sweetheart, and went to live with him in Afghanistan. Nothing had prepared her for the restrictions and humiliations which Muslim women endured there, nor the gradual personality change that her husband underwent. The worst of it, she discovered, was "nothing unique happened to me". It was the way of the world.

"The Afghanistan I knew was a prison, a police state, a feudal monarchy, a theocracy rank with fear and paranoia," Chesler recalls in The Death of Feminism, published last year. "Afghanistan had never been colonised. My Afghan relatives were very proud of this fact. 'Not even the British could occupy us', they told me, not once but many times.

"I was ultimately forced to conclude that Afghan barbarism, tyranny and misogyny were entirely of their own making and not attributable to colonialism or imperialism. It is what they themselves would say."

Six months later, travelling on false papers obtained by a sympathetic German born friend, Chesler secretly fled the country. The ardent feminism that she embraced on her return to America was forged in Afghanistan, she told me last week. She has not recanted her support for women's rights, she insists, but she has seen the views of others morph in alarming new directions.

Wimmin at war

"The compassion for people of colour has been translated into feminists standing with terrorists who are terrorising their own women," she says. In the week when a massive bomb plot against civilians was uncovered in Britain, Chesler's critique of women's complacency in her book is prophetic. "The Islamists who are beheading Jews and American civilians, stoning Muslim women to death, jailing Muslim dissidents and bombing civilians on every continent are now moving among us both in the East and in the West," she writes.

"I fear that the 'peace and love' crowd in the West refuses to understand how Islamism endangers our values and our lives, beginning with our commitment to women's rights and human rights." Women's studies programmes should have been the first to sound the alarm, she points out: "They did not."

Chesler has fallen out with many old friends in the women's movement. They have in effect excommunicated her for writing in right-wing publications in America, but she has found it impossible to get published on the left. There are whispers that she has become paranoid, mad, bonkers, a charge frequently levelled against the handful of women writers who are brave enough to tackle the same theme.

In Britain there is the polemicist Julie Burchill, who has written incisively about the desire of terrorists to commit acts "not so that innocents may have the right to live freely on the West Bank, but so that they might have the right to throw acid in the face of innocent, unveiled women". Well, the outrageous Julie has always been bonkers, hasn't she.

Then there is "mad" Melanie Phillips, the Cassandra of our age, banging on that "if we wish to learn what was going on in Europe in 1938, just look around". Of course she would say that, wouldn't she. She's Jewish, and anyway didn't you know that she is crazy enough to believe in two-parent families?

In America the radical feminist Andrea Dworkin died last year virtually unmourned by women on the left in part, as her friend Christopher Hitchens remembered, because "she wasn't neutral against a jihadist threat that wanted, and wants, to enslave and torture females."

"That she could be denounced as a 'conservative'," he concluded, "says much about the left to which she used to belong."

In Italy Oriana Fallaci, the 77-year-old journalist famous for interviewing Ayatollah Khomeini, recently went on trial accused of defaming Muslims. It is true that many of her comments about Islam - "a pool that never purifies" - are undeniably offensive, but no more so than comments routinely made by Muslim extremists about "the Jews". In her cancer-stricken twilight years, the once glamorous Fallaci has been written off as a deranged old bat.

Fallaci has grown accustomed in recent years to living with death threats, as have the formidable Muslim women critics of Islamic extremism such as Irshad Manji, the Canadian feminist, Taslima Nasreen, the exiled Bangladeshi writer (and critic of the Iraq war), and Somali-born Ayaan Hirsi Ali, whose film Submission resulted in the murder by Islamic militants of Theo van Gogh, the gay Dutch film director.

Hirsi, after enjoying a brief succes d'estime, has been virtually hounded out of the liberal Netherlands and is due to arrive in America next month, where she has been offered a perch at the American Enterprise Institute, the neoconservative think tank. It is too easy to say she has sold out to the right. Where, one might ask, are her friends on the left?

Something has gone badly wrong with a politically correct feminism that prefers to take aim at the United States, a haven of free speech and relative sexual equality, than to tackle the threat posed to women by Islamic fundamentalism. Just as the existence of Thatcher, the Iron Lady, at the helm of British government in the 1980s failed to impress the women's peace movement, so the presence of Condoleezza Rice, a black woman who grew up in segregated Alabama, as US secretary of state has not dimmed the cries against American "racism".

For this the 1980s peace movement must take some of the blame with its overbearing emphasis on the evil Reagan empire and soft-peddalling of the Soviet Union. But I am surprised, all the same, by the persistence of the ideological

Wimmin at war

blind spot that has led women who are so quick to condemn the failings of the West to make transparent excuses for the behaviour of some of the world's most anti feminist regimes.

Recently Kate Hudson, chairwoman of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, wrote a breathtaking apologia for the Iranian nuclear energy programme, which took at face value Ahmadinejad's claims to be developing it for "strictly peaceful" purposes.

(Since when, by the way, has CND regarded Britain's nuclear power plants so benignly?) Never mind the preposterous dancing with enriched uranium around the doves of peace nor the missiles marked "Tel Aviv" paraded in the streets.

It is fair to say that Pettitt, the original Greenham woman, has wrestled with some of these problems. She is passionately against America's "wars of revenge" for September 11, but makes it clear in her memoir that she is no pacifist: "I didn't regard myself as being in a peace movement, I was in a movement against nuclear weapons. There are enormously hard decisions for which there are sometimes only military solutions."

Pettitt's mother, Solange, was a teenager in northern France when it was occupied by the Nazis and her family sheltered a British soldier for six months.

Pettitt's father was a communist in the 1930s who was unsettled by Stalin's pact with Hitler. At home after the war, Pettitt remembers hearing the stories of friends of her parents who had escaped the Holocaust.

"I can understand where Israel is coming from," she says. "I'm not a fan of Hezbollah. It worries me a lot." But like so many Stop the War protesters, she says that Bush and Blair have opened a "Pandora's box", as if the birth of Islamic extremism began only with the invasion of Iraq.

It is certainly plausible, as Pettitt claims, that Bush's actions have "accelerated the radicalisation of the Islamic world tremendously", although this popular view conveniently downplays the growing Islamic fundamentalist movement before the September 11 attacks and the huge psychological boost that it received from Al-Qaeda's strike on America.

Let us assume that what Pettitt says is true. I can remember when the women's movement was told that its persistent demands for equality were leading to a "backlash". Susan Faludi wrote a feminist bestseller of that name, based on the premise that men were fighting back tooth and nail in the gender wars.

I have just got the book down from my shelves. It says on the back cover: "The backlash against women is real. This is the book we need to understand it, to struggle through the battle fatigue and to keep going." There was no question of slinking away out of fear that men were being emboldened to find new ways of oppressing women.

The Middle East is engaged in a titanic struggle between modernity and theocracy.

Whatever one's views about the Iraq war or the conflict in Lebanon, it deserves more than slogans about "We are all Hezbollah now" and fury against Bush and Blair.

I don't agree with Chesler that we are witnessing the death of feminism, but for now it is MIA: missing in action.

Load-Date: August 13, 2006

International Briefs

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

January 10, 2007 Wednesday

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Section: NATIONAL/WORLD; Pg. b6

Length: 336 words

Byline: ASSOCIATED PRESS

Body

Spy scandal weighs on Polish church

WARSAW, Poland - The abrupt resignation of two top Roman Catholic clergymen over alleged ties to Communist-era secret police has left Poland facing a "national crisis," the prime minister said Tuesday.

Speaking on state Radio 1, Prime Minister Jaroslaw Kaczynski praised Pope Benedict XVI for accepting the resignation of new Archbishop Stanislaw Wielgus, calling it "the right decision."

Lebanese opposition joins labor protest

BEIRUT, Lebanon - Lebanon's Hezbollah-led opposition joined labor unions Tuesday in protesting tax increases proposed by the embattled prime minister, stepping up pressure to force the government to resign.

The demonstration outside the Finance Ministry's taxation department was called by labor unions after Prime Minister Fuad Saniora proposed to increase taxes as part of an economic reform plan ahead of an international donors' conference in Paris later this month.

India finance minister sees almost 9% growth

NEW DELHI - India's economy will likely grow almost 9 percent this fiscal year, but rising inflation is a cause for concern, the country's finance minister said Tuesday.

Finance Minister P. Chidambaram said he was also worried that some industries were persistently underperforming despite the buoyancy of the broader economy.

India's economy expanded 9.1 percent in the first half of the current fiscal year that ends in March 2007, and Chidambaram said he expected full-year growth to be almost 9 percent.

Canadian sextuplets face health challenges

VANCOUVER, British Columbia - A woman has given birth to what is believed to be Canada's first set of sextuplets, and the infants were in listed in fair condition, hospital officials said.

The newborns - each weighing only 1 pound, 6 ounces to 1 pound, 12 ounces - were delivered over the weekend at B.C. Women's Hospital and Health Center.

International Briefs

Hospital officials declined to identify the family or give other details about the births, saying only that they were delivered almost three months premature.

Load-Date: January 10, 2007

End of Document

Pelosi mingles with Syrians; Bush denounces House Speaker's trip to Damascus

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

April 4, 2007 Wednesday

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Section: NATIONAL/WORLD; Pg. c6

Length: 294 words

Byline: ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: DAMASCUS, Syria

Body

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi mingled with Syrians in a market and made the sign of the cross at a Christian tomb Tuesday in a visit to hard-line Syria that was criticized by President Bush.

Bush said the visit sends mixed signals to Syria's government, which his administration accuses of supporting terrorism. The United States says Syria allows Iraqi Sunni insurgents to operate from its territory, backs the Hezbollah and Hamas militant groups and is trying to destabilize the Lebanese government.

Pelosi's visit to Syria was the latest challenge to the White House by congressional Democrats, who are taking a more assertive role in influencing policy in the Middle East and the Iraq war. The Bush administration has resisted calls for direct talks to help ease the crisis in Iraq and make progress in the Israel-Palestinian peace process.

Bush criticized her visit.

"A lot of people have gone to see President Assad ... and yet we haven't seen action. He hasn't responded," he said. "Sending delegations doesn't work. It's simply been counterproductive."

Pelosi did not comment on Bush's remarks before heading from the airport to Damascus' historic Old City. She was scheduled to meet President Bashar Assad today.

Pelosi visited the 8th-century Omayyad Mosque, shaking hands with Syrian women inside and watching men in a religion class.

She stopped at an elaborate tomb, said to contain the head of John the Baptist, and made the sign of the cross. About 10 percent of Syria's 18 million people are Christian.

At the nearby outdoor Bazouriyeh market, Syrians crowded around, offering her dried figs and nuts and chatting with her. She strolled past shops selling olive oil soaps, spices and herbs, and at one point bought some coconut sweets and eyed jewelry and carpets.

Graphic

Pelosi mingles with Syrians Bush denounces House Speaker's trip to Damascus

AP photo

Load-Date: April 12, 2007

End of Document

NEWS IN BRIEF

Hobart Mercury (Australia)
January 24, 2007 Wednesday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 20

Length: 337 words

Body

Beirut barricaded

OPPOSITION protesters blocked roads with burning car tyres around Lebanon's capital Beirut and other regions yesterday to enforce a general strike called by Hezbollah leader Sheik Hassan Nasrallah aimed at toppling Prime Minister Fouad Siniora's government. At least 14 protesters were injured by gunshots.

Iran bars monitors

THE US State Department chided Iran yesterday over its decision to bar 38 nuclear inspectors from entering the country in retaliation for UN sanctions. "It's another indication that Iran continues in its defiant attitude toward the international community," spokesman Sean McCormack said.

Sudan bombs Darfur

SUDAN'S air force bombed Darfur villages in violation of a recent ceasefire, hindering African and US attempts to unite rebel groups, the African Union said yesterday. Rebel leaders said they were bombed as they were returning from a meeting in Chad with US special envoy Andrew Natsios.

Baby trade claims

FIFTY-SIX people have gone on trial for suspected roles in a network that recruited desperate pregnant women from Bulgaria, took them to France and sold their newborns to childless couples. The trial in Bobigny, north of Paris, centres on 22 babies who were sold between 2003 and 2005, mostly to couples within France's Gypsy communities, for up to \$9500.

Viagra maker sued

A LEADING US AIDS group is suing Pfizer, the producer of Viagra, accusing it of increasing the spread of sexually-transmitted diseases through "irresponsible" marketing. AIDS Healthcare Foundation says Pfizer deliberately pitches the erectile-dysfunction drug at men who do not need it.

Property squeeze

A FLAT consisting of little more than a room the size of a snooker table has gone on sale in London's fashionable Chelsea for \$430,000 -- about the same price as the average UK home. The 6sq m flat was formerly a storeroom.

Afghan suicide blast

NEWS IN BRIEF

A SUICIDE bomber blew himself up outside a US military base in the eastern Afghanistan city of Khost yesterday, killing 10 people and wounding 14 others.

Load-Date: January 23, 2007

End of Document

Former Israeli justice minister convicted of forcibly kissing young female soldier

Prince Rupert Daily News (British Columbia)

January 31, 2007 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 11

Length: 306 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: TEL AVIV, Israel

Body

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) -- Former Justice Minister Haim Ramon was convicted Wednesday of forcibly kissing a young **female** soldier -- a case that riveted the country's attention and added another layer of scandal to Israel's beleaguered leadership.

The verdict was expected to clear the way for Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to launch a major cabinet shake up.

Ramon, 56, was charged with sexual misconduct after kissing the 18-year-old woman at a party at the Defence Ministry on the first day of Israel's war with **Hezbollah** guerrillas in Lebanon last summer. Ramon, who is divorced, said the woman had flirted with him and the kiss was consensual.

"There are some lines that cannot be crossed," said Judge Hayuta Kochan, who read out the unanimous verdict by a three-judge panel. "This was not a kiss of affection. This has all the elements of sexual crime."

Ramon could face up to three years in prison. Ramon, who left the courthouse without commenting to reporters, is expected to appeal.

Ramon was a key political ally of the prime minister and served as Olmert's justice minister until the indictment forced him to step down last August. He had remained a member of parliament throughout his trial.

Ramon arrived to a chaotic scene at the Tel Aviv Magistrates Court. Hordes of reporters and TV cameras swarmed around him as he made his way to the small courtroom. With photographers snapping his picture, he sat stone-faced ahead of the verdict.

As the half-hour verdict was read, Ramon anxiously held his head in his hands. After the decision, he looked downtrodden, and his girlfriend hugged him in support.

The verdict said Ramon's defence was full of contradictions, and said it was obvious the young soldier was "authentic and trustworthy" and had suffered a "traumatic experience."

"We completely endorse the plaintiff's version," it said.

Former Israeli justice minister convicted of forcibly kissing young female soldier

Load-Date: February 1, 2007

End of Document

Harper took AIDS conference seriously

Ottawa Citizen

August 20, 2006 Sunday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A11

Length: 273 words

Byline: Philip Laundy, The Ottawa Citizen

Body

It seems that for those whose dislike of Stephen Harper goes beyond straightforward political opposition, the man can do nothing right, and he is even vilified for things he does not do.

I have in mind the two invitations he received, one to an event sponsored by the gay community in Montreal, the other to the international AIDS conference in Toronto. In the case of the former, k.d. lang accused the prime minister of showing "intolerance." In the case of the latter, Stephen Lewis, in his denunciation of Mr. Harper for his non-attendance, suggested he was afraid of being booed. The truth is that Mr. Harper ignored neither invitation and sent a high-profile representative in his place to each event. In the case of the AIDS conference he sent his minister of health, who, it seems to me, is a reasonable and logical choice. The conference was also opened by the Governor General, who outranks Mr. Harper in the official order of precedence.

