

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

Job Number: 223447181

Documents (100)

1. [*B'tselem: Far more Palestinian noncombatants were killed in Cast Lead than IDF admits*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

2. [*Jimmy Carter, we can have peace \(without you\) in the Holy Land*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

3. [*Media war rages over Gaza conflict*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

4. [*International: The Haredim: Poor, devout and isolated*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

5. [*Amnesty says Israel's Gaza action breached laws of war*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

6. [*Situation: Hope-less?*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by

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7. [*Majority in cabinet backs prisoner release*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

8. [*Captive's father sees 'no light at end of tunnel'; Israeli soldier captured in 2006*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

9. [*My bid for president of Palestine is a campaign for peace*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

10. [*Jews prove easy catch*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

11. [World Report](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

12. [The bully laid bare](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

13. [Western armies require discipline and openness to fight the enemy Podium](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

14. [Many are still jobless, but Nablus shopping boom symbolizes improving W. Bank economy](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

15. [Hezbollah chief calls on Egypt to stop Gaza wall](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

Narrowed by
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16. [*'Anti-Semites have warped tiny Israel into Goliath'. Excerpts from the Diaspora affairs minister's speech to the Global Forum for Combating Anti-Semitism Conference in Jerusalem*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

17. [*Warmer Relations With Turkey Kindle Hopes in Syria*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

Narrowed by
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18. [*G2: Childhood in ruins: Last December, Israel began a 23-day bombardment of Gaza, killing around 1,400 people. One year on, a generation of children is growing up amid the wreckage of that attack, traumatised - and radicalised - by the experience. Guardian foreign editor Harriet Sherwood reports*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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19. [*Israel and Egypt eye movement on peace process Israel Prime Minister Netanyahu and Egypt President Mubarak met in Cairo and discussed the Israeli - Palestinian peace process ahead of a visit by US envoy George Mitchell. The two leaders also discussed captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

20. [*Hints of change as old friends get back together Syria takes new direction as it reconnects with a more modern Turkey*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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21. [TV Satire: A sign of free speech or distraction from the lack of it?](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

22. [The self-righteous left's simplistic world](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

23. [Inside The Times](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

24. [World Briefs](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

25. [UN rights boss targets women's rights in Sudan](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type

Narrowed by

News

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

26. [Nation & world](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

27. [Egypt refusing permission for Gaza convoy to dock in Nuweiba](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

28. [IN BRIEF](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

29. [CHINA HAILS ITS FOUNDING](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

30. [LTTE propaganda machine worming into Aussie Parliament](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

31. [*Blaming Jewish 'provocation,' Arabs riot in capital. Despite no presence on Temple Mount, Jews accused of 'defiling' the Aksa Mosque * Nine policemen hurt and 21 rioters arrested in clashes*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

32. [*Iran : U.S. Congress and Middle East Conflict*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

33. [*Our smug leaders have done nothing to see off the BNP Politicians ignore the grievances that allow twerps like Griffin to thrive, argues Charles Moore*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
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34. [*Israel vs. Human Rights Watch*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

35. [*Tall tales from the has-been bunch*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

36. [LETTERS TO THE EDITOR](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

37. [Ambassador: Scotland is a hotbed for Israeli -haters](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

38. [OFFICIAL QUILTS OVER AIRSTRIKE OFFICIAL QUILTS OVER AIRSTRIKE](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

39. [Bee sting therapy Gaza clinic uses bees to relieve medical conditions](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

40. [Nimble, funny, thoughtful headlock on wrestling](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

41. [Rocket fired from Lebanon prompts Israeli barrage](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

42. [*In Brief News*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

43. [*Tensions in Jerusalem after new Al-Aqsa clashes*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

44. [*Palestinians in Israel enjoy the same opportunities as Jewish residents*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

45. [*IN BRIEF*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

46. [*The Week News Quiz*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

47. [Mubarak urges Israel to start final status talks](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

48. [IN BRIEF](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

49. [UN rights chief slams plight of women in Sudan , Gulf, Afghanistan](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

50. [Gay leader now on Merkel's radar](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

51. [New report challenges B'Tselem figures on Operation Cast Lead deaths in Gaza](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

52. [Seven days](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

53. [Dispute Over a Script Seminar for Muslim Students](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

54. [DOOM & GLOOM](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

55. [On fourth anniversary of Gaza disengagement, Netanyahu vows there will be no more unilateral moves](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

56. [Israel blasted over drone strikes on Gaza civilians](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

57. [Britain punishes Israel for Gaza naval bombardment](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

58. [EX-REP. BACK AFTER WEEK IN ISRAEL JAIL](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

59. [Israel blasted over drone strikes on Gaza civilians](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

60. [Letters](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

61. [Letters](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

62. [World Report](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

63. [*Obama gets serious on Middle East*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

64. [*Islamic terrorists find sanctuary in British campuses Commentary*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

65. [*Obama gets serious on Middle East*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

66. [*Secretary Clinton to the Fore*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

67. [*Britain should urge implementation of report's recommendations following Israel 's attack on Gaza*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

68. [*Gay leader drinks to future with Merkel at Oktoberfest Germany*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

69. [*Straw, Muslims and the 'safe' seat*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

70. [*Gay leader drinks to future with Merkel at Oktoberfest Germany*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

71. [*Gay leader drinks to future with Merkel at Oktoberfest Germany*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

72. [*Talks on the Middle East*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

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73. [B'Tselem: 773 of the Killed in Operation Cast Lead Did Not Take Part in Hostilities](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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74. [PALESTINIANS LOSING FAITH IN OBAMA'S PEACE DRIVE](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

75. [Holocaust survivor begins hunger strike in Cairo, demands Egypt allow activists into Gaza. Galloway leads similar group stuck in Aqaba](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

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76. [Why it is essential for us to stand up to bigots](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

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77. [The Johnny Procedure](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

78. [*'No More' must to reject 'Do More' demand: JI chief*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

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79. [*Cairo human rights group attacks Arab states*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

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80. [*Suicide rates in Palestine highest ever*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

81. [*Suicide rates in Palestine highest ever*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

82. [*Egyptians wait on Mubarak*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

83. [*NEWS Briefs*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

84. [Gov't expected to approve Schalit swap by wide margin, 'Post' finds](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

85. [Israeli police mass in Jerusalem after clashes](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

86. [World journal](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

87. [Suicide rates in Palestine highest ever](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

88. [Call for unity among Ummah to face challenges](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

89. [*A new year, an old dream Israelis hold little hope for peace in Mideast*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

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90. [*Muted New Year in Israel Prospect of more conflict with Palestinians dampens mood*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

91. [*WHAT'S ON TODAY*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

92. [*Feature - As we revert from denial to harsh reality The bold campaign against injustice may yet be won, observes Jeremy Corbyn*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

93. [*Obama now at his peak*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

94. [Green shoots in the Mideast](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

95. [Pakistan slams Indian sub](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

96. [Brunei : Palestine under siege: Yet another year of massacres](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

97. [Pakistan slams Indian sub](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

98. [Stunted development](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

99. [*UN Ambassador calls Palestinian Solidarity Day 'one- sided narrative'*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

100. [*The week in blood*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

B'tselem: Far more Palestinian noncombatants were killed in Cast Lead than IDF admits

The Jerusalem Post

September 9, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 5

Length: 351 words

Byline: DAN IZENBERG

Body

More than half of the 1,382 Palestinians who were killed by the IDF in Operation Cast Lead did not take part in hostilities, the human rights organization B'Tselem said in a special report being published Wednesday morning regarding Palestinian fatality figures during the fighting.

B'Tselem wrote that its figures were "the result of months of meticulous investigation and cross-checks with numerous sources."

According to the report, 774 of the Palestinians who were killed did not take part in hostilities, including 320 minors and 111 **women** over the age of 16.

Of those killed, 325 took part in the hostilities and 245 were Palestinian officers, most of whom were killed in IAF aerial bombings of police stations on the first day of the war. The report could not account for the identity of 38 others.

The figures published by B'Tselem contrast sharply with those provided after the fighting by the IDF. Israel maintains that 1,166 Palestinians were killed. About 700 of them were members of **Hamas** or other armed military groups and 295 were not involved in the fighting.

Israel also claims that 89 minors under the age of 16 were killed. However, B'Tselem says its representatives visited homes and gathered death certificates, photos and testimonies relating to 290 children under age 16 who were killed.

The organization has posted all of the names of the dead on its Web site. It said it asked the army to provide it with its own list of Palestinian fatalities so that it could compare the two and try to match names. However, B'Tselem said the IDF refused to comply.

"Behind the dry statistics lie shocking individual stories," the organization said in a press communique. "Whole families were killed; parents saw their children shot before their very eyes, relatives watched their loved ones bleed to death; and entire neighborhoods were obliterated."

B'Tselem said that, given the extensive damage inflicted by the IDF on the Gaza Strip, Israel should "conduct an independent and credible investigation and not make do with military debriefings."

B'tselem: Far more Palestinian noncombatants were killed in Cast Lead than IDF admits

The IDF did not offer a response to this report by press time.

Graphic

Photo: A PALESTINIAN boy is carried to a hospital following an Israeli attack in Gaza City on January 14. (Credit: Bloomberg)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

Jimmy Carter, we can have peace (without you) in the Holy Land

The Jerusalem Post

August 26, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 13

Length: 822 words

Byline: Michael D. Evans

Highlight: The former president's meddling - in his 2006 book, in his involvement with 'The Elders' and in his newly-released book in which he outlines a new plan for peace - is just not cutting it. The writer is a New York Times bestselling author of Jimmy Carter: The Liberal Left and World Chaos. A television special based on the book is currently being produced (www.carterbooktv.com)

Body

Former President Jimmy Carter has just released a new book, *We Can Have Peace in the Holy Land: A Plan that Will Work* in which he advocates a straightforward solution: Israel should embrace the Quartet [Russia, the UN, the EU and the US].

The plan is backed by a group known simply as The Elders, an NGO started by Nelson Mandela in 2007 to promote peace and assist in conflict resolution and funded partly by British entrepreneur Sir Richard Branson, who originally proposed the idea for the group, and musician Peter Gabriel. Jimmy Carter and the Carter Center are heavily involved with this endeavor; Carter is one of three appointed 'Elders' to the Middle East. The delegation currently in Israel accompanying Carter includes South African Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu and former Irish president Mary Robinson (who recently received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from US President Barack Obama despite strong objections by Jewish groups over her leadership role in the 2001 UN Durban Review).

The group's objectives were met with skepticism by Israelis, but according to Carter, were eagerly embraced by the "Palestinians, peace groups and human rights activists in the region."

How could he ask the Jewish people to embrace a group known as The Elders? The controversial Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion is the biggest best-selling book in a bigoted world, and is charged with fueling anti-Semitism.

CARTER'S PLAN is to allow the Quartet to solve the Middle East conflict, plain and simple. He calls for peace-loving organizations such as Hizbullah and Hamas and states like Iran and Syria to be involved in the negotiating process in order to bring peace to the Holy Land. The Quartet, Hizbullah, Hamas, Syria, Iran - according to Carter, everybody but Israel can bring peace.

For Israelis only, Carter reserves the word 'radicals' in his book. He also calls former prime minister Menachem Begin by the same adjective and then describes him as the "most notorious terrorist in the region." Of course, he said the British said that, not him. Carter goes on to describe Binyamin Netanyahu as a "key political associate and naysayer" who was strongly opposed to Israel relinquishing control over the Sinai.

Jimmy Carter, we can have peace (without you) in the Holy Land

It appears that Jimmy Carter is revising history. The Binyamin Netanyahu I know was attending college during the Camp David meetings in the late 1970s. In fact, when I recommended him to Begin for a government job, the prime minister did not even know who Netanyahu was. I have no idea how Carter was so aware of Binyamin Netanyahu's political ideology; he was selling furniture at the time to help fund his schooling.

The former president also writes that at the time, Begin agreed to divide Jerusalem. I found that to be astonishing, especially since Begin had given me a copy of the letter he penned to Jimmy Carter on September 17, 1978, in which he wrote, "Dear Mr. President, on the basis of this law, the government of Israel decreed in July 1967 that Jerusalem is one city indivisible, the capital of the State of Israel." According to Begin, Carter informed him that the US government did not recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

Begin told me he responded, "Excuse me sir, but the State of Israel does not recognize your non-recognition."

Carter further charges that Begin agreed to a freeze on building Jewish settlements but Begin told me he had not agreed to a total freeze; he only agreed not to build new settlements for three months, during the negotiations.

Carter also gives the impression that he and Begin were close friends by saying that Begin and then Egyptian president Anwar Sadat visited him in Plains to reaffirm the personal commitments each had made to the other, which I found quite humorous.

Begin told me he had refused to meet with Carter when the president traveled to Jerusalem. At that time, he was no longer prime minister but was outraged that Carter had misrepresented the events during their meetings.

COULD IT be that Jimmy Carter's ideals are formulated by the number of zeros before the decimal on the contributions to the Carter Center by oil-rich Gulf States? These same states do not now, nor will they ever, allow Jews to worship freely within their borders no matter how much land Israel relinquishes. It is then surprising and hypocritical to call Israel an "apartheid state" and to infer that the region's only democratic country is an obstacle to peace - thus the only solution to the Middle East conflict is through intervention.

Carter's final plea is for President Barack Obama to "shape a comprehensive peace effort between Israel and the Palestinians...then use persuasion and enticements to reach these reasonable goals with the full backing of other members of the International Quartet and the Arab nations."

It is likely he would call on The Elders for their expertise. The best thing President Obama could do is completely ignore Jimmy Carter and his plan.

Graphic

Photo: THE ELDERS: Jimmy Carter, former Norwegian PM Gro Brundtland, founder of the Self-Employed Women's Association Ela Bhatt, Desmond Tutu and Mary Robinson in Jerusalem yesterday. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

[Media war rages over Gaza conflict](#)

Guardian.com

September 9, 2009 Wednesday

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theguardian

Length: 938 words

Body

ABSTRACT

Seth Freedman: B'Tselem's report on Israeli and Palestinian casualties is bound to spark another round of claim and counter-claim

FULL TEXT

Gone are the days when history was written solely by the victors. In today's democratised climate of instantly disseminated words and images, those on either side of a battlefield have the potential to feed facts and figures to media outlets around the world, or to pass on video footage and photographs that their opponents might prefer never saw the light of day.

Winning a media war is, often, as crucial to long-term success as victory in individual battles. A case in point is last winter's [conflict between the IDF and Hamas](#); while the smoke has long cleared from the rubble of Gaza, supporters of either side continue to clash on a daily basis over the true extent of the devastation and loss of life, not to mention their opponents' motives and the overarching policies that led to the outbreak of hostilities.

B'Tselem's [latest publication](#) is guaranteed to spark another round of tit-for-tat claims and counterclaims from those in the Israeli and Palestinian camps, given the highly sensitive nature of the work undertaken by the human rights group in trying to determine the true casualty figures. While there is no argument over the number of Israelis killed during [Operation Cast Lead](#) - three civilians and 10 members of the security forces - B'Tselem declared the Palestinian casualty figure to be almost 20% higher than the official tally [compiled by the IDF](#), with even more blatant discrepancies arising when assessing the number of women and children killed in the Gaza Strip.

According to the IDF, 89 minors and 49 women lost their lives during the attack; according to B'Tselem's research, 252 minors and 111 women died as a result of the military offensive. In line with its usual reluctance to co-operate with certain human rights groups, the army refused to provide B'Tselem with details of how it arrived at such markedly lower casualty numbers, raising more questions than answers about the methodology employed and the veracity of its own fact-finding operation.

B'Tselem, on the other hand, has been entirely open about the way it carried out its extensive study, making available its complete findings on its website and opting out of the opaque, oblique practices so often endorsed by armies and governments when discussing the events of war. However, the mere fact that B'Tselem appears to

Media war rages over Gaza conflict

have nothing to hide will not stop the naysayers laying into it with flailing fists as soon as they get their hands on the report.

In the political cauldron of the Israel-Palestine conflict, the question of "[*Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*](#)" has been turned into a cottage industry, with layer upon layer of self-styled watchmen declaring themselves - and only themselves - to be in possession of the pure, unadulterated truth. For every report published by B'Tselem or [ACRI](#), there is an [NGO Monitor](#) critique published moments later lambasting the findings and "proving" the innate bias of anyone daring to criticise either the IDF or Israeli government - and so it will be with B'Tselem's latest research.

At the same time as B'Tselem's press release was hitting inboxes around the world, NGO Monitor was disseminating its own report, which tore into the work conducted by [Human Rights Watch](#), under the accusatory banner, "[*Experts or Ideologues?*](#)". As is [so often the case](#) with such NGO Monitor studies, its in-house research revealed "a consistent pattern of ideological bias, lack of professional qualifications and unsupported claims based on faulty evidence and analysis on the part of Human Rights Watch ... Israel is consistently singled out for condemnation, using particularly harsh language, while Palestinian and Arab human rights violations are minimised."

The executive summary will be lapped up by those on the Israel-right-or-wrong side of the fence, and equally fervently rejected by those who see through NGO Monitor's supposedly fair-handed and non-partisan approach to the conflict. Likewise, B'Tselem's figures will be grist to the mill of those who believe little to nothing that comes out of the mouths of IDF spokesmen, and jeered and mocked by those for whom the IDF is simply "the most moral army in the world".

Those behind B'Tselem's report are calling for their research to be used as part of a wider investigation into whether or not Israel committed war crimes during Cast Lead. Such a request should not be brushed under the carpet, either by Israeli officials or by those employed by quasi-governmental thinktanks to drown out dissenting voices whenever the IDF's tactics and behaviour are questioned.

B'Tselem has no problem referring to [Hammas rocket attacks](#) on Israeli civilians as war crimes, and does just that in its report. At the same time, it has refrained from explicitly labelling Israeli actions during the offensive as war crimes, preferring to state instead that its findings "raise grave concerns that Israel breached fundamental principles of international humanitarian law and caused excessive harm to civilians".

By taking such a stance, B'Tselem is much softer on the IDF than many would desire, and its diplomatic approach ought to be rewarded with a fair hearing by the Israeli authorities. However, given the historical sequence of whitewashes and obfuscations by the IDF and its backers, B'Tselem's report will be met with either a wall of silence or a barrage of abuse and derision - which does no favours to the supporters of the Israeli military, and certainly gives no solace to the victims on the Gazan side of the border.

Load-Date: September 9, 2009

International: The Haredim: Poor, devout and isolated

The Guardian - Final Edition

July 25, 2009 Saturday

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theguardian

Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 21

Length: 409 words

Byline: Ian Black

Body

Haredim - the Hebrew word means "god-fearing" - are the most orthodox Jews in Israel. In communities in Jerusalem and elsewhere an estimated 600,000 people follow a devout and fundamentalist lifestyle according to halacha (Jewish religious law), cut off in many ways from the modern, secular world.

Ultra-orthodox communities in pre-Holocaust eastern Europe and Palestine were hostile to Zionism - the idea that Jews could live in their own independent, secular nation because only the advent of the Messiah could "return" them to their biblical Holy Land. But since 1948 different Haredi groups have reached an accommodation with the state of Israel and its institutions.

Supporters of the Agudat Yisrael party, for example, have been represented in parliament and government. At the other end of the spectrum, radical members of the fringe anti-Zionist Neturei Karta support Iran's Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and the Palestinian Islamists of **Hamas**. Many thousands of Haredi yeshiva (seminary) students are exempt from military service - a source of resentment for secular Israelis. Virtually no **women** serve.

Haredim are poor compared with other Israeli Jews: 60% of Haredi men do not have regular jobs and prefer religious study. More than 50% live below the poverty line and receive state benefits compared with 15% of the rest of the population. A separate education system is heavily subsidised. Haredim are also young, with families of seven to eight children common. Haredi men wear black or caftans and fur-lined hats on holidays, even in scorching heat. **Women** cover their heads and dress modestly.