Can these outraged individuals not accept that a prime minister receives many invitations, has many commitments, and has a right to determine his or her own priorities? I hold no particular brief for Mr. Harper, or for any other political leader for that matter, and I would make the same defence of any prime minister regardless of his political stripe. When it comes to denunciation, I would reserve mine for those MPs of various political parties who attended an anti-Israel demonstration in Montreal at which Hezbollah flags were in evidence. Are we to infer that they actually support this terrorist organization? Their opponents should remember this at the next election.

Philip Laundy,

Ottawa

Graphic

Photo: J.P. Moczulski, Reuters; Activists decry Prime Minister Stephen Harper's refusal to attend the opening ceremonies of the 16th International AIDS Conference during a rally in support of women's and children's rights in Toronto Aug. 14.

Harper took AIDS conference seriously

Load-Date: August 20, 2006

End of Document

WORLD AT A GLANCE

The Evening Standard (London)

January 24, 2007 Wednesday

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London Evening Standard

Section: LL2 04; Pg. 6

Length: 315 words

Body

Ancient fish rises from deep

. A FRILLED shark, rarely seen because it lives 1,400m below sea level, has been caught on camera.

The **female** was photographed at the Awashima Marine Park, south of Tokyo, but died hours later. The prehistoric eel-like species was thought to be extinct until discovered in the 19th century. It has razor sharp teeth and grows up to two metres long. It was picked up by local fishermen who found it appearing unwell and disorientated on a rare visit to the surface.

Asylum-seeker hijacks Sudan jet

. A HIJACKED Sudanese plane has landed safely in the Chadian capital N'Djamena. All 103 passengers and crew on board are safe after the Sudanese hijacker requested asylum from the French embassy. The Air West domestic flight was on its way to Darfur this morning and was diverted by the Sudanese man carrying an AK-47 rifle, 30 minutes after takeoff. Sudanese airport security is lax, particularly for domestic flights.

Wall St exec 'fired over journalist's friendship'

. AMERICA'S best known financial journalist is at the centre of a row over the sacking of one of Wall Street's most prominent executives. It is claimed Maria Bartiromo's friendship with Citigroup's Todd Thomson caused him to be fired. Chief executive Chuck Prince refused to comment, but insiders say he was concerned about Mr Thomson's friendship with Ms Bartiromo, 39, who works for the CNBC station and is nicknamed "the money honey".

Three killed in Beirut street violence

. **HEZBOLLAH**-LED protesters clashed with government supporters in Beirut, paralysing the Lebanese capital, yesterday. At least three people were killed and dozens injured in the worst violence yet in the pro-Iranian group's bid to topple Prime Minister Fuad Saniora. Protesters built roadblocks, set fire to cars and brought the airport to a halt. Saniora vowed in a televised address: "We will stand together against intimidation".

Graphic

TOO FRIENDLY: TV'S MARIA

Load-Date: January 24, 2007

End of Document

Kiss conviction may force israeli cabinet reshuffle

Aberdeen Press and Journal

February 1, 2007 Thursday

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Section: Pg. 19

Length: 319 words

Body

An Israeli court has convicted former justice minister Haim Ramon of forcibly kissing a young **female** soldier, a stunning censure of a top official that could reshape the Israeli Cabinet.

Ramon, who faces up to three years in prison, joined a growing list of politicians who have fallen from grace, including Israel's president who is facing rape charges.

Ramon, 56, was charged with sexual misconduct after kissing the woman, 21, at a party at the defence ministry on the first day of Israel's war with **Hezbollah** guerrillas in Lebanon last summer.

Ramon, who is divorced, said the woman, who cannot be identified under Israeli law, had flirted with him and the kiss was consensual.

With its salacious details and high-profile defendant, the case captured the nation's attention for months, and his conviction sent a stark message to high officials that behaviour once considered a perk of the job would no longer be tolerated.

"There are some lines that cannot be crossed," said judge Hayuta Kochan who read out the unanimous verdict by a three-judge panel. "This was not a kiss of affection. This has all the elements of sexual crime."

Ramon, who faces sentencing on February 21, said he would appeal.

A close ally of veteran statesman Shimon Peres, Ramon once appeared to be on the fast track towards the premiership, serving as a minister in several Cabinets. He bolted the dovish Labour Party ahead of elections last year and joined Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's Kadima Party, serving as justice minister until he was charged last August.

In a statement, Mr Olmert "expressed sorrow" at Ramon's conviction.

Ahead of the verdict, hordes of reporters and TV cameras swarmed around Ramon as he pushed towards the small courtroom at the Tel Aviv magistrates' court.

As the verdict was read, a visibly anxious Ramon held his head in his hands. His girlfriend hugged him in support.

Ramon declined to comment on the verdict.

Load-Date: February 2, 2007

Kiss conviction may force israeli cabinet reshuffle

End of Document

Gunman: terrorist; or sole act

The Gold Coast Bulletin (Australia)

September 6, 2006 Wednesday

Main Edition

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Section: WORLD BRIEFING; Pg. 15

Length: 311 words

Body

THE lone gunman who opened fire on western tourists in Jordan on Monday calmly approached them from behind before yelling 'God is Great' in Arabic and shooting them.

The Jordanian Government initially branded the attack an act of terrorism, claiming the life of a British man and wounding six others, including 22-year-old Australian woman Ashlea Blair.

Later, it said the gunman appeared to be acting alone, but investigators were trying to establish if he belonged to a radical Islamist group.

"We will ascertain whether this was a sole act or whether this individual is a member of a terrorist cell," said Prime Minister Marouf al-Bakheet after he visited the injured in hospital.

Interior Minister Eid al-Fayez identified the gunman as Nabil Ahmad, a Jordanian in his late 30s and a resident of the industrial town of Zarqa.

Zarqa is the hometown of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the slain al-Qaeda leader in Iraq.

Israel's offensive in the Gaza Strip and war against Hezbollah in Lebanon, which has killed some 1400 fellow Arabs, have raised passions in Jordan where anti-Israeli feelings run high.

Many Jordanians are angry about what they see as western indifference towards the plight of Palestinians.

Terrifying accounts have surfaced of Monday's shooting rampage at an ancient Roman amphitheatre in the heart of Jordan's capital.

Ashlea Blair told of seeing her British friend, Christopher Stokes, 30, shot dead.

Ms Blair, who suffered a flesh wound to her hip, said she saw the life draining from her friend's body after initially thinking the gunshots she heard were firecrackers going off.

"A man came up behind us and started to shoot and all I can remember is one of my friends falling over," she said.

Witnesses said the man fired at least 12 shots at the group, also wounding two British women, a Dutch man, a New Zealand woman and a Jordanian tourist police officer.

Gunman: terrorist or sole act

Load-Date: September 6, 2006

End of Document

**NDP endorses call to pull out of Afghanistan: 'No sign the world is safer,'
Layton tells convention delegates**

Ottawa Citizen

September 11, 2006 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A4

Length: 792 words

Byline: Mike De Souza, The Ottawa Citizen

Dateline: QUEBEC

Body

QUEBEC - Pulling Canadian troops out of Afghanistan will be one of five priorities for the New Democratic Party leading up to the next election campaign, leader Jack Layton pledged yesterday as he wrapped up a weekend party policy convention.

The position on the war on terrorism, endorsed by 90 per cent of the 1,500 delegates at the convention, has prompted harsh criticism from leaders of the Muslim Canadian Congress, among others, who have called the NDP "reckless and opportunistic."

But, as the world marks the fifth anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the U.S., Mr. Layton is insisting the Afghanistan war is the wrong mission for Canada.

"There is no sign that it is making the Taliban weaker or the world safer," Mr. Layton told delegates in his closing speech. "There is no hope of changing the realities on the ground in Afghanistan -- with the forces we have or can commit."

Mr. Layton, who received a 92-per-cent approval rating from the NDP delegates, also laid out other key priorities in response to the five-point plan used by the Conservatives in the last election campaign. The other NDP priorities consist of a plan for more affordable housing, better education and training programs for young people, improved care for seniors through the creation of 50,000 new long-term care spots, and a strong environmental plan that would cut greenhouse gas emissions by 80 per cent below 1990 levels by 2050 through tougher industry regulations.

The NDP, which holds no seats in Quebec, filled its convention with policies designed to appeal to that province's voters. They included a near unanimous adoption of a constitutional position that recognizes Quebec as a nation and promises more powers for the province, following a model of asymmetrical federalism.

While he took shots at the Liberals, saying they deserved more time in the penalty box, and the Bloc -- for not representing Quebec's best interests -- Mr. Layton reserved most of his criticism for Prime Minister Stephen Harper. He said the Conservative government was taking Canada down a dangerous path, and must be stopped.

NDP endorses call to pull out of Afghanistan : 'No sign the world is safer,' Layton tells convention delegates

But the convention was dominated by debates over the party's foreign policy, leaving some MPs uncomfortable about the tone and positions adopted by members. Nova Scotia MP Peter Stoffer, who has a large military presence in his riding, said there should have been more debate and consultation on the issue.

"Canadians themselves, I think in most cases, are generally confused about what's going on in Afghanistan," said Mr. Stoffer. "So I will still push to have that national debate."

Speaking to reporters, Mr. Layton stressed that his calls for a new independent policy for Canada were endorsed by a member of Afghanistan's national assembly, who was invited to speak to delegates at the convention.

Malalai Joya had said the current mission is not making Afghanistan any safer, since it is helping increase the powers of drug lords and warlords who continue to suppress the rights of women and children. Mr. Layton said a better plan should be developed that is balanced with aid, reconstruction aid and diplomacy.

"She called for an independent and new path for Canada and for those countries looking to help in Afghanistan," Mr. Layton said. "This is why we're calling on our prime minister to abandon the path which he has taken along with (U.S. President) George Bush and to carve out a uniquely Canadian path founded on Canadian values."

But there was also controversy over proposals regarding the latest Middle East conflict, with one NDP resolution referring to Hezbollah, considered to be a terrorist group by the Canadian government, as a political party.

"I found that there was just too much in the descriptive part of the resolution to justify support for it," said Judy Wasylycia-Leis, the MP for Winnipeg North. "While we may agree that Israel's response to the kidnapping was disproportionate, one cannot forget that Israel has been, for years, the victim of bombings and taunts and attacks against its very right to survive as a nation."

The Canada-Israel Committee called the resolutions "irresponsible" and "dangerously misinformed."

"Despite the efforts of some caucus members to steer the party toward a constructive set of resolutions, the NDP will now be known for its biased positions and for lending support and credibility to terrorist entities like Hezbollah and Hamas that are committed to the destruction of the State of Israel," said the committee's national chairman, Marc Gold.

The convention was the second-largest in NDP history. While it drew strong endorsements from Canada's largest labour unions, the NDP failed to attract any new support from Quebec's labour movement, which has traditionally supported the Bloc Quebecois.

Load-Date: September 11, 2006

THE WEST AND MUSLIMS

The Nation (AsiaNet)

January 10, 2007 Wednesday

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Length: 834 words

Byline: INAM KHAWAJA

Body

The Western countries talk of tolerance, multilateralism and dialogue. The Muslims have been practicing all this since the advent of Islam. The history of the past 1427 years is witness to the fact that Muslim countries from Spain to Indonesia and from Kazakhstan to Somalia have practiced religious freedom, tolerance and respect of the sensibilities of the minorities. There have been no Ghettos or Pogroms; on the contrary non-Muslims have occupied high offices (Ministers and Generals) in many Muslim countries.

In contrast in Europe Jews were confined to Ghettos and there were innumerable Pogroms, the last being in Germany (the Holocaust) a little over forty years ago. Then there was the notorious Spanish Inquisition. The British claim of practicing pluralism and the talk against the wearing of veil by Muslim women do not go together.

In the recent past obnoxious cartoons were published in Denmark and also republished in several other European countries. These deplorable acts were justified in the name of freedom of speech. Is insulting Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) the only way of demonstrating the freedom of speech? I would like the sane and reasonable people in the civilised Western world to please reflect and think about the fact that Muslims historically have never insulted or used insulting or derogatory language about Jesus Christ, Saint Paul, Saint Peter or any other Christian personality.

At present at US airports Muslims are singled out for detailed search, this is nothing but plain discrimination either on religious or ethnic basis. Yet today USA claims to be the champion of freedom, democracy and tolerance. The Prime Minister of Israel has recently admitted that they possess nuclear weapons; which analysts estimate to number about two hundred. Why has there been no condemnation of this by USA? Why are the Western nations not moving UN to at least pass a resolution condemning it?

Israel continues to occupy the West Bank and the Golan Heights with impunity because of US Veto in the Security Council, which makes US equally guilty of the state terrorism of Israel. It needs to be noted that Israel first attacked, killed several Hezbollah fighters and kidnapped others and when Hezbollah retaliated by killing a few and kidnapping two Israeli soldiers, Israel attacked Lebanon. The wonton destruction of Lebanese civil infrastructure continued for over a month, yet there was no condemnation by USA of this State Terrorism by Israel.

President Bush has signed the "Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006", thus banning US aid to Palestinian Authority aiming to isolate Hamas the group which swept the election with overwhelming majority in the March 2006 elections. It is strange that the Act states that it is; "designed to promote the development of democratic institutions in the areas under the administrative control of the Palestinian Authority". What it really means is that only the institution acceptable to Israel is considered democratic by USA.

THE WEST AND MUSLIMS

Iran a signatory of the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is engaged in developing Nuclear Technology for peaceful purposes. This is permissible under the provisions of NPT. The West particularly the US is opposed to Iran enriching Uranium,' because they claim that Iran intends to build nuclear weapons. This is nothing but plain discrimination based upon prejudice. In spite of this Iran is prepared to engage in a dialogue with USA.

Muslims have in fact never been opposed to dialogue. However due to the actions and the behaviour of the West one doubts if they are seriously interested in a meaningful dialogue. It appears that by dialogue they mean that they want the Muslims to change the face of Islam then I am afraid they are pursuing an unachievable goal.

Muslims claim that they stand for peace and peaceful coexistence but the attacks on US

embassies in Africa, the attacks of 9/11, the Bali bombings and the London train bombings make this claim hollow. Allah forbids killing of women, children and non-combatants. It is irrelevant that the opponents carry out these heinous crimes; this cannot be accepted as a justification for retaliation in kind. What is worse is the fact that Ulema and the politicians have not raised their voices against these atrocities.

Suicide is forbidden in Islam, yet some Muslims emulate the Tamil Tigers and carry out suicide bombings. It is deplorable that there is no condemnation of this un-Islamic practice by the Ulema and the Muslim leaders. Muslims say that Islam stands for liberation of human beings and democracy but out of fifty-eight members of OIC only in Malaysia there is democracy and not even one country practically enforces in full the injunctions of the Quran and the Sunnah. Where is the model for the world to emulate?

Both Muslims and the West need to set their houses in order before there can be any meaningful and purposeful dialogue. The West has change its behaviour and the Muslims should discourage un-Islamic acts practiced by some.

Load-Date: January 12, 2007

Defending a people

Hindustan Times

August 3, 2006 Thursday 1:28 PM EST

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Length: 788 words

Byline: Hindustan Times

Dateline: NEW DELHI, India

Body

NEW DELHI, India, Aug 3 -- The *Hezbollah* and Hamas' provocations against Israel once again demonstrate how terrorists exploit human rights and the media in their attacks on democracies. By hiding behind their own civilians, the Islamic radicals issue a challenge to democracies: either violate your own morality by coming after us and inevitably killing some innocent civilians, or maintain your morality and leave us with a free hand to target your innocent civilians.

This challenge presents democracies such as Israel with a lose-lose option, and the terrorists with a win-win option. There is one variable that could change this dynamic and present democracies with a viable option that could make terrorism less attractive as a tactic: the international community, the anti-Israel segment of the media and the so-called 'human rights' organisations could stop falling for this terrorist gambit and acknowledge that they are being used to promote the terrorist agenda.

Whenever a democracy is presented with the lose-lose option and chooses to defend its citizens by going after terrorists who are hiding among civilians, this trio of predictable condemners can be counted on by the terrorists to accuse the democracy of 'over-reaction', 'disproportionality' and 'violations of human rights'. In doing so they play right into the terrorists' hands, causing more terrorism and more civilian casualties on both sides. If this trio could instead, for once, be counted on to blame the terrorists for the civilian deaths on both sides, this tactic would no longer be a win-win situation for the terrorists.

It should be obvious by now that *Hezbollah* and Hamas actually want the Israeli military to kill as many Lebanese and Palestinian civilians as possible. That is why they store their rockets underneath innocent civilians' beds. That is why they launch their missiles from crowded civilian neighbourhoods and hide among civilians. They are seeking to induce Israel to defend its own civilians by going after them among their civilian 'shields'. They know that every civilian they induce Israel to kill hurts Israel in eyes of the media and the international and human rights communities.

They regard these human shields as shahids - martyrs - even if they did not volunteer for this lethal job. Under the law, criminals who use human shields are responsible for the deaths of the shields, even if the bullet that kills them came from the gun of a policeman. Israel has every self-interest in minimising civilian casualties, whereas the terrorists have every self-interest in maximising the same - on both sides. Israel should not be condemned for doing what every democracy would and should do: taking every reasonable military step to stop the terrorists from killing their innocent civilians.

Defending a people

Now that some of those who are launching rockets at Israeli cities have announced they have new surprises in store for Israel that may include chemical and biological weapons, the stakes have gotten even higher. What would Israeli critics regard as 'proportioned' to a chemical or biological attack? What would they say if Israel tried to preempt such an attack and in the process, killed some civilians? Must a democracy absorb a first strike from a WMD before it fights back? Would any other democracy be expected to do that?

The way in which terrorists first use women and children as suicide bombers against other women and children and then shed crocodile tears over the deaths of civilians they deliberately put in harm's way, gives a new meaning to the word 'hypocrisy'. We all know that hypocrisy is a tactic of the terrorist, but it is shocking that others fall for it and become complicit with them. Let the blame fall where it belongs: on the terrorists who deliberately seek to kill enemy civilians and give their democratic enemies little choice but to kill some civilians behind whom they are hiding.

Those who condemn Israel for killing civilians - who are used as human shields and swords for terrorists - actually cause more civilian deaths and make it harder for Israel to withdraw from the West Bank. How the world reacts to Israel's current military efforts to protect its citizens will have a considerable impact on future Israeli steps toward peace. Prior to the recent kidnappings and rocket attacks, the Israeli government had announced its intention to engage in further withdrawals from large portions of the West Bank. But how can Israel be expected to move forward with any withdrawal plan if all it can expect in return is more terrorism and more condemnation from the international community when it seeks to protect its civilians?

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Letters

Christian Science Monitor

August 21, 2006, Monday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 8

Length: 674 words

Body

Questioning Israel as a 'plucky democracy' and 'hard-line' state

Regarding the Aug. 14 article, "Why Bush embraces Israel's hard line": What the article does not describe is the nature of this hard line; apparently it requires no definition or explanation because it is self-evident and indisputable. But I wonder.

Is Israel's readiness in principle for a two-state solution an example? Does the evacuation of over 8,000 Israeli citizens from the Gaza Strip constitute a hard line? Or Prime Minister Olmert's proposed disengagement from the West Bank, a politically charged move supported by the Israeli electorate that voted Mr. Olmert into power? Not exactly a hard line. When, just over a month ago, Hizbullah violated an internationally recognized border, kidnapped two soldiers and killed another eight, and fired salvos of rockets at Israeli civilians, Israel responded to this act of war with force. Is that perhaps the elusive hard line?

Leo Taubes

Jerusalem

Regarding the Aug. 14 article on Bush's support for Israel: According to the article administration supporters say that Americans generally see Israel as a plucky democracy in a sea of autocracies. If this is the case, perhaps Americans need to think a bit more. Israel has long defined itself as a Jewish state. This presents a quandary. In order to remain a Jewish state, it would have to diminish the claims of citizenship and the vote of any other faith or ethnic group that might upset that Jewish dominance.

In the view of most of the world, this would make Israel at best a limited democracy after the manner of Saudi Arabia, which denies the vote to women, or the USSR, which allowed only members of the Communist Party to vote. Of course, once upon a time, US voters were only white males who owned property, including other human beings. On the other hand, if Israel became what most of the world now considers to be a truly inclusive democracy, it would ultimately cease to be a Jewish state.

Debra L. Wiley

Inglewood, Calif.

Study abroads only for mature students

Letters

Regarding your Aug. 16 editorial, "Go to college, see the world": Not so fast! I appreciate your optimism, but as a professor and study-abroad coordinator since the 1960s, I have seen thousands upon thousands of students heading abroad to study.

In the "old days," when it was the language majors who studied abroad, things went relatively smoothly because those students were on their junior-year-abroad program, with at least four semesters of the language and culture studies under their belts. They were prepared to live in the foreign community and had a positive study-abroad experience.

Today, however, many universities, my own included (San Diego State University), require that students in many majors participate in study-abroad experiences.

Too many of these students have little or no preparation on how to survive and thrive abroad, let alone have a productive academic experience. A couple of short meetings with an adviser before they leave does little.

They do not communicate well or at all in the language of their chosen country and can have horrible experiences that frequently turn out to be counterproductive and fuel the ugly American stereotype we have suffered for so long.

These students become basic tourists and spend most of their time partying. They neither represent their country nor their university well.

Minimum language and culture preparation are essential for a positive academic experience.

Ronald Young

San Diego

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Load-Date: August 20, 2006

Muslims must back Iran: Hilali

The Australian (Australia)

April 9, 2007 Monday

All-round Country Edition

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Section: LOCAL; Pg. 1

Length: 828 words

Byline: Richard Kerbaj

Body

MATP

AUSTRALIA'S most senior Islamic cleric Taj Din al-Hilali called on the Muslim world to unite behind the radical Iranian regime and to serve in its "trenches" in published comments during a visit to Tehran last weekend.

As Tehran was involved in a tense standoff with Western powers over the detention of 15 British naval personnel seized after they were accused of trespassing in its waters last month, Iranian media was using Sheik Hilali's quotes in a propaganda drive.

The controversial Australian mufti was quoted as saying the global Islamic nation would not "kneel" to its enemies.

In reports published in Iran on Saturday, Sheik Hilali was quoted as saying that Muslims needed to overcome their sectarian divisions that have led to much "bloodletting" in Iraq.

Leaders in Australia's Muslim community have attacked the Egyptian-born cleric over his reported comments, saying he had no authority to speak on their behalf.

The comments will increase pressure on the mufti who caused a national furore last year when he compared scantily clad women with uncovered meat.

He also is under investigation by police over allegations that he passed money raised by members of the Muslim community in Australia to supporters of al-Qa'ida and Hezbollah's terrorist arm during a visit to Lebanon last year.

The Australian revealed last week the Sydney-based Lebanese Muslim Association had raised \$70,000 in conjunction with other Islamic bodies following the Israel-Hezbollah war in Lebanon. The money was earmarked for war victims.

The weekend reports of Sheik Hilali praising Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's hardline Islamic regime follow his January outburst on Egyptian television when he described Westerners as "the biggest liars". "Anglo-Saxons came to Australia in chains, while we (Muslims) paid our way and come in freedom. We are more Australian than them," he told Egyptian television.

In Tehran, the mufti was billed as a celebrity by the Islamic Republic Newsagency.

Muslims must back Iran : Hilali

"The mufti of Australia has called on the Islamic world to stand in the trenches with the Islamic Republic of Iran which possesses the might and power," the Iranian Alalam News reported on its website in Arabic on Saturday.

It reported that Sheik Hilali -- who was in Tehran for the three-day International Islamic Unity forum -- told Alalam TV on Friday following the conference opening that he was committed to the unity of the Islamic nation.

"(Islamic unity) is what has brought all participants together at this Islamic unity conference, to show the whole world that they are dedicated to the one God and dedicated to Islamic unity and the Islamic nation will not kneel in front of its enemies, never," Sheik Hilali was reported as saying.

Attorney-General Philip Ruddock yesterday told The Australian he was concerned about Sheik Hilali's reported comments.

"I would be concerned if any Australian was offering support and succour to Iran, particularly as it is intent on pursuing the development of the nuclear fuel cycle outside international scrutiny," Mr Ruddock said.

The Ahmadinejad Government has become a source of growing concern for Western leaders because of its nuclear ambitions and incidents such as the capture of the British sailors.

The Australian understands that Sheik Hilali remained in Iran yesterday but will soon travel to Turkey to attend another Islamic conference.

Prominent Sydney-based imam Khalil Shami said Sheik Hilali was further damaging the image of local Muslims by wrongly expressing their commitment to the "radical" Iranian regime.

"As an Australian Muslim, it's very worrying to me that he's speaking on (our) behalf," he said. "Because really, the Iranian people don't know that we're not behind Hilali.

"And if you ask the Sunni Muslims, you will find that 99 per cent are not with Iran. So this hurts us and worries us."

Another Islamic leader Mustapha Kara-Ali, a former member of John Howard's Muslim Community Reference Group, warned that Sheik Hilali's support for Iran would be potentially used by extremists in Sydney to recruit alienated young Muslims.

"Hilali's new (declaration) will play into the hands of underground extremists in Sydney's southwest who will use this edict as ammunition to further recruit disenfranchised Muslim youth," he said.

Sheik Hilali's position remains under a cloud, with a significant section of the Australian Muslim community wanting him deposed.

But the new president of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, Ikebal Patel, dismissed reports that Sheik Hilali had been sacked as mufti.

"No, we haven't sacked the mufti ... (Sheik Hilali) is still the mufti," he said.

"The position of mufti itself is very much there and the ... incumbent, while not being paid for the position, is still the holder of the position."

The federation said it was up to the Australian National Imams Council to decide the fate of the mufti, with a decision expected by the end of June.

More reports -- Page 2

Load-Date: April 8, 2007

End of Document

War in Iraq named the top story of 2006

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

December 31, 2006 Sunday

Copyright 2006 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 816 words

Byline: David Crary Associated Press

Body

NEW YORK -- The convoluted, increasingly costly war in Iraq was chosen the top story of 2006 by U.S. editors and news directors in The Associated Press' annual vote, followed closely by the U.S. election in which debate over Iraq played a pivotal role.

The war received 176 first-place votes out of 242 ballots cast. The vote came before Saturday's execution in Baghdad of former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. The election, in which Democrats seized control of Congress, received 46 first-place votes and was the overwhelming pick for the No. 2 story.

Last year's top story was Hurricane Katrina and the other devastating Gulf Coast storms. The Iraq war finished third in that poll, was runner-up in 2004 and the No. 1 story in 2003, while the buildup to the war was 2002's top story.

Here are 2006's top 10 stories, as voted by AP members. There was a tie for seventh place:

1. IRAQ: What started in 2003 as a supposedly straightforward drive to topple Saddam Hussein deteriorated during 2006 into a dismayingly complex and savage struggle, with Iraqis by the thousands killed in sectarian reprisal attacks and the U.S. military death toll nearing 3,000. President Bush dropped talk of "staying the course" but balked at embracing many of the key suggestions of a bipartisan study group; Iraqi authorities struggled to assert control and avoid fracture.

2. U.S. ELECTION: Unhappiness with events in Iraq was one of the driving forces behind the Democrats' surge in the Nov. 7 election. They took over the House with a large majority, gained a narrow edge in the Senate, and also advanced in statehouses nationwide. Nancy Pelosi, assailed by the Republicans as a "San Francisco liberal" during the campaign, will become the first female speaker of the House.

3. NUCLEAR STANDOFFS: The United States and its allies were frustrated in their efforts to rein in nuclear programs in North Korea and Iran. North Korea tested a nuclear bomb in October, and Iran -- despite a threat of sanctions -- pushed ahead with plans to bring its first nuclear power plant on line in late 2007.

4. ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION: Congress tried to confront the influx of illegal immigrants from Latin America, but the effort collapsed amid deep divisions over whether to stress a crackdown or include provisions to help some illegal immigrants work toward citizenship. The get-tough approach triggered protests by immigrants-rights supporters.

5. SCANDALS IN CONGRESS: Several Republican congressmen were brought down by scandals, including Mark Foley, who resigned over sexually explicit messages sent to male pages, and Randy Cunningham, who pleaded guilty to accepting bribes from defense contractors. House Majority Leader Tom Delay resigned after being indicted

War in Iraq named the top story of 2006

on campaign finance charges in Texas, and Ohio's Bob Ney pleaded guilty in connection with the probe of lobbyist Jack Abramoff.

6. **SADDAM CONVICTED:** Saddam Hussein was convicted in the slaying of 148 Shiite Muslims, including children, following an assassination attempt against him in 1982. He was sentenced to die by hanging, but proceedings against him continued on genocide charges stemming from a chemical attack on Kurds in 1987. (The 2006 AP list of top stories was compiled and voted upon before Saddam's execution on Saturday.)

7. **MIDEAST FIGHTING:** Israel and the Lebanon-based Hezbollah militia fought a monthlong war in the summer; more than 900 people were killed and much of southern Lebanon was battered. Lebanon's Western-backed government emerged more embattled than ever, while Hezbollah claimed increased popular support.

7. **RUMSFELD RESIGNS:** As conditions worsened in Iraq, President Bush publicly stuck by his defense secretary. But a day after the midterm elections gave Democrats control of Congress, Bush announced Donald Rumsfeld's departure. Though his brusque style initially won some admiring reviews, Rumsfeld was seen as underestimating Iraq's challenges while alienating the military brass and members of Congress.

9. **AIRLINER PLOT:** British authorities said they narrowly thwarted a terrorist plot to bomb several jets over the Atlantic. The disclosure led to tough new restrictions on the contents of carry-on luggage.

10. **DARFUR DISASTER:** Violence worsened in Sudan's Darfur region, where fighting between rebels and government forces has killed more than 200,000 people. The United Nations approved a 20,000-strong peacekeeping force, but Sudan blocked its deployment.

Just missing out on the Top 10 was mounting concern over climate change and global warming, highlighted by the release of Al Gore's movie, "An Inconvenient Truth," and alarming new warnings from many scientists.

Several voters remarked on how Iraq -- and its ripple effects -- dominated the year.

"All news paled in comparison to the developments in the Middle East, which are beginning to be felt in every community," wrote Ken Stickney of The News-Star at Monroe, La.

Load-Date: December 31, 2006

Jack Layton is out to lunch on Afghanistan: NDP leader is playing for support of the loony left of his party

The Gazette (Montreal)

September 6, 2006 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL / OP-ED; Pg. A17; L. Ian MacDonald

Length: 740 words

Byline: L. IAN MACDONALD, Freelance

Body

First, Jack Layton called for the redeployment of Canadian troops from Afghanistan to the Middle East in a peacekeeping role in southern Lebanon. Then, last week, he called for peace talks in Afghanistan in which the Taliban would be invited to the table. Finally, after four Canadian soldiers were killed in action in a raid on a Taliban stronghold on the weekend, he called for an end to the Canadian mission by next February, even though Parliament has extended it to 2009.