Self-segregated Haredi neighbourhoods are closed off by barriers on the sabbath and festivals to prevent the passage of vehicles - hence the fury over the decision by Jerusalem's secular mayor to open parking facilities outside the Old City.

There are tensions between Haredim and non-Haredi Orthodox Jews - the pro-settlement National Religious Party in particular - as well as between Haredi and secular Jews over issues such as Jewish conversions, civil marriage and gay rights.

Haredi practice forbids TV and films, reading secular newspapers and using the internet for non-business purposes. Recently a Haredi paper digitally altered photographs of the newly installed Israeli cabinet to replace two **female**

International: The Haredim: Poor, devout and isolated

ministers with pictures of men. Arnon Sofer, a leading demographer, predicts that Haredim will constitute 20% of Israel's Jewish population by 2020.

Load-Date: July 25, 2009

End of Document

Amnesty says Israel's Gaza action breached laws of war

The Irish Times

July 2, 2009 Thursday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 10

Length: 399 words

Byline: MICHAEL JANSEN

Body

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL holds that Israel's offensive on Gaza, launched without warning on December 27th last year, breached the laws of war. When ceasefires were imposed on January 18th, Amnesty says in a 117-page report published today, the first comprehensive report on the conflict, 1,400 Palestinians, most of them civilians, had been killed, including 300 children.

Palestinians also violated international law by firing rockets indiscriminately into southern Israel killing three civilians and forcing many to flee the area.

The report, released in Jerusalem, argues that Much of the destruction [in Gaza] was wanton and resulted from direct attacks on civilian objects, as well as indiscriminate attacks that failed to distinguish between legitimate military targets and civilian objects in violation of international law.

Hundreds of civilians were killed in attacks carried out using high-precision weapons. Others, including women and children, were shot at short range when posing no threat to the lives of Israeli soldiers.

Amnesty questions the misuse of high-precision weapons to kill children playing on rooftops or people sleeping in their homes. Israel not only fired imprecise incendiary white phosphorus shells over and into densely populated residential areas, killing and wounding civilians and destroying property, but also, asserts Amnesty, denied that this substance was being used, delaying appropriate medical treatment for the injured. Artillery in general and white phosphorus shells in particular should never be used in populated areas and their use is unlawful, the report says. Amnesty says Israeli troops used Palestinians as human shields to provide protection while they occupied or searched buildings.

The scale and intensity of the attacks were unprecedented, even in the context of increasingly lethal Israeli military campaigns in Gaza in previous years, the report says. More people were killed and more damage was inflicted than in any earlier Israeli offensive.

Amnesty criticises Israel for failing to establish any independent or impartial investigation into the conduct of their forces and for refusing to co-operate with independent fact-finding missions. The organisation contrasts the Israeli attitude with that of Hamas, which rules Gaza and freely permits human rights organisations to conduct investigations into Israeli and Palestinian abuses.

Load-Date: July 2, 2009

Amnesty says Israel 's Gaza action breached laws of war

End of Document

Situation: Hope-less?

The Jerusalem Post

June 30, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 16

Length: 840 words

Byline: STUART WEISS

Highlight: What started out as an unusual ad campaign has now become a cause celebre in Ra'anana, and beyond. The writer is director of the Jewish Outreach Center of Ra'anana.

Body

Driving down the streets of Ra'anana a couple of weeks ago, motorists noticed large posters of a scantily-clad young woman, promoting a local lingerie store called Hope. Only problem was, on most of the posters, the woman was almost completely obscured by heavy black lines that had been drawn to block out almost everything except the name of the company.

But who had done this? The first inclination, of course, was to assume that members of the religious community had objected to the immodest pictures and had taken matters into their own hands.

You could almost picture these intrepid members of the modesty patrol, surreptitiously sneaking around at night, paint brush in hand, merrily masking the maiden, and so sparing the innocent and the pure from the sexy, scandalous scenes that had invaded their neighborhood.

But lo and behold, it soon was learned that it was the company itself that had done the deed! Yes, the posters were created that way from the very beginning, with the model intentionally blocked out. But now the question was why.

Hope's co-owner, Yafit Kavia, maintains that this was just part of a clever ad campaign to attract attention. "It's different, it's unusual," she told me. "We meant no offense to the religious community; in fact, as someone who grew up in a traditional home, I thought it would be totally inappropriate to put up posters of women in their underwear!"

But local residents were not so sure. More than one irate citizen told me, "I'm absolutely certain that the perpetrators of this campaign knew full well that the secular residents would blame the religious for defacing the posters; the religious would then deny it, and the ensuing war of words would keep everyone talking about the store."

COMING ON the heels of a fear-and-smear campaign by Ra'anana's Meretz party in the last local election - which warned voters that, if elected, the religious parties would "close the streets and stores on Shabbat and force their way of life on all of us" - the Hope happening has created a furious debate in the city about the limits of good taste and "freedom of sight." There has even been a call for the mayor to publicly condemn the bizarre advertising gambit, and forcibly remove the posters from the city's streets.

Situation: Hope-less?

But the issues swirling around in this idyllic city of 80,000 are just a microcosm of what is happening throughout our entire society. It's about the great distrust between religious and secular, each of whom believes the opposite side is out to get them. It's about the blame we place - openly or subconsciously - on "the other," who, we are firmly convinced, is to blame for virtually all the ills of the nation.

After all, the religious consider the secular population as second-class, don't they? The secular destroy the Jewish character of the state, they are valueless and only care about their own selfish, material pleasures, and they would gladly hand half this country over to the Palestinians on a silver platter for a phony peace. Right?

As for the secular, they are just as sure that it is the religious who threaten their way of life. The religious want to force Judaism's strictures down everyone's throat; they want to replace our democracy with a theocracy; they care more about some lifeless dunam of biblical land than the future of our own children. Isn't that so?

And therefore, if a controversial photo was blotted out, it must have been the religious who did it! And if such posters were erected like that in the first place, it must have been a secular ploy to make the religious look like fanatical vigilantes. The preconceived notions and nonsense that afflict us are, to me, more frightening than Iran, **Hamas** and the water shortage put together.

YES, FOLKS, we do have our problems, and we should not take them lightly. There is a legitimate debate over Jewish values, land for peace, pluralism and army service versus yeshiva study. And our situation isn't made any easier by kippa-clad demonstrators - in an obvious effort to bring honor to God and Torah - launching loaded diapers at police protecting a parking lot on Shabbat. Or by mustachioed men in bikinis riding on floats through the streets of Jerusalem in an effort to show off the joy of being a gender-bender.

But the fact is, we have more in common with each other than we realize. The vast majority of our country has a genuine respect for Judaism, though we may express it in different ways. We abhor corruption, whether by a secular Avraham Hirschson or an observant Shlomo Benizri, and we cheer when we see justice done. We want our children to be safe on the streets, well-educated and able to live securely, now and in future generations. We love Israel, we are in awe of its beauty, we are dedicated to its survival and we are willing to place our lives on the line - just by living here! - to demonstrate our loyalty to this country.

All this may sound overly optimistic, even naive. But I believe it, because Hope springs eternal. At least in life, if not in lingerie.

jocmtv@netvision.net.il

Graphic

Photo: THE LINGERIE STORE poster. The preconceived notions and nonsense that afflict us are more frightening than Iran, **Hamas** and the water shortage put together.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Majority in cabinet backs prisoner release

The Jerusalem Post

November 24, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 984 words

Byline: GIL HOFFMAN and REBECCA ANNA STOIL

Body

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu expects to pass an as-yet-unfinalized deal to bring home kidnapped IDF soldier Gilad Schalit by a wide margin, sources close to Netanyahu said Monday.

The sources denied reports that Netanyahu intended to try to bypass the cabinet out of concern that he would have trouble passing the deal. They said charges that he would try to approve the agreement undemocratically were baseless.

Most of the 30 cabinet ministers remained silent on Monday about how they intended to vote on the deal because they had not seen the list of prisoners who would be included. Some said their decision would be impacted by the inclusion of former Tanzim leader Marwan Barghouti or the terrorist behind the murder of former minister Rehavam Ze'evi, Ahmad Sa'adat.

Top Likud officials speculated that no more than five ministers would end up voting against the deal. The most likely ministers to vote against it are National Infrastructures Minister Uzi Landau (Israel Beiteinu) and Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz (Likud).

Other possible no votes could come from Vice Premier Moshe Ya'alon (Likud), Minister-without-portfolio Bennie Begin (Likud) and perhaps even Vice Premier Silvan Shalom (Likud) and Science and Technology Minister Daniel Herschkowitz (Habayit Hayehudi).

Steinitz led the opposition to the deal that brought home businessman Elhanan Tannenbaum and the bodies of kidnapped soldiers Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser. Along with Shalom, Steinitz absented himself from a recent vote to release women prisoners in return for a tape of Schalit.

In an interview with the BBC in London, Shalom warned Hamas to stop making demands that it knows will not be accepted, such as releasing Barghouti or Sa'adat.

"We have to finish this story, and in practical terms, I don't see a way out except for a deal," Diaspora Affairs Minister Yuli Edelstein said last month in a quote he said Monday was still relevant.

Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman granted Israel Beiteinu ministers the right to vote according to their conscience without enforcing faction discipline, allowing Landau to vote against while Stas Meseznikov, Yitzhak Aharonovich, and Sofa Landver vote in favor.

How Lieberman will vote is unknown, but there is speculation in his party that he would abstain.

Majority in cabinet backs prisoner release

Herschkowitz said he was "torn" over how to vote, calling it "an awful dilemma." He said that after seeing the deal, he would consult with rabbis and many other people, and then make a decision that would take into account - but not be based solely on - Jewish law.

Every Shas and Labor minister is expected to vote in favor. Shas mentor Rabbi Ovadia Yosef is expected to issue a ruling ahead of a cabinet vote on the deal.