What can he be thinking?

Well, he's playing to the galleries on the left, just as Gilles Duceppe is playing to the crowds in Quebec by calling for an emergency debate in the House on the Middle East and the mission to Afghanistan.

Layton is trying to manage the loony left in the NDP, which has a national policy convention this weekend in Quebec City. If he's able to push through a resolution about a peace process in Afghanistan, then he can prevent the convention from becoming an unseemly orgy of bashing George W. Bush and booing Prime Minister Stephen Harper. It's not the kindly Canadian way and voters in the mainstream centre don't appreciate inappropriate behaviour at conventions any more than they tolerate it from their own children.

Moreover, as many as 55 per cent of Canadians now oppose the mission, including about two-thirds of Quebecers. Layton is trying to squeeze the Liberals from the left as the Conservatives are from the right.

Of course, there is no logic to any of his positions.

First, on his really stupid idea of redeploying troops from Kandahar to an even more dangerous hot spot, the Middle East, all in the name of peacekeeping. Well, it isn't peacekeeping. It's a stabilization force, like the one in Afghanistan. It has nothing to do with peacekeeping as we once knew it. But Layton, like so many Canadians, refuses to let go of nostalgia for the good old days of Canadian peacekeeping, when other people broke things and we fixed them.

Never mind, Layton wanted to station Canadian troops in the buffer zone between **Hezbollah** on one side, and Israel on the other. As if **Hezbollah** would welcome our presence there after the Harper government unequivocally sided with the Israelis during the war in July. They might even have kidnapped Canadian soldiers; it's not as if they haven't done it before.

Jack Layton is out to lunch on Afghanistan : NDP leader is playing for support of the loony left of his party

Layton's even crazier idea was a role for the Taliban in peace talks, that as combatants they had to be at the table, and that we were already talking to them in urging them to switch sides.

Gosh, Jack, do you think the Hamid Karzai government in Kabul might have something

to say about that? Or perhaps

NATO, which is providing the stabilization force in which Canada is participating? Or even the United States?

On the eve of the sombre fifth anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks, in which, by the way, two dozen Canadian perished, Layton proposes peace talks with the guys who hosted Al-Qa'ida.

Layton might also want to check with his women's caucus, including his own wife, on the Taliban regime, which was truly from the dark ages. Women were forced to wear the burka, they weren't allowed to work and girls were not allowed to attend school. In their current insurgency phase, they blow up schools, some of which Canadians have built, and execute teachers.

And these are the guys Jack Layton wants at the table. Charming.

Of course, he neglects to say that as difficult as the mission is, part of the role is to protect humanitarian efforts to build a civil society and infrastructure out of the ruins of Taliban rule and two decades of civil war. Canadian soldiers and civilians are removing land mines, training police officers, teaching radio journalism, helping farmers sow crops other than opium, funding literacy programs for girls and promoting democracy.

Those are all noble objectives. Is the insurgency intensifying? Are the casualties mounting? No doubt.

After patrolling in the relatively placid Kabul region since 2001, Canada took on the more dangerous current role partly because the Martin government dithered over accepting assignments in other, less volatile regions of the country, and partly because the chief of defence staff, Rick Hillier, lobbied hard for a front-line role.

While Canada might have got even more than we bargained for, the situation won't be improved by inviting the enemy to non-existent peace talks. Of course, it did get Layton on television a lot in the run-up to his convention.

www.lianmacdonald.ca

Load-Date: September 6, 2006

Deafening silence that shames all moderate Muslims

Yorkshire Post

August 16, 2006

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Length: 767 words

Body

Bernard Ingham

SINCE we have a Government that has never known how to behave - from Tony Blair's early change of policy to suit Bernie Ecclestone to John Reid's potentially prejudicial claim to have caught the "main players" in the current alleged airline plot - I should say that nobody has yet been charged, let alone convicted, of trying to blow aircraft out of the sky.

This does not, of course, stop people trying to fathom what causes young British Muslims to make a brief career out of suicide bombing, especially as a year ago they slaughtered more than 50 passengers on London's Underground.

Many weird and wonderful theories are advanced by white, liberal crackpots whose instincts are to blame their own society for all the world's ills.

In view of this, the great and the gullible from the UK branch of Islam not surprisingly took out advertisements to condemn British foreign policy for manufacturing terrorists.

I am not a fervent admirer of our foreign policy, not least because it is conducted at the expense of our over-stretched military. While I do not mourn the political passing of Saddam Hussein, Blair's justification for war proved to be fraudulent and certainly neither we nor the Americans thought through the implications of getting rid of the tyrant.

But where I think policy is more right than wrong is in taking terrorism seriously.

Terrorism and its suicide bombers are the current scourge of the world. They guide the Government's actions - some would say counter-productively - over Afghanistan and Iraq and also Lebanon from which operates one of the many groups (Hezbollah) seeking to wipe Israel off the map.

We did not go into Iraq or Afghanistan until after the al-Qaida atrocities in America of 2001 and I am sure Israel would not be so fierce if it did not live under siege from Hezbollah and Hamas, acting as fronts for Iran and Syria.

The plain fact is that the globe is at risk from terrorists, most of them Muslim, who also divide the Islamic world.

Look at the way Shias and Sunnis are wiping each other out in Iraq now that Saddam is no longer there to terrorise them into quiescence and at the way the Taliban is still seeking to bend Afghans to its medieval will.

In short, it is a bit simplistic to blame British foreign policy for recruiting terrorists to the extremist-Muslim cause against an often pathetic West.

Deafening silence that shames all moderate Muslims

I would have thought Spain's disgraceful capitulation to the Madrid bombers offered more encouragement to terrorism than America's Wild West response or Britain's more sophisticated reaction.

The truth is that nobody has a clue why British Muslim youngsters - and now, reportedly, British middle-class converts to the faith - can be recruited as terrorists ready and willing to die in the process of their murderous trade.

It cannot be poverty, not even if they are living on benefits. They would be a lot less comfortable in Islamic countries.

It cannot be alienation or lack of opportunity. There are daft Britons queuing up to welcome anybody and everybody, with open arms and an open public purse, to our shores. And our entire system is geared to hailing ethnic-minority heroes who make it. Monty Panesar and Sajid Mahmood are now celebrated England cricketers.

It could be that the appalling condescension inherent in the actions of most British do-gooders towards immigrants troubles

the minds of young Muslims,

even if it is only their parents who have experienced the full humiliation of it. I find it nauseating.

The wilful refusal of their elders to integrate with their host country, and the tensions between the teachings of Islamic fundamentalism and the way

of life in a frankly decadent Britain, may well cause confusion and resentment.

But against whom or what? Is anybody seriously suggesting that rational human beings who have experienced the freedom of the West would die for the primitive horrors of sharia law and its treatment of women?

And can any of this remotely explain volunteering as a suicide bomber?

The trouble is that not all people are rational. So, instead of looking for complex sociological excuses, let's face reality.

The best explanation is often the simplest. The tiny minority of British Muslims who opt for terrorism are mad - deranged by their fashionable zeal as religious fanatics. And those who opt for suicide missions are the maddest of the lot.

This Friday's text at all mosques run by moderate imams should be: the madness of fanaticism.

What are thousands of moderate Muslims afraid of? Terrorists in their midst? Their deafening silence shames them. Terrorism is evil. Either you condemn it or you condone it.

Load-Date: August 16, 2006

The flip-flop symposium

University Wire

October 17, 2006 Tuesday

Copyright 2006 The Daily Princetonian via U-Wire

Section: COLUMN

Length: 781 words

Byline: By Jason Gilbert, The Daily Princetonian; **SOURCE:** Princeton

Dateline: PRINCETON, N.J.

Body

I have always been in vehement opposition to the war in Iraq, until about a month ago when I started vehemently supporting it. This is the opposite route most people take in their reactions to the war, but nonetheless, I have changed sides. It's what the Republicans call the "flipflop" and what the rest of us call "critical thinking."

But what's the reason for my sudden apostasy? Was it the heartfelt primetime speeches of President Bush? Was it the crafty advertising campaign of the GOP? Was it the eloquence of the Princeton Tory? Well, Bush is no Reagan, I don't watch commercials and I think the Tory must have gone out of business. No, what made me support our continued actions in Iraq was a three-putt on 18 by Phil Mickelson in late September, part of the thrashing the U.S. golf team took en route to their third straight Ryder Cup defeat.

The United States of America -- and this is based on absolutely no research whatsoever -- is known for being good at three things: war, entertainment and sports. When we defeat other countries at any of these things, we assert our dominance over them, which is -- and this is based on even less research -- the very reason the founding fathers wrote the Constitution. The world needs to know we're number one; anything less would be unacceptable.

It's hard to perform a cross-country comparison in terms of entertainment, but even the most rudimentary evaluation favors the world over the United States. Every year Bollywood produces hundreds of more movies than Hollywood, and none of them star Ashton Kutcher. America's number one song for the last five weeks has featured the line, "Come here girl, go head be gone with it." Even the harshest critic of Mel Gibson's drunken tirade would have to admit that the actor is much less anti-Semitic than, say, Hezbollah. Though, to the best of my knowledge, Hezbollah leader and Secretary General Sheik Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah has never referred to a female police officer as "sugar tits."

But enough about entertainment; it is sports where America has consistently reassured the world of our dominance. Just when the Vietnam War was at its most humiliating, Mark "The Mustache" Spitz won seven gold medals in Munich. Just when the Cold War was at its most tense and the U.S.S.R. had incredibly sent troops into Afghanistan, the Miracle on Ice happened in Lake Placid. Yes, Battlefield Earth was a terrible movie, but just two months after its release, Dream Team IV won gold in Sydney, the last Dream Team to do so. Despite the best efforts of Vietnam, the Soviet Union and John Travolta, our athletic prowess showed the world who was really number one. When war and entertainment were down, sports lifted us up.

The flip-flop symposium

Now, for the first time in decades, our sports are down. In the past year the United States suffered a first round exit at the World Cup, and we didn't even qualify for the Ice Hockey World Championships. We didn't place at the World Baseball Classic, our national pastime, and we got bronze at the World Basketball Championships, a sport we invented. At the 2006 Winter Olympics, Team U.S.A. came in second place ... to Germany. We never used to lose to Germany, and now look at us! The final blow came at the Ryder Cup, a golf event that pits the best American golfers against the best European golfers. For the third straight year, Europe destroyed the United States. Europe! Do you remember when America saved Europe in that war all those years ago, when Europe was eternally grateful to the new world superpower?

Neither do I.

That's why, in short, I now have no choice but to support the war in Iraq -- excuse me, "Operation Iraqi Freedom." I've heard and have even launched many of the criticisms. I've heard that American lives are pointlessly being lost, but is loss of life really pointless when it's going toward avenging the U.S.'s devastating 4-0 loss to Finland at the World Ice Hockey Championship qualifiers? I've heard that the war is unjustified because we entered without a United Nations mandate, but wasn't losing to Canada at baseball mandate enough? I know that there were no WMDs in Iraq, but now we're fighting for the World Basketball Championship, the WBC. WMD, WBC, it's close enough! You might say, "Well, close only counts in horseshoes and hand grenades." Well, the U.S. army is equipped with hand grenades, smart guy. President Bush, 1; liberal media, 0.

Yes, we need to stay in Iraq, and we need to win the thing. We need that lasting image: the terrorists crying as Americans cavort through the streets in victory, Pfc. Michael Jordan hitting an armistice-beating three-shot kill to defeat the opposition.

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Comment & Debate: Delirious rhetoric: Condoleezza Rice flatters her president with empty words as the war on terror loses all credibility

The Guardian - Final Edition

September 7, 2006 Thursday

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Section: GUARDIAN COMMENT AND DEBATE PAGES ; Pg. 33

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Byline: Sidney Blumenthal

Body

About two weeks after the 2004 presidential election, on November 13, the British embassy held a surprise 50th birthday party for Condoleezza Rice. On her arrival, Ambassador David Manning presented her with a red Oscar de la Renta gown. When Rice changed into the dress and emerged like Cinderella, she was met by her Prince Charming, dressed in a tuxedo, the man she once called "my husband", President Bush.

The following week, Bush appointed his national security adviser as his secretary of state. Bush's relationship with Rice is perhaps the strangest of his many strange relationships. The mysterious attachment involves complex transactions of noblesse oblige and deference, ignorance and adulation, vulnerability and sweet talk. Like his other **female** enablers - Karen Hughes, his political image-maker and undersecretary of state for public diplomacy, and Harriet Miers, his legal counsel - Rice is ferociously protective. She shields him from worst-case scenarios, telling him to ignore criticism, and showers him with flattery that he is a world-historical colossus.

As national security adviser, before 9/11, Rice protected Bush from warnings by the counter-terrorism chief, Richard Clarke, about al-Qaida attacks - and demoted Clarke. Before the invasion of Iraq, she lent her imprimatur to the disinformation about Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction and peddled it to the media. She did not demand an Iraq postwar stabilisation plan. Nor did she object to the Pentagon's seizure of Iraq's civil governance responsibilities from the state department. Before Israel's attack on Lebanon, she did not caution against the possibility of Israeli failure against **Hizbullah**. She was party to the decision to lend full war materiel and intelligence support to the effort if Israel would undertake it.

In the beginning, the didactic academic lectured her pupil that he stood at a crossroads like in 1947, at the making of the cold-war policy. After 9/11, she inculcated in Bush the notion that he was a world-builder and could imprint his design on a scale to match the Peace of Westphalia of 1648 that established the sovereignty of nation-states.

A few months after Rice became secretary of state, in July 2005, she transported senior staff to a West Virginia retreat where her head of policy planning, Stephen Krasner, delivered a lecture on the Peace of Westphalia followed by one on the Truman Doctrine to explain the magnitude of Rice - and Bush's - ambition for "transformational diplomacy".

This May, as the situation in Iraq drastically worsened, Rice told senior staff that she wants no more reporting from the embassies. She announced in a meeting that people write memos only for each other, and that no one else reads them. She said she wouldn't read them. Instead of writing reports, the diplomats should "sell America", she insisted. "We are salesmen for America!"

Comment & Debate: Delirious rhetoric: Condoleezza Rice flatters her president with empty words as the war on terror loses all credibility

On Tuesday, kicking off the mid-term elections campaign, Bush delivered a speech that cited Bin Laden's screeds, Lenin's What Is To Be Done? and Hitler's Mein Kampf, and promised "complete victory". Rice contributed her own comparison of the "war on terror" to the American civil war. "I'm sure there are people who thought it was a mistake to fight the civil war to its end and to insist that the emancipation of slaves would hold," she said.

But the more delirious the rhetoric, the more hollow the policy. "There is no plan for Iraq," a senior national security official with the highest intelligence clearance and access to the relevant memos told me. "There is no plan."

Sidney Blumenthal is a former senior adviser to President Clinton. To buy his book, How Bush Rules, for £16.95 plus p&p call 0870 836 0749 or visit www.guardianbookshop.co.uk sidney-blumenthal@yahoo.com

Load-Date: September 11, 2006

End of Document

A hateful religious intolerance drives actions of terrorists

St. Petersburg Times (Florida)

August 11, 2006 Friday

0 Edition

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Section: NATIONAL; Pg. 20A

Length: 1222 words

Body

My wife and I recently returned from London on British Airways. Therefore, the arrest of 24 potential terrorists who apparently intended to kill people just like me and most of your readers was of great interest.

While in Europe, we witnessed camps and cities where thousands upon thousands of men, women and children were murdered while the rest of the world stood by and watched. In addition to the death camps, we visited what was a Jewish community center where more than 8,000 Jews were forced against a wall and then shot, simply because the rail cars going to one of the many camps were too full. Like the biblical Thomas, I had to place my fingers in the bullet holes to fully comprehend the inhumanity and hate that existed in Europe some 60 years ago and continues today within certain radical elements of the Muslim faith.

Like most Americans, I believed that the hate between Jew and Muslim was about land, and events like 9/11 resulted from American support for a free Jewish state or some other real or imaged grievance. It has become evident that "land for peace" is a myth, and that any stated grievance is not the justification for the murder of the innocent.

The facts and public statements of radical Muslim leaders prove that the terrorists' intolerance and hatred of non-Muslims are the only reasons for their actions. We are in a fight to believe or not believe in God, as our personal theology dictates.

Is this a fight we want Michael Moore and Howard Dean to lead?

Terrence W. Stapleton, Tarpon Springs

Press on in fight against terrorism

I thank President Bush for taking the heat to fight terrorism. The very thought that the privacy of my calls to Pizza Hut is more important than thousands of lives is insane.

Foiling the plot at London's Heathrow Airport is the classic reason we must listen in and trace terrorists with all possible diligence and with all available technology. Privacy is not worth much if you're dead.

Lynn O'Keefe, Largo

We're at war with Islamic fascists

A hateful religious intolerance drives actions of terrorists

Events of the last week have been an immense reminder that Western civilization is at war with Islamic fascists.

First, the government of Iran supports terrorism, and must be confronted soon. Hezbollah has been receiving military weapons from Iran. Iranian soldiers were discovered fighting with Hezbollah against Israeli soldiers. In addition, many of the insurgents in Iraq have their origins in Iran. And let's not forget that Iran is thumbing its nose at the world community with its weapons program.

Second, the aircraft bombing plot that was discovered by British authorities is an uncanny reminder that the Islamic fascists still have an unquenchable desire to commit mass murder on all Americans and our allies. While I am as war-weary as the next guy, removing our troops from Iraq prematurely would be disastrous. Iraq would fall into the hands of the terrorists, Iran would become empowered, and our nation would be viewed as weak and powerless.

Third, although Sen. Joseph Lieberman was the vice presidential candidate for the Democrats in 2000, he has been rejected by his own party. How ironic that a political party that's always urging others to be "tolerant of all views" is intolerant of Lieberman because he understands the enemy our nation is facing, and thus supports the liberation of Iraq.

Fourth, 11 Egyptian "students" came to our nation on student visas, then disappeared without setting foot on a college campus. (Several of the 9/11 hijackers were in our nation via student visas, yet never set foot on a college campus.) Fortunately, many of these young Egyptian men have already been rounded up. While this obviously involves ethnic profiling, it is paramount if we are to survive as a nation.

Once all Americans understand that the Islamic fascists have dragged America, Britain, Israel and all freedom-loving nations into World War III, we can stand together and defeat these bloodthirsty, intolerant people.

Thomas W. Cunningham Jr., St. Petersburg

The folly of a Lebanon cease-fire

Here they come, the peace doves, in flocks to decry the violence. It's a familiar pattern. As soon as Israel shows its muscle and starts attacking the people who start the "game," it's time to call for a cease-fire.

The people in Lebanon who had no problem allowing Hezbollah to move in and take control and fire explosives into Israel are now playing the "pity us, we're victims" card as soon as the fire is returned.

There are organizations in the Middle East that have written oaths (and repeated verbal ones) to destroy Israel by any means. Just imagine if one Israeli called for the destruction of Iran, or Syria, or Lebanon, what a hue and cry would arise. Or if any Israeli called for the elimination of Arabs in the area? My, oh my, what a terrible thing.

All that the cease-fires do is allow the terrorist organizations to replenish their stocks without fear of attack and reinfiltrate the civilian areas with their weapons, where return fire will be shown to the media as the terrible wages of Israeli war-mongering.

How many times should we repeat this farce?

Max R. Loick, St. Petersburg

This is no way to fight a war

With the very possible all-out civil war in Iraq and the stubborn policy of the Bush administration and Donald Rumsfeld and the Pentagon, it could leave our American forces as sitting ducks and we could see a mass killing of our loved ones. This is being totally ignored by George W. Bush as he starts his vacation on his ranch in Texas.

How long will the American public sit still for this outrage? Either pull out our troops and admit our loss or send in enough troops (at least 50,000 more) and take complete control of Iraq. We just cannot sit still and do the same old, same old. Not only are we losing lives, but we have already spent more than \$300-billion in taxpayer money.

A hateful religious intolerance drives actions of terrorists

Vote the bums out in November.

Ray Raphael, Beverly Hills

Lieberman should admit defeat

Re: Lieberman will seek Senate seat on his own, Aug. 10.

If Sen. Joe Lieberman is the devoted Democrat he proclaims himself to be, let him show us that he is a uniter, not a divider. It takes a far bigger man to put his pride aside and gracefully admit defeat. Fellow Democrat Ned Lamont would most likely welcome Lieberman's support with open arms. Come on, Joe, for the good of the party.

JoAnn Lee Frank, Clearwater

Liberal intolerance on display

Any way you cut it, the Democratic primary win by Ned Lamont over Connecticut Sen. Joe Lieberman is a major gift for the GOP. Not only will Lieberman win in November as an independent, but the Democratic Party, at long last, will have shown its true face. And it's the face of political bigotry. This is the same Lieberman who voted against all of the Bush tax cuts, against banning same-sex marriage, against Judge Samuel Alito, and against drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Despite all this, the liberal party activists prefer a cipher who happens to be rich, and antiwar.

My glee as a Republican couldn't be greater. This image of liberal intolerance will be hung around Democratic necks between now and November and gives the GOP the ammunition necessary to stave off potentially disastrous losses in the battle to hold on to a congressional majority.

The George McGovern wing of the Democratic Party is alive and well, and that's not good for the Dems.

Jay Johnson, St. Petersburg

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9/11 the fifth

Hindustan Times

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Dateline: NEW DELHI, India

Body

NEW DELHI, India, Sep 10 -- Another anniversary of September 11 and another round of assessments: who's winning the war on terrorism? The answer is nobody. Neither George W. Bush nor Osama bin Laden is doing well. But the real response is that the nature of the struggle has metamorphosed to the point that the question is redundant.

Let us first look at it from al-Qaeda's perspective. Bin Laden knitted together an otherwise motley crew of militant Islamic movements, each focused on overthrowing some specific Arab regime. He told them: hey, the country behind all these regimes is the US, so let's join together against this common enemy. He, or more likely al-Qaeda's ideologue Ayman al Zawahiri, argued that a spectacular terrorist attack would expose US weakness and, to use Jason Burke's words, "radicalise and mobilise" the Muslim masses against the likes of the House of Saud, Hosni Mubarak and, over time, Hugh Hefner.

Initially, 9/11 had a spectacular effect on the Arab Muslims. Newspaper surveys said 94 per cent of Saudis and two-thirds of Egyptians had put bin Laden on their personal pedestals. But things went downhill rapidly after that. The US speedily over-ran Afghanistan and disrupted al-Qaeda's global network in the immediate post-9/11 years. By 2003, militant webchats were asking whether the network had bitten off more than it could chew in taking on the US. Bin Laden moved on to the internet. Wannabe al-Qaeda groups have continued to mushroom, taking inspiration from bin Laden tapes and bomb-making websites.

However, the loss of even a modicum of central control has meant that bin Laden's overall attempt to lift Islamic militancy to a new level - go for the spectacular terrorist attack, the type that can arouse the ummah - has been lost. Islamic terror is back to what it was in 9/11: random, local, so amateurish that most plots are foiled and most victims are fellow Muslims. Several surveys have shown that admiration for bin Laden has fallen rapidly in the Islamic world in the past few years.

In Pakistan, says a Pew Global Survey, confidence in bin Laden fell from 51 per cent in 2005 to 38 per cent in 2006. Jordan saw a decline from 60 per cent to 24 per cent. Large parts of the Islamic world have been turned off suicide bombing and terrorism in general. What residual support there exists for such tactics is because of its use in Palestinian, Chechen or Kashmiri militancy rather than al-Qaeda's endorsement.

In December 2001, bin Laden had exulted, "My life or death does not matter. The awakening has started." Fat chance. The decline of al-Qaeda tracks a similar decline in approval and trust of the US among Muslims. Post 9/11, the Bush administration concluded, in a curious echo of al-Qaeda, that the present Arab Muslim polity had to be

changed. The rottenness of the Islamic State was the reason why middle-class, educated Arabs were flying aircraft into skyscrapers.

Unfortunately, for lack of any other blueprint, Bush accepted one put forward by the so-called neoconservatives. They argued the solution lay in conquering a bit of the Arab world, paving it over with liberal democracy and having it serve as an example to the rest of the Muslim world. For a number of reasons, including oil and Saddam Hussein's proclivity for weapons of mass destruction, Iraq was the guinea pig. However, the guinea pig is on its back, bloody and bloated, thanks to a US post-war Iraq policy that consisted of a long string of wildly wrong decisions.

Those who argue that the Iraq war has made al-Qaeda stronger are, simply, wrong. Islamic terror groups have never had any problems in local recruitment. Before Iraq, young Muslims bought one-way dynamite tickets because of Palestine, Chechnya or Kashmir. After the US leaves Iraq, they will sign up for the same old reasons. The two Lebanese would-be terrorists caught in Germany wanted revenge for the Danish cartoons of the Prophet. Members of a wounded civilisation find grievances in every MTV video.

Which is why healing that civilisation remains the overall US strategy and, to be fair, the solution advocated by most thinking Arabs. No one really has an alternative. The real debate is over tactics. What is dawning on the world is that the most likely solution, democratisation, will primarily benefit Islamist political movements. Some scholars call them neo-traditional rather than fundamentalist, but the various subspecies include Khomeinism, the Muslim Brotherhood and Hezbollah. They want to create conservative but modern Islamic States, yet have no interest in al-Qaeda's talk of mythological caliphates. They also have a broad measure of popular support and, if allowed, would probably win elections in a stretch of the Arab world running from Egypt to Iraq.

But the Arab polity they would seek to create would be, in Western or even Indian eyes, illiberal. It would be regressive about the rights of women, gays and minorities. It would not be secular in any sense of the word. But it would be wealth-creating and welfare-oriented, representative and legitimate, but uninterested in terrorism and reconquering Moorish Spain. Willy-nilly, a neo-traditionalist Islam is going to be the dominant political discourse in a large swathe of the Arab Muslim world. But this discourse is not the one bin Laden wants. Note how Hezbollah and Hamas make it clear they have no taste for 9/11, al-Qaeda and its works.

So where does this leave the war on terrorism? Crudely speaking, the last five years have seen the collapse of two radical solutions to the Arab world's discontent. Al-Qaeda has lost its way, its message reduced to decapitation videos and ghetto youngsters attacking commuters. The Bush agenda is similarly lost in the woods. 'Amnesty International with bombers' is no longer taken as a serious option when it comes to changing the Arab world. And the terrorist-in-the-neighbourhood fear that provided the domestic support for a pre-emptive foreign policy is waning. This month's Foreign Affairs magazine asks: "Is There Still a Terrorist Threat?"

The two principal antagonists of the war on terrorism have disarmed themselves, at least in the struggle for hearts and minds. Ironically, the damage that each has suffered has been largely self-inflicted. But it has left the door open to plenty of other contenders, each interested in providing the template for 21st century Islam. The leading contender right now is Iran, experiencing a sort of Khomeinist revival under Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and thanks to fat oil revenues. It is a sign of the vacuum in Islamic polity that almost anyone can fill the leadership void. Islamic media in Pakistan, for instance, has suddenly taken to hero-worshipping Hezbollah's Sheikh Nasrullah.

The Europeans, led by the French, are trying to position themselves as the West's guide for the Arab world. The point is that no one can claim a sure-shot solution to Arabic angst. Whether it is neocons, Ahmadinejad or Indonesian Sufi singers - they are all experiments in civilisational therapy. This is the new war on terrorism. It is no longer about stopping bombs and paper-cutters. That is still there. But that was there even before 9/11 and was largely a law-enforcement business. The new struggle is about changing the Arab world. It is a search for the means to spark off and spread an Islamic renaissance. And it will be such a protracted and titanic effort that many decades from now, the annual commentative frenzy on 9/11 will be seen as little more than a comical footnote to history.

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9/11 the fifth

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Women Lead an Islamic Revival In Syria, Testing Its Secularism

The New York Times

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Late Edition - Final

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Byline: By KATHERINE ZOEPF

Dateline: DAMASCUS, Syria

Body

Enas al-Kaldi stops in the hallway of her Islamic school for girls and coaxes her 6-year-old schoolmate through a short recitation from the Koran.

"It's true that they don't understand what they are memorizing at this age, but we believe that the understanding comes when the Koran becomes part of you," Ms. Kaldi, 16, said proudly.

In other corners of Damascus, women who identify one another by the distinctive way they tie their head scarves gather for meetings of an exclusive and secret Islamic women's society known as the Qubaisiate.

At those meetings, participants say, they are tutored further in the faith and are even taught how to influence some of their well-connected fathers and husbands to accept a greater presence of Islam in public life.

These are the two faces of an Islamic revival for women in Syria, one that could add up to a potent challenge to this determinedly secular state. Though government officials vociferously deny it, Syria is becoming increasingly religious and its national identity is weakening. If Islam replaces that identity, it may undermine the unity of a society that is ruled by a Muslim religious minority, the Alawites, and includes many religious groups.

Syrian officials, who had front-row seats as Hezbollah dragged Lebanon into war, are painfully aware of the myriad ways that state authority can be undermined by increasingly powerful, and appealing, religious groups. Though Syria's government supports Hezbollah, it has been taking steps to ensure that the phenomenon it helped to build in Lebanon does not come to haunt it at home.

In the past, said Muhammad al-Habash, a Syrian lawmaker who is also a Muslim cleric, "we were told that we had to leave Islam behind to find our futures."

"But these days," he said, "if you ask most people in Syria about their history, they will tell you, 'My history is Islamic history.' The younger generation are all reading the Koran."

Women are in the vanguard. Though men across the Islamic world usually interpret Scripture and lead prayers, Syria, virtually alone in the Arab world, is seeing the resurrection of a centuries-old tradition of sheikhas, or women who are religious scholars. The growth of girls' madrasas has outpaced those for boys, religious teachers here say.

Women Lead an Islamic Revival In Syria , Testing Its Secularism

There are no official statistics about precisely how many of the country's 700 madrasas are for girls. But according to a survey of Islamic education in Syria published by the pan-Arab daily Al Hayat, there are about 80 such madrasas in Damascus alone, serving more than 75,000 women and girls, and about half are affiliated with the Qubaisiate (pronounced koo-BAY-see-AHT).

For many years any kind of religious piety was viewed here with skepticism. But while men suspected of Islamist activity are frequently interrogated and jailed, subjecting women to such treatment would cause a public outcry that the government cannot risk. Women have taken advantage of their relatively greater freedom to form Islamic groups, becoming a deeply rooted and potentially subversive force to spread stricter and more conservative Islamic practices in their families and communities.

Since intelligence agents still monitor private gatherings that involve discussion of Islam, groups like the Qubaisiate often meet clandestinely, sometimes with women guarding the door to deter interlopers.