Shas officials called on Netanyahu on Monday to release Jewish murderers of Arabs at the same time he released the terrorists freed as part of the deal. Likud MK Danny Danon said he would lobby Netanyahu to insist on the United States releasing Israeli spy Jonathan Pollard as a goodwill gesture upon completion of the deal.

"If Netanyahu intends to release hundreds of mega- terrorists, the US, which would endorse the deal, must release Pollard, who has sat in jail more than any terrorist who will be released in the deal," Danon said. "President [Barack] Obama should show good intentions to the Israeli public and not only issue one-sided demands."

Netanyahu faced expected criticism on Monday from the National Union faction and from his brother-in-law, far right activist Hagi Ben-Artzi, who sent him a letter slamming the prospective deal.

"Out of love for Bibi, I tell him: Don't take on your shoulders the responsibility for all the deaths the deal will cause," Ben-Artzi told Army Radio. "You were elected with principles. Go home! Quit rather than make such a deal."

In response to the rumors circling the Knesset regarding a prisoner exchange, the National Union's Knesset faction held a press conference Monday afternoon during which they called on Netanyahu to reveal the findings of the Shamgar Commission. The commission, which was tasked with examining the implications of prisoner exchanges, has never published its findings, but National Union Chairman MK Ya'akov Katz said that he knew that the commission had warned against prisoner swaps.

"Imagine what the outcome of the Second Lebanon War would have been if the Winograd Commission had delivered its findings in advance of the war. How prepared we would have been," he explained. "Now, we have that opportunity with the Shamgar Commission. Netanyahu must reveal the findings before we make any decision to release terrorists, and he must have a debate in the government and in the Knesset before he reaches any conclusion."

MK Uri Ariel emphasized that the government was misleading the public in arguing that there was no other alternative to releasing prisoners. Israel, he said, could put pressure on Hamas through restricting the privileges of Palestinian security prisoners held in Israel, or through limiting Gaza's power supply or water supply, both of which are provided by Israel.

"What the prime minister and defense minister are doing is simply caving in to public pressure," said Ariel, arguing that the role of Israel's leadership was to provide "real bravery and leadership."

MK Aryeh Eldad cited Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency) statistics showing that 30-50% of released terrorists eventually return to terror, and accused the current government of crossing "red lines that even [former prime minister Ehud] Olmert was not willing to cross."

Eldad, who is his faction's representative on the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, complained that in the course of Monday's briefing with National Security Adviser Uzi Arad, he discovered that the National Security Council "was not asked and did not submit an opinion regarding the impact of the release of terrorists" as a result of any possible deal for Schalit's release.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Captive's father sees 'no light at end of tunnel'; Israeli soldier captured in 2006

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)

October 9, 2009 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A22

Length: 331 words

Byline: Claire Snegaroff, Agence France-Presse

Dateline: PARIS

Body

The father of captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit said Thursday he saw no immediate hope that his son would be freed soon, despite the release of a video last week showing him alive.

"We were moved to see him after so much time, after a period in which we hadn't even received a photo of him," Noam Shalit told AFP during a trip to Paris, where he is urging France to push for his release.

"On the other hand we are very worried, we don't see light at the end of the tunnel," Shalit said ahead of a meeting later Thursday with French President Nicolas Sarkozy.

Israeli authorities last week received the first footage showing Gilad Shalit looking healthy after more than three years of captivity in Gaza, where he is being held by Palestinian militants.

The video was sent in exchange for Israel's release of 20 Palestinian women prisoners.

Looking gaunt, the clean-shaven 23-year-old read from a piece of paper, at times smiling or repressing a grin, as he sat on a chair against a white wall in the footage made public just hours after the women were set free.

The exchange was widely seen as the biggest breakthrough since Gaza militants captured Shalit in a 2006 cross-border raid, and as a key step toward an eventual swap that would see Israel free hundreds of prisoners.

But Noam Shalit, whose son also has French nationality through his mother, is not so hopeful.

"For us, it is a step in the right direction, but that doesn't mean that a deal on prisoners is close, there has been no breakthrough," he said.

But the decision by Hamas, the Islamist group that rules Gaza, to release the video was "a sign that they are under pressure and they want to move things forward," he said.

He said he believed that the video had had a powerful effect on the Israeli public.

"No one can remain indifferent to a film like that," he said.

Captive's father sees 'no light at end of tunnel'; Israeli soldier captured in 2006

Shalit is hoping that his meeting with Sarkozy, who since the soldier's capture has personally intervened to try to secure his release, will lead to a breakthrough.

Graphic

Photo: AFP-Getty Images; Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit holds a Gaza newspaper dated Sept. 14 in a video released Oct. 2. ;

Load-Date: October 9, 2009

End of Document

My bid for president of Palestine is a campaign for peace

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

November 26, 2009 Thursday

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THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 957 words

Byline: Ray Hanania

Body

In 33 years of political journalism and election campaigning in America, I've learned that no one can predict an election outcome. Surprising things that people do not expect usually happens. And longshots with no hope of winning oftentimes do win. So with all that in mind, I am announcing my candidacy for president of Palestine.

First person by Ray Hanania

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It has several goals. The last of which is to actually become Palestine's president. First and foremost is my declaration that peace based on compromise is the only future for Palestinians and Israelis.

There is no future for Palestinians or Israelis with today's situation. The Israelis have turned to the hard conservative right, rejecting real peace and believing they can have everything while Palestinians remain driven by anger and emotion and very little logic. Sometimes anger is soothed by revenge, but suffering is never avenged by violence. Rejecting peace is the foundation of violence and both Israelis and Palestinians are guilty of rejecting peace each for their own misguided, anger-driven reasons.

So someone has to step up to the plate and say what needs to be said if only to give the people an alternative.

Two states, one Israel and one Palestine is the only answer. It always was and always will be. It doesn't matter that Palestinians rejected two-states in 1948 when they fought to destroy the Jews or that Israel rejected two-states in 1948 also when they fought but failed to take over the whole country. Two states, based on land for peace. Israel abandons its hunger for Palestinian land and Palestinians abandon their own hunger for Israel.

Two states, based on the premise of building from ashes rather than turning what remains into ashes, which is where we are all headed at the moment. We just don't see the end. Although continued suffering and continued fear is in fact an endless ending. There is no end to tragedy driven by vengeance, but tragedy can end when there is hope.

My bid for president of Palestine is a campaign for peace

Two states with both sides accepting the inevitable. A sharing of Jerusalem, an end to the Israeli settlements, compromise on the Palestinian Right of Return, and both committed to non-violent and genuine negotiations.

Not easy, for sure. But the most valuable things in life are those that we have to fight the hardest to attain. And nothing is harder than achieving peace.

Even when there is peace, the fanatics on both sides, Israelis and Palestinians, will continue to do what they have always done, undermined peace and blamed the other side.

The blame game has no victors, only generations of losers. Losers on both sides who continue to suffer.

Two states means Israel recognizes the rights of Palestinian refugees and apologizes to them for their role in creating their tragedy, and working with the United Nations, America and the Arab World to create a fund to help resettle them in a Palestinian state where they can live in dignity rather than in humiliation and squalor.

Two states means the Palestinians surrender what they have already lost in constant war and failed resistance and failed leadership, recognizing once and for all that Israel does exist. They must set aside the Palestinian Right of Return which is based on the Rule of Law, and instead apply the Rule of Reason.

Israelis must abandon the majority of the settlements and give Palestine land from Israel, one inch for each inch that they keep in settlements. They must freeze their settlement growth which has continued even during the peace process of the 1990s that Israelis wrongly blame on the late President Yasser Arafat.

Israel does nothing willingly. It's time its people push their government to do the right thing, to recognize their own contributions to the continued conflict and stop blaming others, the Palestinians, for the failures.

Israel is as much at fault for the failure of peace as are the Palestinians.

Palestinians must reject the religious fanaticism of **Hamas**, a terrorist organization that is no different than the Israeli settler movement. They must stop cheering when **Hamas** or other terrorists attack Israel. And Israelis must stop justifying the unjustifiable. The murder of innocent men, **women** and children is a horrendous war crime that has occurred at the hands of both sides.

Two states can bring this to an end. We need a new attitude and a revival in hope. Hope for the future. Hope for peace. Hope for compromise. Hope that reason can prevail.

It's not easy, but it can be done.

In the face of today's conflict, I would rather support a reasoned dream than embrace an unreasoned status quo.

There are no innocent parties in this conflict. We can tell ourselves that there are but we will all be judged for the enabling of violence, the acts of violence and more importantly for refusing to support peace to save lives.

Palestine has no hope without compromise and Israel has no hope with a Palestine State.

It's simple. Enough is enough. Yalla Peace! That's the motto of my virtual campaign for office on the Internet for now and who knows, maybe a reality if enough people see the errors of their anger.

Support my campaign by visiting www.YallaPeace.com. It's not about electing me to any office at all. It is about believing that the long shot can bring us great reward in the future and is far better to cheer than the tragedy that we call today.

Ray Hanania is an award winning Palestinian journalist, columnist, author and standup comedian.

My bid for president of Palestine is a campaign for peace

End of Document

Jews prove easy catch

Herald Sun (Australia)

October 26, 2009 Monday

1 - FIRST Edition

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Length: 984 words

Byline: ALAN HOWE

Body

Disgusting, women-hating racists play key roles in the poisonous circus that is the United Nations

THEY say that you should set a thief to catch a thief.

The none-too-smart and ideologically unsound United Nations works on more simplistic levels -- it sets angry Arabs to catch its Jews.

Works every time.

There's no shortage of angry, resentful and underachieving Arabs at the UN, nor will it run out of like-minded Africans too soon.

By and large, Arabs and Africans are not good at democracy. They don't do personal freedoms all that well. Many of them are fond of cruel and unusual punishments -- you know, public stonings for miscreant young women wanting to marry the man of their choosing, that sort of thing.

That the UN powerlessly condemns such behaviour is, apparently, beside the point.

In a sneering perversion of logic, some Arab and African nations, to whom human rights are an unnecessary indulgence, sit at some of the UN's top tables -- the UN Human Rights Council and even the Committee Against Torture.