The group is named for its founder, a charismatic Syrian sheikha, Munira al-Qubaisi.

A wealthy woman in her 50's living in Damascus, who has attended Qubaisiate meetings and who asked that her name not be used because she feared punishment, provided a rough description of the activities.

A girl thought to be serious about her faith may be invited by a relative or a school friend to go to a meeting, the woman said. There, a sheikha sits on a raised platform, addresses the assembled women on religious subjects and takes questions.

Qubaisiate members, the woman said, tie their head scarves so there is a puff of fabric under the chin, like a wattle. As girls and women progress in their study of Islam and gain stature within the group, the color of their scarves changes. New members wear white ones, usually with long khaki colored coats, she said. Later they graduate to wearing navy blue scarves with a navy coat. At the final stage the sheikha may grant them permission to cover themselves completely in black.

Hadeel, a Syrian woman in her early 20's who asked to be identified only by her first name, described how her best childhood friend had become one of the Qubaisi "sisterhood" and encouraged her to follow suit.

"Rasha would call and say, 'Today we're going shopping,' and that would be a secret code meaning that there was a lesson at 7:30," Hadeel said. "I went three times, and it was amazing. They had all this expensive food, just for teenage girls, before the lesson. And they had fancy Mercedes cars to take you back home afterward."

Hadeel said she had at first been astonished by the way the Qubaisiate, ostensibly a women's prayer group, seemed to single out the daughters of wealthy and influential families and girls who were seen as potential leaders.

"They care about getting girls with big names, the powerful families," Hadeel said. "In my case, they wanted me because I was a good student."

Women speaking about the group asked that their names not be used because the group is technically illegal, though it seems the authorities are increasingly turning a blind eye.

"To be asked to join the Qubaisiate is very prestigious," said Maan Abdul Salam, a women's rights campaigner.

Mr. Abdul Salam explained that such secret Islamic prayer groups recruited women differently, depending on their social position. "They teach poor women how to humble themselves in front of their husbands and how to pray, but they're teaching upper-class women how to influence politics," he said.

The Islamic school where Ms. Kaldi, the 16-year-old tutor, studies has no overt political agenda. But it is a place where devotion to Islam, and an exploration of women's place in it, flourishes.

The school, at the Zahra mosque in a western suburb of Damascus, is a cheerful, cozy place, with soft Oriental carpets layered underfoot and scores of little girls running around in their socks. Ms. Kaldi spends summers,

Women Lead an Islamic Revival In Syria , Testing Its Secularism

vacations and some afternoons there, studying and helping younger children to memorize the Koran. Her work tutoring has made her an important figure in this world; many of the younger girls greet her shyly as they pass.

The school accepts girls as young as 5, who begin memorizing the Koran from the back, where the shortest verses are found. The youngest girls are being taught with the aid of hand gestures, games and treats.

The atmosphere is relaxed. The children share candy and snacks as they study, and the room hums with the sound of high-pitched voices reciting in unison. Several girls, preparing for the tests that will allow them to progress to higher-level classes, swing one-handed around the smooth columns that support the roof of the mosque, dreamily murmuring verses aloud to themselves.

After girls in the Zahra school have committed the Koran to memory, they are taught to recite the holy book with the prescribed rhythm and cadences, a process called *tajweed*, which usually takes at least several years of devoted study. Along the way they are taught the principles of Koranic reasoning.

It is this art of Koranic reasoning, Ms. Kaldi and her friends say, that most sets them apart from previous generations of Syrian Muslim women.

Fatima Ghayeh, 16, an aspiring graphic designer and Ms. Kaldi's best friend, said she believed that "the older generation," by which she meant women now in their late 20's and their 30's, too often allowed their fathers and husbands to dictate their faith to them.

They came of age before the Islamic revivalist movement that has swept Syria, she explained, and as a result many of them do not feel an intellectual ownership of Islamic teaching in the way that their younger sisters do.

"The older girls were told, 'This is Islam, and so you should do this,' " Ms. Ghayeh said. "They feel that they can't really ask questions.

"It's because 10 years ago Syria was really closed, and there weren't so many Islamic schools. But society has really changed. Today girls are saying, 'We want to do something with Islam, and for Islam.' We're more active, and we ask questions."

Ms. Ghayeh and Ms. Kaldi each remember with emotion the day, early in President Bashar al-Assad's tenure, when he changed the law to allow the wearing of Islamic head scarves in public schools, a practice that was forbidden under his father, Hafez al-Assad. The current president, who took office in 2000, also reduced the hours that students must spend each week in classes where the ruling Baath Party's ideology is taught, and began allowing soldiers to pray in mosques.

Those changes have been popular among Sunnis, who make up 70 percent of the country's population, but they carry political risks for a government that has long been allergic to public displays of religious fervor.

The government has been eager to demonstrate in recent years, through changes like these and increasing references to Syria's Islamic heritage in official speeches, that it does not fear Islam as such.

During the weeks of war between Israel and Hezbollah, the government frequently used references to the Islamic cause and to the "Lebanese resistance," as Hezbollah is called in the Syrian state-controlled news media, to play to the feelings of Syrians and consolidate its support. But it is still deeply anxious about Islamic groups acting outside the apparatus of the state, and the threat that they may lose to state control.

The girls at the madrasa say that by plunging more deeply into their faith, they learn to understand their rights within Islam.

In upper-level courses at the Zahra school, the girls debate questions like whether a woman has the right to vote differently from her husband. The question is moot in Syria, one classmate joked, because President Assad inevitably wins elections by a miraculous 99 percent, just as his father did before him.

Women Lead an Islamic Revival In Syria , Testing Its Secularism

When the occasion arises, they say, they are able to reason from the Koran on an equal footing with men.

"People mistake tradition for religion," Ms. Kaldi said. "Men are always saying, 'Women' can't do that because of religion,' when in fact it is only tradition. It's important for us to study so that we will know the difference."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos: Students in the oldest group, 15 to 17, at the Zahra mosque school for girls taking an English language class in addition to religious training.

In a madrasa at the Zahra mosque in suburban Damascus, Enas al-Kaldi, 16, teaches 7- and 8-year-old girls to memorize the chapters of the Koran. (Photographs by Jeroen Kramer for The New York Times)(pg. A10)

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Sex-case questions for Israeli President

The Australian (Australia)

August 24, 2006 Thursday

All-round Country Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 8

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Body

AP

JERUSALEM: Israel's President, Moshe Katsav, was being questioned by police last night in a sexual harassment investigation after officers seized computers and documents during a raid on his official residence on Monday night.

At least two former **female** employees have accused Mr Katsav of harassing them. One of the **women** has reportedly also alleged that Mr Katsav received money for granting pardons.

Mr Katsav has denied wrongdoing and his legal team yesterday condemned the repeated leaks of information concerning the investigation against him, accusing the police of pursuing political interests rather than seeking the truth.

The investigation marks the latest in a string of scandals involving top officials and comes at a time of growing malaise in Israel following the war in Lebanon.

"This combination of an unfortunate and unsuccessful war on one hand and corruption on the other hand is a deadly combination," said commentator Yossi Sarid, a former MP.

The President's office would not comment on the raid, but said he would co-operate with the investigation.

In previous statements, Mr Katsav has said all his dealings with **female** employees had been professional and rejected the corruption accusation as absurd.

Investigators will review Mr Katsav's email traffic as well as the pardons he granted during his term, which began in 2000.

The President serves a single seven-year term. Israeli presidents enjoy immunity from trial on charges related to their tenure in office, but are not immune from investigation, the Justice Ministry has said.

The scandal threatens to mar the two-decade career of a politician with an image of being dull, but squeaky-clean. Mr Katsav, a longtime backbencher in the Likud party, was elected to the presidency by parliament in a shocking upset over the venerable Shimon Peres.

Sex-case questions for Israeli President

Although the position is largely ceremonial, the president is expected to set a moral standard and help unify the country during times of trouble. During the recent war against **Hezbollah** guerillas in southern Lebanon, Mr Katsav visited areas hit by rocket fire, rushing for shelter during one barrage.

Load-Date: August 23, 2006

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Iraq, the nightmare by which all other conflicts are measured

The Irish Times

December 28, 2006 Thursday

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Section: WORLD; World 2006; Pg. 1

Length: 1618 words

Body

IRAQ: Through a lethal cocktail of arrogance, ideology and ignorance, George Bush's foreign policy master plan imploded this year, leaving a huge mess, writes Lara Marlowe

There were no limits to George Bush's plans for the Middle East. For more than a year after the March 2003 invasion of Iraq, the US president dreamed of a "greater Middle East initiative" based on neoconservative ideology. The initiative was supposed to usher in freedom and democracy, free markets and women's rights, from Arab north Africa all the way to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

This was the year, 2006, when it all fell apart. The autumn brought a cascade of disavowals. Outgoing UN secretary general Kofi Annan described Iraq with the dreaded words "civil war". Henry Kissinger, adviser to US presidents since 1959, told the BBC that the war in Iraq could not be won.

Robert Gates, who was summoned to replace defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld, was asked by the Senate armed services committee: "Do you believe that we are currently winning in Iraq?"

He replied: "No sir".

No one in Washington talks any more about the greater Middle East initiative. Ambitions for Iraq, which was to have been the linchpin of the new Middle East, have been drastically scaled back. As quoted in the Iraq Study Group report published on December 6th, President Bush's goal is now an Iraq that can "govern itself, sustain itself and defend itself".

Forget about the beacon of democracy whose example was going to undermine neighbouring regimes.

From the Mediterranean to the Asian subcontinent, the entire zone that Bush sought to civilise has festered. Iran defies the US and Europe by continuing its uranium enrichment programme. Five years after the US "liberated" Afghanistan, that country is again the world's number one opium producer and the Taliban is resurgent.

To a large extent because of Israeli military assaults and Western indifference, the Lebanese and Palestinians are also on the verge of civil war.

Iraq is, of course, the nightmare by which all other conflicts are measured. Sectarian violence reached the civil war threshold last February, when Sunnis blew up the golden-domed mosque of Samarra, which is holy to Shia Muslims. Some 1,300 Sunni were massacred in retaliation.

Iraq , the nightmare by which all other conflicts are measured

More than 100 Iraqis are murdered every day now and nearly that many are kidnapped by sectarian militia men or gangsters. Their bodies are later dumped by the roadside, in vacant lots or fields, or wash up on the banks of the Tigris. The situation is so desperate that US troops tried building high walls between Sunni and Shia neighbourhoods of Baghdad to stem the bloodbath.

A UN report issued on September 21st says torture by sectarian groups and security forces in Iraq is systematic. The bodies of former detainees bear the marks of beatings with electric cables, wounds to the head and genitalia, broken hands and legs, electric shocks and cigarette burns. Corpses delivered to the Baghdad morgue have been burned with acid, skinned, had eyes and teeth pulled out, or have been pierced by drills or nails.

Another UN report, issued this month, says between 2,000 and 3,000 Iraqis flee the country every day. At least 1.5 million Iraqi refugees have already reached Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, and another 1.5 million are displaced within Iraq.

Afghanistan, alas, is beginning to resemble Iraq. With more than 3,000 Afghans and 150 North Atlantic Treaty Organisation soldiers killed this year, 2006 was the bloodiest year in the five years since the Taliban was overthrown.

There were at least 80 suicide bombings, a four-fold increase on 2005. Afghanistan now supplies 92 per cent of the world's opium supply while opium accounts for 60 per cent of the country's economy.

The US recently shifted responsibility for southern and eastern Afghanistan, where the Taliban is strongest, to Nato but, as in Iraq, there are simply too few soldiers. Also as in Iraq, costly attempts to train local police, often by private contractors, have failed. Material and weapons issued to security forces have simply disappeared. Incompetence and corruption further undermine US attempts at "nation-building".

Lebanon's "cedar revolution" provided prized evidence that democracy was coming to the Middle East, but that too unravelled this year. More anti-Syrian politicians, most recently the industry minister Pierre Gemayel, were assassinated.

In July and August, Israel bombarded the country for 34 days, in retaliation for the abduction of two Israeli soldiers by the Shia Muslim militant group Hizbullah.

Some 1,200 Lebanese and more than 100 Israelis were killed in the summer war. Lebanon's infrastructure was shattered, but the most serious casualty was the fragile consensus among the country's religious groups. The body politic split between Christians, Sunnis and Druze on the one hand, and Shia Muslims, supported by the breakaway Maronite Catholic Gen Michel Aoun, on the other.

The former group is allied with Paris and Washington, the latter with Tehran and Damascus.

This month, the pro-Syrian, pro-Iranian camp staged weeks of mass street protests in the hope of bringing down prime minister Fuad Siniora's pro-Western government. "There is no longer a place for America in Lebanon," Sheikh Naim Qassem, the deputy leader of Hizbullah exhorted one rally. "Do you not recall that the weapons fired on Lebanon are American weapons?" he added.

The situation in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories is as volatile as that in Lebanon. The Palestinians elected a Hamas-led government at the end of January 2006, in elections which were deemed exemplary throughout the Arab world.

Israel and the international community punished the Palestinians by blocking \$50 million a month in customs duties that rightfully belong to the Palestinian Authority, and by withholding all aid that might transit a government ministry controlled by Hamas.

The situation worsened further when Palestinians abducted Israeli corporal Gilad Shalit at the end of June. As international attention shifted to Lebanon and Iraq, Israel killed nearly 400 Gazans between June and November.

Iraq , the nightmare by which all other conflicts are measured

During the same period, Palestinians killed five Israelis. Hamas and Fatah, the former ruling group founded by the late Yasser Arafat, failed to form a "unity government" and have repeatedly clashed.

All attempts to restart peace talks run up against the three conditions imposed by Israel and adopted by the US and EU: that Hamas recognise Israel, renounce violence and abide by past Israeli-Palestinian peace accords.

No one seems to notice that Israel has not recognised a Palestinian state, renounced violence nor abided by past accords. The British prime minister Tony Blair offered the faintest glimmer of hope when he said he would search for a different way forward.

If there is one winner in this Middle East cauldron, it is the Islamic Republic of Iran. As the extent of the disaster in Iraq became evident, talk of "regime change" in Tehran subsided. Iran's influence with Iraq's Shia majority, in Syria, Lebanon and among radical Sunni Islamists in the Palestinian territories has never been greater.

The US ostracised the moderate Iranian president Mohamed Khatami, who pleaded for a "dialogue of civilisations," and reaped the far more radical Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. On April 11th, Ahmadinejad announced triumphantly that "Dear Iran has joined the club of nuclear countries" by enriching uranium. The UN Security Council demanded that it stop, yet proved incapable of agreeing on punitive measures.

Ahmadinejad continued to thumb his nose at the West, holding a revisionist conference on the "myth" of the Holocaust in Tehran. In an alarming sign that Iran's nuclear programme may start off a nuclear arms race in the region, six Sunni Muslim Gulf emirates announced they are considering their own atomic energy programme.

George Bush thought he could transform the Middle East into a pro-American oasis of democracy that would embrace Israel. Instead, Iraq has become a staging ground for al-Qaeda and the scene of a Shia-Sunni civil war that risks spreading throughout the region.

This mess was created by a lethal cocktail of arrogance, ideology and ignorance. In *The End of Iraq*, former US ambassador Peter Galbraith tells how shortly before the Iraq invasion, Bush's Iraqi guests in the White House were stunned to find the US president didn't know the difference between Sunni and Shia. Jeff Stein, national security editor of the Congressional Quarterly in Washington, found that intelligence and law enforcement officials involved in the "war on terror," as well as members of Congress in relevant committees, didn't know the difference either.