Sharing leg space under the UN's influential desks are such legendary stalwarts of democratic fairness and equality as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Cameroon, Madagascar, Jordan, Nigeria, Senegal and China. Tin pots, basket cases, thugs -- take your pick.

They were just some of the countries that, as members of the Human Rights Council, initiated and sat on an inquiry into the Israeli actions in Gaza, which took place almost a year ago.

Led by esteemed South African jurist Richard Goldstone, they lived up to cheeky Oscar Wilde's putdown of Britain's then greatest poet, William Wordsworth. Wilde said of Wordsworth's famous bucolic lessons that "he found in stones lessons he had already put there".

Jews prove easy catch

The UN Human Rights Council had its finding sewn up in January when it sent "an independent . . . fact-finding mission" to the "occupied Gaza Strip".

O CCUPIED by whom? The Israelis walked away from Gaza four years ago, courageously dismantling the settlements there and controversially forcing its grumpy civilians to leave.

The only Israeli in Gaza that I can think of is the kidnapped soldier, Gilad Shalit, who has been held by Hamas terrorists for more than three years. Now there's someone Goldstone might have spoken to.

Gazans paid Israelis back in spades for the long-sought opportunity to be masters of their own fate: they sent thousands of Qasam rockets over the border and on to local towns, the deadly fusillade becoming a political imperative in democratic Israel.

Israelis wanted their Government to stop the shelling and end the terror. That's why the Israeli army entered Gaza last December in a controversial invasion in which about 1400 people were killed, mostly Palestinians. That's the thing when you take on the Israelis; they don't come at you with some wobbly rockets that Uncle Ali knocked up out the back last night.

And if you are going to employ the terrorist tactics of hiding and operating in densely populated areas and schools, expect some painful collateral damage.

The UNHRC didn't appear to be on a hunt for the truth -- that often being unbearable -- but they are keen to reinforce the prejudices of each other by condemning Israel. Its predecessor, the UN Human Rights Commission, did the same until, thoroughly discredited, it embarrassed even Secretary-General Kofi Annan and he shut it down.

So with a slight change of name -- the acronym stays the same, saves on stationery -- it's back to the same unquenchable hatred for Israel.

Goldstone's report predictably accused Israel of human rights abuses in Gaza -- so self-defence is now a crime?

A RESOLUTION endorsing the report's finding went further, upsetting its author. It contained "not a single phrase condemning Hamas as we have done in the report", said Goldstone, sounding almost surprised.

So which fearless, peace-loving and virtuous states signed on?

Senegal, for a start. Kids are big business in Senegal, but not the Toys 'R' Us kind. There they are sold into forced labor, prostituted and often trafficked to other countries to become domestic servants -- the illegal variety that has almost no identity and whom you can imprison and rape with impunity.

This year Senegal arrested nine HIV-prevention workers, reportedly beat them, accused them of consorting with criminals (being in police custody in Dakar, I guess they were), charged them with "indecent and unnatural acts" and jailed them.

Senegal -- and I wish this were a joke -- is also a key player on the UN's Committee Against Torture.

Egypt also saw merit in the loony resolution. Now here's a country that keeps the Committee Against Torture busy. The committee has expressed concern at the "persistence of the phenomenon of torture and ill-treatment of detainees by law enforcement officials".

In 2002, the very committee on which now Egypt sits found it guilty of a pattern of "torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment".

Nigeria voted yes. I'm voting Nigeria's one of the nastiest governments on earth. Prisoners of its corrupt judicial system are raped and tortured. The lucky ones.

Jews prove easy catch

In Nigeria's northern states, lashings and stonings are popular and, if you see an amputee in the streets, it is unlikely that he is a member of the Limbless Soldiers' Association. Of course, there are restrictions on freedoms of speech, movement, assembly, religion and the press.

Djibouti voted yes, but I wonder what the genitally mutilated, repressed women of that Horn of Africa hellhole really think?

Cameroon voted yes, and if you are up for a few entertaining minutes just look at official travel advisory for it.

While you are there you might check advisories for Zambia, Pakistan, Ghana, the Philippines, Russia, Richard Goldstone's homeland South Africa, Qatar, Mauritius and all the others who sit in judgment on a world gone mad.

Do you agree with Alan and Sally?

Have your say at blogs.news.com.au/heraldsun

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End of Document

World Report

Windsor Star (Ontario)

November 3, 2009 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Byline: Star News Services

Body

EUROPE

NEW VIDEO PLEA FOR MISSING MADELEINE

LONDON -- British police today released an Internet video of Madeleine McCann, who disappeared two years ago in Portugal at the age of three, with tanned skin and darker hair which she might have if held captive in a warmer climate.

The video shows a digital image of what Madeleine might look like now if she had darker skin and shoulder-length hair. Another image shows her with paler skin.

The minute-long video, produced in seven languages, also contains film footage of Madeleine before she disappeared, including of her boarding a plane and playing on a staircase.

Jim Gamble, head of Britain's Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre, urged the public to help spread the video online including via social networking sites and Internet chat rooms.

Gamble said the video was aimed at pricking the conscience of anyone who might be connected to those behind her disappearance.

"The person we are looking to reach is likely to be a partner, family member, friend or colleague of the person or people who were involved in Madeleine's disappearance," Gamble said in a statement.

SWEDEN TO OUTLAW VIEWING CHILD PORN

STOCKHOLM -- Sweden plans to make it illegal to look at child pornography, beefing up its ban on possession of child porn that does not apply to those who merely view such images on the Internet, it said.

The new law would make it illegal to "actively gain access to child pornography" even if the images were not technically in a person's possession, the centre-right government said.

KARADZIC REGRETS MUSLIMS ESCAPED

World Report

THE HAGUE -- Radovan Karadzic's one regret over the massacre at Srebrenica was that some Bosnian Muslims "got away," prosecutors alleged on Monday.

The former Bosnian Serb president again refused to attend the United Nations war crimes tribunal in The Hague as Alan Tieger, the prosecutor, concluded his case. He accused Karadzic of personal responsibility for "one of humanity's dark chapters" -- the slaughter of more than 7,000 Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica.

FIRST SWINE FLU DEATH IN AUSTRIA

VIENNA -- An 11-year-old Italian girl became the first person in Austria to die of swine flu on Monday, doctors at the hospital where she was being treated in Innsbruck announced.

The young girl from Bozen, in northern Italy, was hospitalized on Oct. 23 in Innsbruck after first visiting a general practitioner with flu symptoms.

She was in a life-threatening condition for several days and was placed on a respirator after suffering lung failure.

MIDDLE EAST

EX-OFFICER KILLED AT HOME IN IRAQ

MOSUL -- A former Iraqi army colonel during Saddam Hussein's rule was assassinated in front of his home in the northern city of Mosul on Monday, eyewitnesses and police said.

Abdul Khalaq Mohammed Saeed, now head of security in Mosul for mobile phone company Asiacell, was shot by gunmen as he stood at the gate to his home.

Saeed, in his mid-50s, is survived by his wife and four children.

\$5M BOUNTY ON TALIBAN LEADERS

ISLAMABAD -- Pakistan put a bounty of \$5 million on the heads of Taliban leaders in the country on Monday after a suicide bomb killed at least 35 people near military headquarters in Rawalpindi.

The blast was aimed at people lined up to withdraw money from a bank. Many of the victims were elderly people who had wanted to withdraw their pensions. Four soldiers were among the dead. More than 30 were injured.

Hours after the first blast, another suicide bomber struck in the eastern city of Lahore at a police checkpoint.

ISRAEL FREES 12 HAMAS MPS

RAMALLAH -- Israel on Monday released 12 Palestinian MPs from the Islamist Hamas movement who were detained in 2006 after Gaza militants captured an Israeli soldier, officials said.

Another MP was freed late Sunday, bringing to 37 the total number of Hamas lawmakers released in recent months, including parliamentary speaker Aziz al-Dweik, who was set free in June.

A spokesperson for the Israeli Prisons Authority said the lawmakers were released because the 40-month period of their administrative detention had expired. None was charged with anything.

It was unclear why Israel had decided to release the deputies at this particular time, since administrative detention can be prolonged indefinitely.

AFRICA

FOUR TO HANG FOR ALBINO MURDER

World Report

DAR ES SALAAM -- A Tanzanian court on Monday sentenced four suspects to death by hanging for the murder of a 10-year-old albino boy last November, an official said.

State lawyer Edwin Kakolaki said the presiding judge ruled the prosecution had "proved its case beyond reasonable doubt" and handed down the sentence in a court in the country's northwestern Shinyanga town.

The ruling brings to seven the number of suspects sentenced to death for the murder of albinos in Tanzania. Three men were handed death sentences in September by the same court.

CONGO TROOPS KILL 500 SINCE MARCH

KINSHASA -- Democratic Republic of Congo soldiers have "deliberately killed" more than 500 civilians since March during an offensive targeting rebels in the country's east, Human Rights Watch said Monday.

Earlier on Monday, a top UN official announced that they had withdrawn its support for Congolese army units operating in the east, accusing its soldiers of killing 62 civilians.

ASIA

BRITAIN SNUBBED OVER POISON KILLING

MOSCOW -- Britain's foreign secretary was publicly snubbed by his Russian counterpart on Monday when he was told it was "absolutely unrealistic" to expect Moscow to extradite the prime suspect in the murder of the Kremlin critic Alexander Litvinenko.

In a tense joint appearance in Moscow, David Miliband and Sergei Lavrov publicly disagreed about whether Britain had even supplied Russia with sufficient evidence on the case. Litvinenko died in 2006 after drinking tea laced with radioactive polonium in a London hotel.

Later, Miliband returned the snub, rejecting a proposal to try the case on Russian soil, hinting that Moscow was incapable of organizing a fair trial. "This crime took place in London," he said. "That is where the trial should take place." He said Britain would continue to press the case with Russia.

MAN KILLED NEAR PUTIN'S OFFICE

MOSCOW -- Gunmen shot dead a prominent Russian businessman in his car on Monday a few hundred metres from the seat of Russia's government, state investigators said.

Shabtai von Kalmanovic, a businessman and president of the Spartak female basketball club, died at the scene, investigators from the state prosecutor's office said in a statement.

More than 20 shots were fired at the car outside Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's office at the Russian White House, the government headquarters, it said.

The killers fled in a car and Kalmanovic's driver, who was wounded, gave chase but had to abandon it because of his wounds.

DEATHS IN UKRAINE FUEL SWINE FLU FEARS

KIEV -- Ukraine raised its death toll from flu and respiratory problems on Monday, while Kiev's mayor suggested a Champions League match should be played without spectators amid a swine flu scare.

Kiev had made an urgent appeal to world powers for help battling the spread of the A(H1N1) virus on Sunday, after declaring 60 people had died of respiratory complications and flu. The health ministry put this figure at 67 on Monday, without detailing when the deaths took place or explaining the jump in the toll.

World Report

He said 255,000 cases of flu and acute respiratory illness had been registered among the country's population of 46 million.

CLINTON WISHES HE'D DIED IN OFFICE

ISTANBUL -- Former U.S. president Bill Clinton said on Monday he would have preferred to leave the White House in a coffin because he loved being commander in chief, but signalled his political life is over.

"It's good that we have a (term) limit. Otherwise I would have stayed until I was carried away in a coffin. Or defeated in an election," Clinton said at a conference in Istanbul. "I loved doing the job."

NORTH AMERICA

CANADIAN CAN'T SUE U.S. OVER TORTURE

NEW YORK -- A Canadian man who was detained at a New York airport and then moved to Syria, where he says he was tortured, cannot sue the United States, a federal appeals court ruled on Monday.

Maher Arar, a Syrian-born software engineer, was arrested by U.S. officials during a 2002 stopover in New York while on his way home to Canada and then deported to Syria because of suspected links to al-Qaida.

Arar says he was imprisoned in Syria for a year and tortured and has sued top U.S. government officials, claiming his civil liberties were violated.

In a 7-4 decision, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit agreed with a lower court that Arar could not sue U.S. officials.

CENTRAL AMERICA

CUBA SLAMS BOOK BY CASTRO'S SISTER

HAVANA -- Cuba's state-run media on Monday condemned a just-published book in which Fidel Castro's sister admits she spied for the Central Intelligence Agency.

The country's media added that the expose proves that the former Cuban leader was a "victim" of decades of U.S. targeting.

"The truth is in full view: Fidel Castro is the victim, the offended person, the individual against whom they conspired," wrote the government-run La Jiribilla magazine.

The condemnation by the Havana government follows the admission by Juanita Castro, 76, in her Spanish-language book that she worked with the U.S. spy agency.

In the book, which went on sale last week, Juanita, the fifth of seven Castro siblings, writes that she aided the CIA during the 1960s, at a time when the United States was plotting to assassinate her brother and replace his Communist regime.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Morteza Nikoubazl, Reuters; DRUGS IN AFGHANISTAN: Afghans smoke heroin as they sit at a cave in southern Herat on Monday. ;

Load-Date: November 3, 2009

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The bully laid bare

New Straits Times (Malaysia)

September 11, 2009 Friday

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Body

THE Palestinians have been saying it all the while. Now, the Israeli human rights group, B'Tselem, has published what is probably the most damning evidence of the atrocities committed by the Israeli military against civilians in Gaza. On Sept 9, B'Tselem released its findings into three weeks of fighting - murder might be the better word - from Dec 28, 2008, when the Israeli military steamrolled into the Gaza Strip to punish Hamas fighters for firing rockets into Israeli territory, killing several Israeli civilians. The operation, according to B'Tselem, resulted in the death of 1,387 Palestinians, more than half of them civilians. It said 773 civilians, including 320 children and 109 women over 18, were killed.

These figures, not by a Palestinian group, but by an Israeli organisation, show the Israeli military for what it is: a big bully unconcerned about civilian casualties. The figures contradict those given by the military: 1,166 Palestinians killed, including 89 children under 16. B'Tselem arrived at its conclusions based on a thorough study, and interviews with witnesses, including Israeli soldiers; it gathered death certificates, photos and testimonies. B'Tselem said: "Behind the dry statistics lie shocking individual stories. Whole families were killed; parents saw their children shot before their very eyes; relatives watched their loved ones bleed to death; and entire neighbourhoods were obliterated."

The military offensive also devastated the Palestinian economy. On Sept 8, the UN Conference on Trade and Development said the Palestinian economy suffered \$4US billion in losses due to the Israeli operation. The United States under President Barrack Obama has initiated moves to reopen stalled peace talks. It has also taken a tougher stance against Israel, giving rise to the audacity of hope. But the Palestinian factions need to take a hard look at themselves, too. It is time the Palestinians and the Arab nations moved as one in seeking a solution to the conflict. So long as they are disunited, Israel will continue to ride roughshod. Israel must realise that the world wants to see peace in the region. It is hoped B'Tselem's report will goad it in this direction. B'Tselem said: "The extremely heavy civilian casualties and the massive damage to civilian property require serious introspection on the part of Israeli society." So true. The rest of the world, too, should resolve not to allow such atrocities to recur. Any killing of civilians - whether in Gaza or Sri Lanka or Afghanistan - must be condemned in the strongest language.

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Western armies require discipline and openness to fight the enemy; Podium

The Independent (London)

July 9, 2009 Thursday

First Edition

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The INDEPENDENT

Section: COMMENT; Pg. 32

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Byline: Richard Kemp

Body

MAINTAINING THE good reputations of Western armies demands a culture of openness and honesty among soldiers at all levels, so they are willing to admit their mistakes readily to their chain of command.

For any of this to work, I repeat, our people must be whiter than white. This requires the best of training and the toughest of discipline and it is sometimes even harder among conscript troops and mobilised reservists.

Here I am not just talking about serious abuses and breaches of the laws of war. I include smaller things like trashing people's homes that have been taken over, or are searched or cleared. Like being as courteous as possible to civilians. Maintaining control over soldiers who have just seen their best mates blown apart is far from easy, but it is vital.

Where there is genuine concern over our own troops' conduct or action, we must not hesitate to conduct inquiries and investigations, and if necessary bring people to justice. As far as possible, these processes should be open.

But this involves of course yet another major complication - because we must not confuse mistakes made as a genuine consequence of the chaos and fog of war with deliberate defiance of rules of engagement and the laws of war. Mistakes are not war crimes. We must also know how to explain this.

Most armies do some of these things already. But what we need really is a radical re-evaluation of the effort required to achieve the impact we need. This requires a mindset that is hard to find in most armies around the world. It requires resources and a shift in priorities. And it significantly complicates already highly complex military operations.

It does not answer all of our problems but all the steps I have mentioned are - in my view - essential to countering the strategies and tactics of the insurgents we are faced with today - in Gaza, Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere.

They are also, I believe, essential in defending our military policies and objectives and in defending our brave servicemen and women who are prepared to put their lives on the line to defend their country.

Western armies require discipline and openness to fight the enemy Podium

Colonel Richard Kemp, CBE, served in the British Army from 1977 until 2006. He spoke at a recent conference in Israel "Hamas, the Gaza War, and Accountability under International Law"

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Many are still jobless, but Nablus shopping boom symbolizes improving W. Bank economy

The Jerusalem Post

July 17, 2009 Friday

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Byline: KHALED ABU TOAMEH

Body

NABLUS - Many of those who have visited this city in the past decade were journalists searching for interviews with gunmen belonging to Fatah's armed wing, the Aksa Martyrs Brigades, or stories related to violence and bloodshed.

In recent months, however, most of those who come to Nablus, once known as the Palestinian's economic capital, are shoppers searching for cheap clothes and fine sweets or a massage at one of the newly renovated 200-year-old Turkish baths.

The shoppers, mainly Israeli Arabs, don't need to sneak into the city by bypassing IDF checkpoints. Their shopping sprees have been facilitated by the army's recent removal of two major checkpoints that used to prevent Israeli citizens from entering cities that are under the exclusive control (Area A) of the Palestinian Authority.

Several other major Palestinian cities in the West Bank have also been playing host to Israeli-Arab shoppers, thanks to an easing of IDF security measures.

The army recently removed the main checkpoint at the southern entrance to Jericho, paving the way for thousands of families to seek relatively cheap rooms in the city's five-star hotels and resorts.

Despite the apparent boom, the Palestinian economy is still in far from good shape. High unemployment rates remain one of the major challenges facing the PA government. Unemployment in the West Bank is estimated at 20 percent. (In the Gaza Strip it is believed to be over 35%.)

Some Palestinians said that improved security inside the PA-controlled areas has also played a role in boosting the local economy.

"The masked gunmen have disappeared from the streets," boasted a senior PA security official in Ramallah. "We are implementing a zero-tolerance policy toward lawlessness and anarchy."

The relative calm has encouraged the building of malls, cinemas and other projects in many cities, signaling what many Palestinians hope is the beginning of the return to normal life.

Moreover, the growing sense of security has attracted local and foreign investors, who said that what's happening in the West Bank these days reminds them of the optimism that prevailed immediately after the signing of the Oslo Accords more than 15 years ago.

Many are still jobless, but Nablus shopping boom symbolizes improving W. Bank economy

"Lawlessness and anarchy have always scared potential investors," remarked businessman Mazen Alawi. "We hope that the international community will continue to support the government of [Prime Minister] Salaam Fayad. We also hope that Israel will continue to remove checkpoints and ease restrictions."

It thus appears that the Palestinians have chosen not to wait for Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu or the Quartet's Middle East envoy, Tony Blair, to strengthen their economy. Instead, they have been taking matters into their own hands, investing tens of millions of dollars in various projects throughout the West Bank.

On Wednesday, thousands of Palestinians took to the streets here to celebrate the Nablus Shopping Festival. Organizers said they were hoping to attract more than 500,000 people during the month-long event, which is reminiscent of carnivals and festivals that take place in Brazil and other Latin America countries.