The Iraq Study Group report notes that only six of 1,000 staff at the US embassy in Baghdad are fluent Arabic speakers. US statistics on attacks in Iraq were "systematically collected in a way that minimises . . . discrepancy with policy goals," the report says.

Many US analysts have fallen into the trap of believing that if the US had put more troops into Iraq in the first place, or managed the transition better, or had better intelligence, things might have worked out differently.

An intelligence analyst told the Iraq Study Group: "We rely too much on others to bring information back to us and too often don't understand what is reported back because we do not understand the context of what we are told."

The US Congress spent nearly \$2 billion this year on countermeasures to protect troops in Iraq against improvised explosive devices (roadside bombs). "But," the report laments, "the administration has not put forward a request to invest comparable resources in trying to understand the people who fabricate, plant and explode those devices."

Load-Date: December 28, 2006

Former Israeli justice minister convicted

The Halifax Daily News (Nova Scotia)

February 1, 2007 Thursday

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Section: NATIONAL NEWS; Pg. 17

Length: 342 words

Byline: AP

Body

An Israeli court convicted former justice minister Haim Ramon yesterday of forcibly kissing a young **female** soldier, a stunning censure of a top official that could reshape the Israeli cabinet.

Ramon, who faces up to three years in prison, joined a growing list of politicians who have fallen from grace, including Israel's president, who is facing rape charges.

Ramon, 56, was charged with sexual misconduct after kissing the 21- year-old woman at a party at the Defence Ministry on the first day of Israel's war with **Hezbollah** guerrillas in Lebanon last summer. Ramon, who is divorced, said the woman, who cannot be identified under Israeli law, had flirted with him and the kiss was consensual.

With its salacious details and high-profile defendant, the case captured the country's attention for months, and Ramon's conviction sent a stark message to high officials that behaviour once considered a perk of the job would no longer be tolerated.

"There are some lines that cannot be crossed," said Judge Hayuta Kochan, who read the unanimous verdict by a three-judge panel. "This was not a kiss of affection. This has all the elements of sexual crime."

Ramon, who will be sentenced Feb. 21, said he would appeal.

A close ally of veteran statesman Shimon Peres, Ramon once appeared to be on the fast track toward the prime minister's post, serving as a minister in several cabinets. He bolted the dovish Labour party ahead of elections last year and joined Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's Kadima party, serving as justice minister until he was charged last August.

In a statement, Olmert "expressed sorrow" at Ramon's conviction.

As the verdict was read, a visibly anxious Ramon held his head in his hands. His girlfriend hugged him in support.

The verdict said Ramon's defence was full of contradictions, and said it was obvious the young soldier was "authentic and trustworthy" and had suffered a "traumatic experience."

Ramon declined to comment on the verdict.

His accuser, in an interview with Israel's Channel 10 after the verdict, denied ever flirting with him.

Former Israeli justice minister convicted

Load-Date: February 1, 2007

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INSIDE

The New York Times
March 27, 2007 Tuesday
Late Edition - Final

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

Length: 336 words

Body

Behind U.S. Pressure on Iran, Long-Held Worries Before making their concerns public, American officials used a secret diplomatic message to accuse Iran of supplying roadside explosive devices to Shiite extremists in Iraq, charges that Iran has denied. The United States also said that the Hezbollah militia had a role in training insurgents. PAGE A11
Astor's Assets Inventoried Brooke Astor's Park Avenue duplex is worth about \$24 million while her Westchester estate is valued at \$17 million.

Her fortune is now estimated at nearly \$131 million, according to an inventory. PAGE B1
Iraqis Move to Calm Divisions The Iraqi prime minister and president plan to introduce a proposal that would allow thousands more former members of Saddam Hussein's political party to serve in the government, a step in the effort to reconcile warring Shiites and Sunnis. PAGE A10
Report on Tillman Death Army officers violated regulations by failing to disclose promptly in 2004 that Cpl. Pat Tillman was killed by fellow soldiers, according to a Pentagon investigation. PAGE A15
Rutgers and L.S.U. Move On Rutgers and Louisiana State will meet in the Final Four after winning their regional finals in the women's N.C.A.A. basketball tournament. Louisiana State beat Connecticut. SPORTS
TUESDAY, PAGE D1
An Old Soul Gleams Anew Old King Cole, above, making merry as restorers clean the Maxfield Parrish mural. The nursery-rhyme king's name graces the St. Regis Hotel's bar in Manhattan. PAGE B2
Gonzales Aide Won't Testify An aide to Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales is refusing to testify on the removal of eight United States attorneys, her lawyer said. PAGE A17
Smithsonian Chief Resigns The top official of the Smithsonian Institution resigned after an audit showing that the museum complex had paid for his routine use of lavish perks like private jets. PAGE A12
Robots Get Creepy-Crawly

Researchers are taking a softer approach to robots, planning squishy versions to find land mines and treat disease. SCIENCE TIMES, PAGE F1

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos (Photo by Hiroko Masuike for The New York Times)

INSIDE

(Photo by James Estrin/The New York Times)

Load-Date: March 27, 2007

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... And Prepare To Use Your Guns

New York Sun (Archive)

March 29, 2007 Thursday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 9

Length: 845 words

Byline: DANIEL JOHNSON

Body

Remember the Iranian hostage crisis between 1979 and 1981? This, surely, was the lowest point in American foreign policy since 1945. The botched attempt to rescue the hostages defined the failure of the Carter presidency, just as their release indicated that the Reagan era would be different.

Well, now we have a new Iranian hostage crisis. By "we" I mean in the first instance the British. Last Friday, eight royal navy sailors and seven royal marines were taken prisoner by Iranian Revolutionary Guards while carrying out a routine inspection of a cargo ship, on the false pretext that they had entered Iranian waters illegally. This was unmistakably an act of war.

Since then, the Iranians have refused to give any information about the whereabouts of the captives, let alone consular access. All we know is that they are being interrogated and accused of espionage. There have been hints that a show trial is being prepared. So-called students have already held a mock trial of the hostages that ended in shouts of "death to Britain."

The Foreign Office reflex in these situations is to appease. It did so in a similar incident that occurred in 2004, when eight marines were captured. The Foreign Office prides itself on the fact that the marines were soon released. It omits to mention that the marines were physically abused by their guards and humiliated by being forced to grovel on Iranian television. One of their boats is on display in Tehran as a trophy.

The feeble British response three years ago will have emboldened the Iranians to go further this time. They know how these stories will be depicted in the Western press. The commander of HMS Cornwall, the hostages' parent warship, had a BBC television crew on board at the time. What could the poor man do?

The fact that one of the sailors is a woman, Leading Seaman Faye Turney, adds greatly to the hostages' propaganda value, because public opinion is assumed to have no stomach for any policy that risks worsening the plight of this young mother. The Iranians have no scruples about exploiting the presence of women in Western armed forces. In view of their record, the foreign secretary, Margaret Beckett, should not have accepted the assurances of her Iranian counterpart that the 15 hostages are "fit and well" and that "all ethics have been observed" in the treatment of Ms. Turney.

Tony Blair published evidence this week to prove that the captured Britons were not in Iranian waters. True, but Iran took British hostages because they could - and with impunity, too. Mr. Blair said that it was time that "we" began to "ratchet up" the pressure on Iran. So the question is: Does the "we" include you?

... And Prepare To Use Your Guns

So far, America has offered diplomatic support, but American public opinion has taken little notice. True, American warships have just begun a big naval exercise in the Gulf. But it will take more than saber rattling to face down a government that has defied the West for decades.

Privately, the royal navy is fuming. An American officer in the same task force was not impressed: "Our reaction was: 'Why didn't your guys defend themselves?'" The answer is: British rules of engagement. The marines and sailors were probably under orders not to shoot. Nor could HMS Cornwall use her missiles to destroy the Iranian gunboats, for fear of precipitating a crisis.

The crisis, however, is happening anyway. In return for the British hostages, the Iranians may demand the release of five Revolutionary Guards captured inside Iraq. America would rightly reject such a deal out of hand. There is no equivalence between British sailors carrying out a U.N. mandate and Iranian agents helping Shiite militias to murder American or British troops.

The British should be pressing for a Security Council resolution, setting a date for the release of the hostages and authorizing the use of force if necessary. British diplomats are not safe in President Ahmadinejad's Iran. They should be packing their bags.

With Congress breathing down his neck, President Bush does not want a showdown with Iran until he is ready for one - not now and not over hostages who aren't even American. So if Mr. Blair wants Mr. Bush's support, he needs to take a tougher lead himself. Americans admire courage, and Mr. Blair has already proved that he is a brave man. It would help if Mr. Blair made clear that the rules of engagement will change so that British forces are no longer obliged to surrender without a fight.

When Hezbollah crossed the Lebanese border to take hostages in Israel last summer, the Israelis resisted fiercely and several of the unit soldiers were killed. Israel treated the incident as the act of war that it was, and Israeli forces received full American support to go after Hezbollah. The former U.N. ambassador, John Bolton, told a shocked BBC interviewer last week: "I'm damn proud of what we did."

If the British want their hostages to get sympathy in America, they need to start behaving less like Europeans and more like Israelis. There is no point in gunboat diplomacy if you aren't prepared to use your guns.

Load-Date: March 29, 2007

How the Beirut marathon and Milton of Britain can inspire abroad and at home

The Guardian - Final Edition

December 5, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: GUARDIAN SPORT PAGES; Pg. 10

Length: 689 words

Byline: Steve Cram

Body

A couple of stories this week left me with the feeling that despite all the negativity around athletics the sport is always capable of inspiring and surprising both the participant and the spectator. Some 20,000 runners braved the demonstrations and political tensions to take part in the fourth Beirut Marathon on Sunday, despite the event having been postponed by a week, and in the north-east of England a young student won the chance to represent Great Britain after starting to compete only a matter of weeks ago.

The Middle East may not seem everyone's idea of a safe running haven but in recent years the many events now held in the region have attracted participants from all over the world. This year's race was scheduled for November 26 but the assassination of the industry minister Pierre Gemayel and the resulting increase in civil unrest prompted the organisers to postpone the race until last Sunday. And even then the public protest organised by Hizbullah in Martyrs Square looked like putting paid to the event altogether as tensions grew in the city, with troops and police on the streets.

The race's founder, May el Khalil, however, insisted that the race would be an ideal way to foster a sense of unity and she met civil leaders to find a way of accommodating the marathon without impinging on the protest. The course already had problems because of an Israeli artillery attack in the summer, but a new route was hastily mapped out and the event went ahead.

The race was won by Moses Kemboi in the men's section and Eunice Korir in the women's, both from Kenya. All the competitors ran an extra 500 metres or so to avoid Martyrs Square but that was an insignificant effort compared with the huge gesture of just being there to show that sport is still able to override conflicts of race, religion and politics when left to ordinary people.

All of this will probably be lost on Felicity Milton, but in a different way her recent cross-country efforts will be equally inspiring to some. The 19-year-old Durham University engineering undergraduate has been selected to represent Great Britain in next weekend's European Cross Country Championships in Italy after finishing second to Jo Pavey in the trial race at the end of last month.

She admitted after the race that, although delighted with her run, she did not really know who Pavey was. That was because she had been involved in athletics for only a matter of weeks and the whole idea of racing across muddy fields was new to her, never mind knowing who her competitors were.

How the Beirut marathon and Milton of Britain can inspire abroad and at home

So how in this day and age can a complete unknown climb to the top so quickly in a sport which usually needs years of training and racing?

In September Milton casually joined in a training session of the cross-country team after finding that her planned hockey session was cancelled. She had maintained a good fitness programme to play hockey but hadn't raced since 14, preferring to concentrate on her team sport. After enjoying training with Durham City Harriers she was asked to join the club with little or no expectation. After a few weeks' training her first race was in a relay in Manchester, where she impressed. Since then each event has brought more recognition; her rise has been nothing short of meteoric.

After one or two club races for the Harriers and a run in the university's Past v Present match she gave notice to a wider audience by posting the second fastest time to Hayley Yelling in the national relay championships. Nonetheless her run in the European trial was astounding, given her lack of experience and the quality of her rivals. Her story will undoubtedly prove to many that potential 2012 Olympic medallists may be undiscovered, perhaps playing other sports.

But how can you plan for the happy accident that Tracey Morris went from being a fun-running optician's assistant to an international marathon runner after entering the London Marathon for the crack? Now it seems that athletics may just have stumbled on another asset. Whatever Milton's progress, hers is a heart-warming story and, like the Beirut marathon, I hope she goes on to bigger and better things.

Load-Date: December 5, 2006

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Minister quits over 'stolen kiss' at party on the day war broke out

The Times (London)

August 19, 2006, Saturday

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Section: OVERSEAS NEWS; Pg. 35

Length: 824 words

Byline: Ian MacKinnon in Jerusalem

Body

The Israeli Justice Minister will resign tomorrow over allegations that he forcibly kissed a teenage woman soldier during a farewell party at government offices in Tel Aviv on the day the Lebanese war erupted.

Haim Ramon said he would fight his indictment for sexual harassment. "I am sure that I will succeed in court. A kiss of two, three seconds, based on the version of the complainant, cannot be turned into a criminal act. I am certain of my innocence, and I will prove it in court," he said in a statement.

But the impending resignation of a minister seen as a close ally of Ehud Olmert, the Prime Minister, has added to a sense of crisis. The Government was already on the defensive as other scandals emerged amid growing public anger over mismanagement of the war against Hezbollah that achieved none of its key aims.

Mr Olmert, whose Kadima-led Government was elected on March 28, conceded yesterday that his central electoral plank of unilaterally withdrawing from parts of the West Bank had been shelved because of the upsurge in violence in Gaza and the conflict in Lebanon.

The feeling of drift and a rising chorus of criticism by reservist soldiers returning from the Lebanese front led analysts to predict that the Government's days could be numbered. One commentator wrote that Mr Olmert was left without a political direction or diplomatic agenda.

Mr Ramon's intention to resign came after the furore surrounding the army chief's sale of £ 15,000 stock just three hours after the Lebanese conflict broke out with the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers. That in turn eclipsed even the criminal indictment of another leading Kadima party member.

Menachem Mazuz, the Attorney-General, revealed that Tzahi Hanegbi was to be indicted on charges of fraud, election bribery and lying under oath related to his making of 80 political appointments while Environment Minister in the Likud Government between 2001 and 2003.

Even before that, Amir Peretz, the Defence Minister, had bowed to public pressure and announced a fact-finding inquiry headed by a former army chief to examine the military's readiness before and during the 34-day conflict.

"At the moment it doesn't feel like things are under control," the political analyst Yoel Marcus wrote. "With so many questions in the air, with a commission of inquiry, defiant citizens and a political tsunami on the way, it's time to get ready for early elections."

Minister quits over 'stolen kiss' at party on the day war broke out

The imminent demise of the Justice Minister over a tale of alleged snatched passion as Israeli troops prepared for battle has highlighted the Government's sense of siege in a lurid way. Police began an investigation after the young soldier, named only as "H", claimed that Mr Ramon, 56, had kissed her during a leaving party at the Defence Ministry headquarters in Tel Aviv on July 12.

The woman met Mr Ramon when he was summoned to a special Cabinet meeting to discuss the Lebanon crisis and he invited her to the party that followed. She asked that he pose for a photograph with her and the pair then went into a side-room, where she alleges that he kissed her despite her protestations. Mr Ramon maintains the woman gave him her telephone number and had kissed him.