The organizers said that in addition to cultural events that include music and dancing, they were also planning to prepare the largest knafeh pastry sweet in the world. Nablus has long been famous for its knafeh, which is made of noodles and honey-sweetened cheese.

"This is a very special day for Nablus," said PA- appointed governor Jamal Muhaisen. "Indeed, the economic situation today is much better."

Muhaisen said he hoped that the festival would bring tens of millions of dollars to the local economy. He said similar festivals were scheduled to take place in most of the major Palestinian cities in the West Bank.

Basel Kana'n, chairman of the Nablus Chamber of Commerce, expressed satisfaction with the improved economy.

"Yes, the situation today is much better," he said, adding that thousands of Israeli Arabs converge on the city on weekends as part of organized tours for shopping and entertainment.

Only a few weeks ago, he noted, two local businessmen, Marwan al-Masri and Bashir Shaka'a, inaugurated Cinema City, the first movie theater to open here in 22 years. The two invested \$2 million in the 175-seat cinema.

Ghassan Shaka'a, a former mayor of Nablus and member of the PLO Executive Committee, said the opening of the cinema reflected the growing sense of security in PA- controlled areas.

"People are more confident thanks to the law and order imposed by the Palestinian security forces," he said. "Today more businessmen are willing to invest in Palestine because they feel more secure."

Once notorious as a terrorist hotbed, the Casbah (Old City) also seems to be enjoying the fruits of the economic boom.

Scores of Palestinian men flock to the area every day to enjoy hot steam and a massage in one of the two Turkish baths inside the Casbah. Customers are also provided with light meals, nargilas and free mint tea.

"It's like being in a different world," said physical therapist Muhammad Amer from the Al-Shifa Bath. "Hardly a day passes without new customers coming here. Most of our clients are Arabs from Israel."

Many shopkeepers said for that for the first time since the beginning of the second intifada in September 2000 there are signs that the economic situation in the city and other parts of the West Bank is improving.

"I hope the situation will stay like this for a long time," said Ayman Abu Jaser, manager of a small restaurant that specializes in kebab and humous. "I've never seen Nablus so full of shoppers."

He added that Saturday has become the favorite day for almost all merchants because of the large number of Israeli Arabs who flood the city's markets.

Older merchants said the full markets reminded them of the days when Israeli Jews used to eat and shop in Palestinian cities and villages, before the first intifada erupted in late 1987.

Many are still jobless, but Nablus shopping boom symbolizes improving W. Bank economy

Nablus-born Munib al-Masri, who is often described as the wealthiest Palestinian on earth, said he and many of his friends were working hard to restore Nablus's status as the economic capital of the Palestinians.

He too attributed the economic boom to the success of the Palestinian security forces in restoring law and order to Palestinian communities.

"The security situation is good, so everyone wants to do business in the West Bank," said Ali Barham, coordinator of the Nablus Shopping Festival. "Many people are beginning to feel the change."

The change, Palestinian political analysts explained, is one of the direct results of the international community's decision to pour billions of dollars into Prime Minister Fayad's government to bolster his standing and undermine support for Hamas among the Palestinians.

"The crisis between Fatah and Hamas has been a blessing to Fayad and his government," said a Ramallah-based analyst. "Everyone is giving Fayad money with the hope that he would be able to prevent Hamas from extending its control to the West Bank."

He cautioned, nonetheless, that while the growing prosperity may have some kind of a moderating effect on Palestinians, it does not necessarily mean that many would end up voting for Fayad or Fatah when and if free elections are held.

"It's premature to tell whether all the money that has been poured on the Fayad government has changed people's political attitudes," the analyst said.

Fayad's aides said he hardly spends time in his Ramallah office because he's too busy running from one place to another inaugurating different economic projects in the West Bank.

"We're not waiting for Netanyahu and Blair," said one aide. "Many of the projects were planned long before Netanyahu and Blair came."

Blair, on a visit to Nablus this week, said the economy is improving "because the Palestinians are providing their own security today and the Israelis are starting to lift the access and movement restrictions."

There could be immense change here, Blair said, if political talks were able to resume soon with prospects of a deal to create a Palestinian state at peace with Israel.

Like Nablus, Jenin was also once known as a "capital of Palestinian terror" because of the multiple gangs and militias that used to roam its streets. Thanks to the easing of IDF restrictions and the millions of dollars that are being invested in various projects, Jenin has also been transformed into a major shopping city.

For more than a year now, the IDF has been allowing Israeli Arab families to enter Jenin for shopping, especially on weekends.

But a most significant change occurred recently, with the opening of the Herbawi Home Center mall. The five-story mall has since attracted thousands of visitors from the West Bank and Arab villages and towns in Israel.

Developer Ziad Turabi said that luxury malls were also expected to be opened in Ramallah, Hebron, Tulkarm and Nablus in the near future.

According to the International Monetary Fund, the West Bank economy could improve significantly this year if Israel continues to ease restrictions on Palestinian trade and movement. It said that the economy in the West Bank could grow by as much as 7% this year.

Osama Kana'n, the IMF representative in the West Bank, said this could represent the first significant improvement in living standards for the Palestinians since 2006. Yet he warned that if the relaxation of Israeli restrictions does not continue, real GDP per capita would decline further in 2009.

Many are still jobless, but Nablus shopping boom symbolizes improving W. Bank economy

Last week the government announced that the Allenby Bridge on the Jordanian border will remain opened 24 hours a day as part of Netanyahu's plan to improve the Palestinian economy. The decision has been hailed by PA officials.

Graphic

Photo: PALESTINIAN **WOMEN** are seen in the new Cinema City in Nablus. According to many in the West Bank, life has taken on a greater semblance of normalcy. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

Hezbollah chief calls on Egypt to stop Gaza wall

AlArabiya.net

December 26, 2009 Saturday

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Body

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah on Sunday called on Egypt to stop its construction of a steel wall along its border with the Gaza Strip as it could obstruct tunnels which provide a lifeline for the enclave, blockaded by Cairo and Israel.

Nasrallah told a crowd of tens of thousands of Lebanese Shiite Muslim marking the Ashura religious ceremony that Egypt should be condemned if it does not halt the wall building. Last year Nasrallah accused Egypt of complicity with Israel in its siege of the Gaza strip.

"In addition to the siege there has been news about (building) a steel wall..to terminate the thin veins which are giving some life and some hope to Gaza," he said.

"We call on the government in Egypt and the leadership to stop the wall and flooding the tunnels and to end the siege otherwise it should be condemned by all Arabs and the Muslims," he said.

Egyptian officials have said steel tubes were being placed at several points along the 14-km (8-mile)-long border, but they did not specify their purpose.

Palestinians fear a steel barrier, deep underground, would limit or end their lifeline through hundreds of tunnels operating in an attempt to break a three-year-old Israeli-led blockade.

Tunnel-builders said some 3,000 tunnels were operational before Israel launched a three-week offensive in the Gaza Strip a year ago, but only 150 were still functional following the conflict and subsequent Israeli air raids.

"This unjust silence over besieging a whole people should not continue regardless of the excuses," Nasrallah said.

Hezbollah chief calls on Egypt to stop Gaza wall

Shortly before Nasrallah's speech tens of thousands of Shiite Muslim Lebanese, chanting "Death to America, death to Israel," marched in Hezbollah's Beirut stronghold to commemorate the annual Ashura ritual.

A sea of men, women and children marched in the streets of Beirut's southern suburbs carrying Hezbollah's yellow and black flags and some carried religious slogans. They beat their chests in a sign of grief over the killing of the Prophet Muhammad's grandson, Imam Hussein, and chanted "O Hussein" and "We will never be humiliated."

Ashura commemorates Hussein, who was killed along with most of his family by Islamic ruler Yazid, who Shiites remember as an oppressor and murderer. Hussein's death at Kerbala in Iraq in AD 680 is a defining moment in the history of Shiites.

Egypt is trying 26 men suspected of links with Hezbollah and accused of planning attacks inside the country. Hezbollah denies they had plans for attacks inside Egypt and says one of the men is a Hezbollah member and that he and up to 10 others were trying to supply military equipment to Hamas-run Gaza.

Load-Date: December 27, 2009

**'Anti-Semites have warped tiny Israel into Goliath'. Excerpts from the
Diaspora affairs minister's speech to the Global Forum for Combating Anti-
Semitism Conference in Jerusalem**

The Jerusalem Post

December 17, 2009 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 7

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Byline: YULI EDELSTEIN

Highlight: VERBATIM

Body

On Yom Kippur, automatic rifle fire shattered the quiet outside the Great Synagogue of Paris, sending worshipers diving for cover. In Denmark, two Jews were shot in a shopping mall in the town of Odense.

A few weeks later, a Danish school principal declared Jewish students no longer welcome in his school, advising Jewish parents to send their children elsewhere.

In Sweden, a Jewish cultural center was attacked by arsonists, twice, in one week.

In Chicago, an unprecedented chain of anti-Semitic attacks left synagogues and schools with their windows smashed, and saw walls covered in graffiti and charred by the remains of a Molotov cocktail.

In London, attempts were made to burn down synagogues and loot local businesses. Men pulled a Jewish motorist out of his car and beat him.

Similar events took place in Belgium, Australia and Brazil.

These events took place in 2009, not 1939. Many of these attacks were done in the name of justice for Palestinians - in order to create "peace" in the Middle East. In order to defend the underdog. In order to attack Jews.

No longer permissible to openly proclaim hatred of the Jews? So the anti-Semite must seek new forms and forums to release his poison.

No longer politically correct to openly hate Jews? So he has repackaged his hate - and in doing so, has been able to gain endorsement from academics, media outlets and even political parties.É

Do not be fooled. Anti-Semitic malice has not decreased. Rather, anti-Semites have succeeded in repackaging their hate into a politically digestible form.

It is no longer the individual Jew or a Council of Jewish Elders who has led the world into war and economic collapse - it is Israel, the state of the Jews, who have brought war and tragedy to the globe.

'Anti-Semites have warped tiny Israel into Goliath'. Excerpts from the Diaspora affairs minister's speech to the Global Forum for Combating Anti-Semitism Confer....