Shortly after the alleged incident, she left her post and went to Venezuela, where she was interviewed by Israeli investigators after refusing to return home to help with the inquiry. A video conference was set up in which she confronted the minister.

The Attorney-General decided to indict his boss when the woman's testimony appeared "consistent and perceived to be credible -and is even supported by other testimony. There is no choice but to file an indictment."

Unlike Mr Ramon, Lieutenant-General Dan Halutz has defied calls that he resign as army chief over his poor judgment in selling shares at such a time. The Attorney-General declared the army chief had done nothing illegal. The general, in an interview with Yedioth Ahronoth, complained that reports questioning his integrity were unfair, although he conceded that, had he thought harder about the share sale, he might not have proceeded.

Gaza attacks, page 36
Italians to rescue, page 37

A WEEK OF PRESSURE FOR OLMERT

August 15

The army chief Dan Halutz, left, admits selling his stock portfolio hours before he began hostilities against Lebanon and the stock market fell substantially

August 16

The Defence Minister Amir Peretz orders an inquiry into the handling of the war, after forces failed to eliminate **Hezbollah** despite Israel's superior military power

August 16

Ehud Olmert's approval rating falls to 43 per cent in an Israeli opinion poll. Another finds that 57 per cent think Peretz should resign

August 18

Haim Ramon, right, announces that he will resign as Justice Minister. He will stand trial on accusations he sexually harassed an 18-year-old **female** soldier

August 18

Olmert announces that convergence -his policy of unilateral withdrawal from parts of the West Bank -has been rendered impossible

Load-Date: August 19, 2006

South Lebanon Towns Reclaim Their Dead and Hold Funerals

The New York Times

August 17, 2006 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2006 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 5; Foreign Desk; Pg. 16

Length: 817 words

Byline: By HASSAN M. FATTAH

Dateline: HALUSIEH, Lebanon, Aug. 16

Body

For weeks the bodies were symbols of the helplessness many felt in the face of Israel's bombs.

But on Wednesday, Lebanon's dead became symbols of closure as towns and villages throughout the south began burying their loved ones.

Families mourned for relatives and towns honored the bodies of **Hezbollah** fighters in ceremonies in the rubble-strewn villages of the south, vowing never to forget the price they paid in the fight against Israel.

In Halusieh, about a 30-minute drive east of Tyre, residents carried the coffins of 11 men, **women** and children through town before holding an emotional ceremony led by a prominent sheik whose relatives were among the dead.

In Shabiye, hundreds marched behind the coffin of Mostafa Rakin, 16, a **Hezbollah** fighter who died in a firefight with Israeli soldiers on Sunday. In other towns and villages, bodies uncovered in the rubble were buried in solemn ceremonies.

Health officials on Wednesday began releasing bodies from the main morgue in Tyre, calling on families to begin burying their loved ones in their home villages instead of a mass grave near the morgue, where more than 200 others have been buried until families can claim them.

The bodies, some in pine coffins and others wrapped in blankets, were given their last respects and buried in open fields and cemeteries on Wednesday afternoon, some beside the graves of fighters from wars past, others beside relatives.

The largest funeral was in Halusieh, where the bodies of five members of the Mouanes family and six members of the Hamed family were cleansed and wrapped for burial in a makeshift mortuary on Wednesday evening.

All 11 were killed on July 24, when Israeli warplanes bombed two houses in which more than 40 people had taken refuge. When one of the houses was bombed, the families inside escaped into the one next door, residents said. But minutes later, bombs struck that home too, killing most of those who had run inside.

South Lebanon Towns Reclaim Their Dead and Hold Funerals

Three generations of the Mouanes family were among the dead, including Kalthoum al-Haj Ali, 85, her daughter Nahya Mouanes, 65, and a granddaughter, Ibtisssam Khamees, 43, as well as Mrs. Khamees's nephew and niece. The wife of Sheik Muhammad Hamed, a village leader, was also buried in the rubble, as well as two of his sons and three of his daughters.

"We couldn't save our children and we couldn't feed our families," cried Wansa Mouanes, 40, as she marched in a funeral procession. When the bombs went off she scrambled to try to save her sister and relatives, but she was no match for the weight of the rubble in which they were buried. "If the Israelis thought they could force us to flee this way, they failed," she said defiantly.

The bodies lay there for three weeks before they could be recovered, Ms. Mouanes said, serving as a constant reminder of the tragedy here. Five were removed Tuesday and taken to the morgue, she said, and another six were dug out Wednesday. All 11 were buried together on Wednesday in a grave that had 11 compartments, one for each body, fashioned out of cinder blocks.

"Mama, listen to me!" Fatima Mouanes cried as several young men lowered her mother's body before her in the mortuary. "We are thinking of you. We will never forget you. Your death will not be in vain."

The crowd lifted the bodies on stretchers and in coffins and marched through the town's back streets as people looked on. A group of women who had gathered in a community center nearby threw rice at the bodies as they were carried past and soon fell into a loud wail.

Minutes later Sheik Hamed, a portly man in his 50's, stood stoically before the bodies of his wife and children and called on the men in the crowd to open their hearts and pray for the souls of the dead, speaking in a matter-of-fact tone, as if praying for any other member of the community.

Then, one by one, the bodies were carried to the grave site yards away and lowered into each compartment, as Sheik Hamed guided the young men carrying the bodies and led further prayers.

"Bring me Abbas!" he said, speaking of the body of his 7-year-old son, which was lowered in.

"Now Khadija!" he shouted, as the body of his 6-year-old daughter was lowered in, the crowd breaking out in calls of "God is Great!"

"Now Zeinab here!" he exclaimed, speaking of his 22-year-old daughter.

When all the bodies were in place, the crowd broke into a final wail as the sheik dipped down to each body to read a prayer. When he reached his wife's body, he kissed the shroud wrapping her and stopped briefly, grimacing, then composing himself.

A tractor began scraping mounds of dirt into the grave, and within minutes the burial was over. As Sheik Hamed greeted well-wishers, he blessed them.

"The history of this town is built on resistance," said Adil Mahmoud, Halusieh's mayor. "Today we offered 11 martyrs, but we know we will continue to give more."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Load-Date: August 17, 2006

Power struggle behind the scenes; Impasse has forced moderates into a corner

National Post (f/k/a The Financial Post) (Canada)

April 3, 2007 Tuesday

National Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. A14; Peter Goodspeed

Length: 851 words

Byline: Peter Goodspeed, National Post

Body

As the Iranian hostage crisis involving 15 British sailors and Marines stretches into its second week, there are indications it has become a power struggle between pragmatic moderates and religious radicals in Iran.

At its centre is the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, the elite military unit charged with defending the Islamic Revolution and a bastion for those opposing Western influence in the Middle East. Even as diplomats struggle to find a solution, radicals close to the Revolutionary Guards have been pressing their government to confront the West while insisting Tehran should reject demands to release the British servicemen.

On Sunday crowds of rock throwing youths affiliated with the Basiji volunteer militia, which is controlled by the Revolutionary Guards, attacked the British embassy in Tehran, shouting "Death to Britain" and "Death to America."

In an echo of the 1979 hostage crisis in which Revolutionary Guards occupied the U.S. embassy for 444 days, they tried to invade the British compound, demanding it be closed because it is "a den of spies."

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the Iranian President, evoked similar sentiments when he delivered a speech the same day to mark the 28th anniversary of the founding of the Islamic Republic, branding Britain and its allies as "arrogant and selfish" for not apologizing in the latest crisis.

"Arrogant powers will vanish like bubbles on water," said the former member of the Revolutionary Guards' Al Quds Brigade, who cut his political teeth in revolutionary Iran as one of the masterminds of the U.S. embassy takeover.

Ever since, hostage-taking has been a hallmark of Iran's foreign policy.

Tehran has backed **Hezbollah** militants who regularly kidnapped Westerners in Lebanon. It also trained and financed terrorists in Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

It's not surprising the latest hostage-taking rapidly turned into a test of wills, with hardline radicals determined to show Iran can withstand Western demands.

Now, as in 1979, the event has become a rallying point for a beleaguered regime.

Power struggle behind the scenes; Impasse has forced moderates into a corner

Just two months ago, Mr. Ahmadinejad's government faced mounting criticism for poor economic management and Iran was targeted with international economic sanctions for refusing to rein in its nuclear program.

The detention of the British servicemen, which came on the eve of a second round of UN sanctions, has been a useful distraction. It has forced Iranian moderates into a corner where they look weak and too willing to make concessions with the West if they seek to resolve the crisis.

The struggle within the government was evident last week when Manoucheher Mottaki, the Foreign Minister, indicated a quick end to the confrontation was possible and promised the release of the only **female** captive, Leading Seaman Faye Turney.

But within hours, the government torpedoed the idea, saying the release was postponed because of Britain's "bad behaviour."

Iran's negotiating stance now seems designed to force pragmatic strategists in Tehran into adopting a harder line against the West. With each day that passes, it is obvious the Revolutionary Guards' influence has begun to dominate Iran's domestic and foreign policy -- not that it is easy to gauge the relative strengths of competing factions in Iran's murky theocracy.

Created in 1979 by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini as a counterweight to the police and regular army, the Guards are legendary for their loyalty to the Islamic Revolution and their fanaticism.

During the Iran-Iraq war they supplied tens of thousands of "human minesweepers" who sacrificed their lives to protect Iran's hard-pressed military.

The Basiji, who are controlled by the Guards, serve as "morality police," monitoring people's activities, enforcing shariah law, harassing **women** who wear too much makeup and reporting families who watch satellite television.

The generation of Revolutionary Guards who invaded the U.S. embassy now claim political power, having made Mr. Ahmadinejad President. They have also become MPs, state governors and local officials.

Mr. Ahmadinejad has liberally sprinkled his cabinet with former Guards and generously provides its economic units with government contracts.

The Guards play a crucial role in Iran's secretive domestic arms industry, including attempts to acquire nuclear weapons and its construction of advanced surface- to-surface missiles.

The 125,000 Revolutionary Guards are a military elite, with their own army, navy and air force, and report directly to supreme religious leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The Al Quds Brigade has trained Hamas, **Hezbollah** and Islamic Jihad operatives. It spies on Iran's dissidents overseas and trains Islamic fundamentalists bent on destabilizing Arab Gulf states.

U.S. officials claim Revolutionary Guards have provided Iraqi militias with roadside bombs.

Some experts believe they are more powerful now than at any time in the past.

It was no coincidence it was the Revolutionary Guards who captured the British servicemen on March 23, or that their top commanders led the list of Iranian officials targeted by UN economic sanctions a day later.

Pgoodspeed@nationalpost.com

Graphic

Power struggle behind the scenes; Impasse has forced moderates into a corner

Color Photo : Behrouz Mehri, AFP, Getty Images; An Iranian skewers chicken for grilling at a picnic in Tehran yesterday to mark the first day of the Persian solar calendar new year. Iran has been holding 15 British servicemen for almost two weeks in a protracted dispute over territorial waters. ;

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Israel Presses Attacks in Gaza, Killing a Rocket Maker

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Body

Israel continued its military offensive in Gaza on Saturday, destroying a minivan containing a Hamas rocket maker and two associates and demolishing at least five homes in Beit Hanun, on the Gaza-Israel border.

The rocket maker, identified by Hamas as Louay al-Burnu, was killed Saturday in Gaza City with two other members of the militant faction. Another Hamas fighter was killed in a gun battle with Israeli forces after firing an antitank rocket near Beit Hanun, and an Israeli noncommissioned officer was badly wounded. A Palestinian civilian, Marwan Abu Harbid, 46, died when an Israeli tank shell hit his home, burying him inside, a relative told The Associated Press.

In nearby Jabaliya, a Hamas member died from wounds from an artillery shell, which wounded four other members of Hamas's military wing. Later Saturday, two brothers, both members of Hamas, were killed in a helicopter strike, as was a 16-year-old Palestinian, according to Agence France-Presse.

Since Israel began its new campaign to halt rocket fire into Israel four days ago, more than 40 Palestinians have been killed, most of them militants, and one Israeli soldier has died. More than 200 Palestinians have been wounded, some 30 of them seriously, Palestinian health officials and doctors at local hospitals said.

The rocket fire has continued, with 28 rockets landing in Israel since the operation began Wednesday, an army spokesman said. At least three Israelis have been wounded by shrapnel. Because Beit Hanun is so close to Israel, Palestinian militants often come there to fire their short-range Qassam rockets, made in Gazan workshops, toward nearby Israeli towns like Sderot and Ashkelon.

For three hours on Saturday morning, Israeli troops suspended patrols in Beit Hanun, a town of some 25,000 people, to allow civilians to leave their homes and open shops, and to let aid groups deliver supplies.

Israeli troops have been rounding up young men suspected of being militants and questioning them. Most have been released. At least 15 men have been detained and brought to Israel for further questioning, an army spokesman said.

The houses the Israelis destroyed contained weapons, the army said, including antitank missiles, automatic rifles and grenades.

Israel Presses Attacks in Gaza, Killing a Rocket Maker

Also on Saturday, a 12-year-old girl was shot in the head and killed by an Israeli sniper in Gaza, Palestinian officials said. The Israeli military expressed regret, saying the sniper was aiming at an armed militant.

The Israeli operation is a continuation of the Gaza offensive that followed the capture of an Israeli soldier, Cpl. Gilad Shalit, on June 25. Corporal Shalit remains a hostage, as do two Israeli soldiers captured by Hezbollah a few weeks later.

Parallel but apparently separate negotiations about prisoner exchanges are ongoing with Hezbollah in Lebanon and with the Palestinian government led by Hamas.

Israel has said that it will pull its armed forces out of Gaza once the corporal is released.

Israeli forces have also been active in southern Gaza trying to destroy tunnels to Egypt used for smuggling contraband including weapons, antitank missiles, ammunition and explosives. But the Israeli cabinet decided not to approve a larger operation there, especially with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert due in Washington to meet President Bush in a little more than a week.

On Friday, as many as 17 Palestinians were killed from dawn to midnight, including two women and two medical workers, in one of the deadliest days in months. Two more men were killed by the Israelis in clashes on the West Bank.

Also on Friday, hundreds of women wrapped in flowing robes called abayas and wearing head scarves, responded to appeals on Hamas-controlled radio to come to a Beit Hanun mosque where a large group of Hamas fighters had taken refuge.

Israeli troops could not dissuade the women, even with live fire, and many of the fighters escaped, presumably in female clothing brought to the mosque by the women. Israel says its soldiers fired only at armed men, but two women were killed. Israel blamed Hamas for encouraging the women to act as "human shields," but a Hamas spokesman, Ghazi Hamad, praised them for their courage.

On Friday, Secretary General Kofi Annan of the United Nations criticized the Gaza operation in a statement and urged Israelis "to exercise maximum restraint, do their utmost to protect civilians and to refrain from further escalating an already grave situation."

But in Washington, the State Department spokesman, Sean McCormack, said, "The U.N. has a point of view" and added that Israel has the right to defend itself. "The reason why all of this developed in the first place is because you have continuing attacks on Israel from Palestinian Authority areas," he said.

In Tel Aviv, the former prime minister, Ariel Sharon, remained in intensive care as doctors battled an infection affecting his heart. Mr. Sharon, 78, has been in a coma for 10 months after a stroke.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo: Palestinians mourned yesterday in Beit Lahiya during the funeral of two brothers who were killed Friday. In nearby Beit Hanun yesterday, Israel killed a Hamas rocket maker and two associates, and razed five homes. (Photo by Mahmud Hams/Agence France-Presse -- Getty Images)

Israel Presses Attacks in Gaza, Killing a Rocket Maker

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