Where Jews were once depicted as blood thirsty, stingy, morally corrupt baby killers, after the horrors of World War Two these depictions of Jews are hard for many to stomach. So the attack has been reframed and reworded.

There are no more Jews. Instead there are Israelis. Israeli soldiers kill babies. Israeli soldiers attack pregnant mothers. Israelis started wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Israel as a nation was not put through a Holocaust. Israelis have not been expelled, converted, exiled and enslaved. So if you attack Israel, you are not picking on the weak. Anti-Semites have warped tiny Israel into Goliath. This way you can hate Israel, you can hate Israelis, and you are not called anti-Semitic.

Beyond having a license to hate, you may be violent, breach the peace, and oppress human rights - as long you loathe the State of Israel.

The Reverend Martin Luther King commented on this distortion of the truth when it first came into being over 40 years ago: "To be anti-Zionist is inherently anti- Semitic, and forever will be.

"Why is this? Zionism is nothing less than the dream and ideal of the Jewish people returning to live in their own land.

"Anyone who holds dear this inalienable right of all mankind... the right to self-determination, should understand and support the right of the Jewish People to live in their ancient homeland. All men of goodwill should exult in the fulfillment of God's promise, that his People should return in joy to rebuild the Land of Israel."

What does it mean to be anti-Zionist? It is to deny the Jewish people of a "fundamental right that we justly and freely accord all other nations of the globe. It is discrimination against Jews, because they are Jews. In short, it is anti-Semitism."

Whenever I travel abroad, I hear time and again the following two statements:

A state for the Palestinian people must be created. And the state created for the Jewish people? It is inherently racist and should be removed.

I do not know if a more contradictory, irrational, and illogical argument has ever been made in the same sentence: The Palestinians are a people and therefore deserve a state; the Jews are a people, and therefore should not be allowed to have a state.

We must repeat again and again these basic facts - to be "anti-Israel" is to be anti-Semitic. To boycott Israel, Israeli professors and Israeli businesses, these are not political acts, these are acts of hate, acts of anti- Semitism!

Anti-Israel hysteria is anti-Semitic hysteria. They are one and the same.

Look at the reality Israelis face when traveling to international athletic, business and academic events. More and more, when they arrive in Sweden, Turkey, England and even the United States, they must lecture and perform before hostile or even violent crowds, requiring police protection.

We must not hesitate to expose this hatred for what it is. It is a strong and vile form of xenophobia. It expresses itself through violence, mockery and exclusion. It is directed towards the outsider, towards that which is different, in appearance, speech or prayer.

As written in the book of Ezekiel, "If the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people, and the sword comes and takes a life, I will hold the watchman accountable for his blood."

We cannot wait for the sword to begin its downward stroke. Anti-Semites in Europe, America and across the Middle East have declared their intentions for the Jews of Israel.

It is not enough to merely react in the wake of anti- Semitic acts. We must take a more proactive approach.

'Anti-Semites have warped tiny Israel into Goliath'. Excerpts from the Diaspora affairs minister's speech to the Global Forum for Combating Anti-Semitism Confer....

Four decades removed from the Six Day War, Israel's enemies prefer to shy away from open battle with the Jewish State. Iran hides behind her proxy armies, **Hamas** and Hizbullah, who hide behind woman and children, knowing Israel will hesitate to return fire on militants using innocents as human shields.

Foreign supporters of Islamic extremism work to undermine Israel at a grassroots level. I pray these activists do not know what they are supporting when they take to the streets on behalf of **Hamas** and Hizbullah. They are supporting terrorists, supporting the implementation of Islamic law, denying rights to minorities and **women**. And time and again these rallies do not end peacefully. They end with a synagogue's windows smashed, a store looted, a Jew beaten.

I call upon each and everyone of us to sit with our children and talk with them about anti-Semitism, explaining why it is wrong to hate a person, and why it is wrong to hate a state.

Graphic

Photo

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Warmer Relations With Turkey Kindle Hopes in Syria

The New York Times

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Byline: By ROBERT F. WORTH

Dateline: ALEPPO, Syria

Body

Ever since Syria and Turkey lifted their visa restrictions in September, Turkish visitors have poured into this picturesque northern city. Hawkers in Aleppo's ancient souk now call out to shoppers in Turkish, and cross-border commerce has soared. The two countries have embarked on a very public honeymoon, with their leaders talking about each other like long-lost friends.

But this reconciliation is about far more than trade, or the collapse of old Turkish-Arab enmities. At a time of economic and political uncertainty here, the new warmth with Turkey has stirred hopes about Syria's future direction, in areas that include religion, oil and gas, and peace with Israel.

For some here, the new closeness with secular, moderate Turkey represents a move away from Syria's controversial alliance with Iran. For others, it suggests an embrace of Turkey's more open, cosmopolitan society. And for many -- including Syria's president, Bashar al-Assad -- it conjures different dreams of a revitalized regional economy, less vulnerable to Western sanctions or pressure.

"It's much more than an economic relationship," said Samir al-Taqi, director of the Orient Center for International Studies in Damascus. "It's about regathering the region, and a feeling that the West is much weaker, less liable to do anything here. I think Syria has lots of ambitions to redefine its geopolitical position."

Those ambitions became apparent in October, when Syria delayed signing an economic agreement with the European Union that it had sought for years, hinting that it wanted better terms. The agreement had been initialed in 2004, when Syria felt threatened by the United States invasion of Iraq and desperate for economic and political succor. Now Syria's leaders feel far more confident, analysts say.

That confidence has less to do with Syria's still-ailing economy than with its political position. The West's isolation of Syria has given way to engagement, despite Syria's continuing support for the militant groups Hamas and Hezbollah. The United States is expected to send a new ambassador to Damascus soon, ending a long freeze in diplomatic relations.

Syria's relationship with Turkey -- which has been slowly warming for years -- helped bring about this political realignment. Turkey mediated indirect talks between Syria and Israel in 2008, fostering renewed hopes in the West for a peace deal.

Warmer Relations With Turkey Kindle Hopes in Syria

But the widespread notion that Turkey will draw Syria toward moderation and a regional peace deal may be something of a fantasy, albeit a useful one. Turkey's alliance with Israel has cooled noticeably since Israel's war in Gaza a year ago, which provoked outrage in the region and reaffirmed the political value of Syria's ties to Hamas. Israel expressed interest in restarting indirect talks with Syria this month, but many here are skeptical. Syria is keenly aware of the backlash it might face from domestic radicals -- or even from Iran -- if it drew closer to Israel.

Instead, the new Turkish alliance may be valuable precisely because it helps Syria hint at change while keeping its options open, said Peter Harling, a senior Damascus-based analyst with the International Crisis Group, and lead author of a report on Syria's foreign policy published Monday.

"In a region full of unresolved conflicts, Syria has chosen to hedge its bets," Mr. Harling said. "Aligning with Turkey helps Syria to offset competing pressures from Iran and the West while strengthening its position economically."

But the relationship is not just about providing Syria with political cover. Mr. Assad, the Syrian president, has made clear that he hopes to foster a regional energy network, building on Turkey's natural gas pipelines. Trade between the countries doubled between 2007 and 2008, and doubled again in 2009, to an estimated \$4 billion, according to the Aleppo Chamber of Commerce.

"I think there is a sort of vision developing between Syria and Turkey where they could serve jointly as a regional trade hub, linking Europe with the Gulf and other parts of the East," said Nabil Sukkar, a Damascus-based economic analyst.

It is too soon to tell how far that vision will go, or whether Syria will start to feel swamped by imports from Turkey's more powerful economy. In the meantime, the political opening has corresponded to a real social and cultural rediscovery, with Turks and Arabs warming to each other after long years of hostility. Syria, after all, was born out of the Ottoman Empire's dismemberment in 1920, and its identity was built in large part on the rejection of its former masters in Istanbul.

On a popular level, there was bitter resentment over Turkey's annexation of the Arabic-speaking Hatay district, which had been Syrian. As recently as 1998 the two countries were on the brink of war over Syria's support for Kurdish rebels. Relations improved slowly after Syria expelled Abdullah Ocalan, the rebel leader.

The thaw has accelerated strikingly in recent months, with Turkish journalists writing glowing accounts of their travels here. Many Syrians say Turkey feels much closer to them culturally than Iran or Saudi Arabia, two important allies of recent decades. Turkish films and television shows are often dubbed into Syrian Arabic and become huge hits here. One film, "Valley of the Wolves: Iraq," portrayed Turkish agents taking revenge on American soldiers for massacres carried out on Arabs in Iraq, in a neat parable of recent policy shifts.

For Syrians, the warmth is partly aspirational: many hope that Turkey's gradual shift over the past decade from military autocracy to a more democratic and tolerant political system will be replicated here. For the moment, they must be content with having new friends.

"Before, we were afraid to come here," said Omer Sonmez, a Turkish businessman who first visited Syria three months ago, and now crosses over regularly to trade roasted pumpkin seeds and other foods. "We thought it would all be so closed, with no women on the street. But when you talk to Europeans, they say the same thing about Turkey!"

"And look," Mr. Sonmez added, glancing around at the crowds emerging from Aleppo's covered market. "We are not so different. Even our faces are similar."

Graphic

PHOTOS: A British tourist at the Mosque of Abraham in the Aleppo Citadel. Syria, once part of the Ottoman Empire, has shown hostility toward Turkey in the past.

Turkish tourists at the Grand Mosque in Aleppo, Syria. The lifting of visa restrictions has brought a flood of Turkish visitors to the city. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY TAMARA ABDUL HADI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) MAP: Signs of a Turkish-Syrian thaw can be seen in Aleppo, in northern Syria.

Load-Date: December 15, 2009

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G2: Childhood in ruins: Last December, Israel began a 23-day bombardment of Gaza, killing around 1,400 people. One year on, a generation of children is growing up amid the wreckage of that attack, traumatised - and radicalised - by the experience. Guardian foreign editor Harriet Sherwood reports

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Byline: Harriet Sherwood

Body

Ghiada abu Elaish's fingers twist in her lap and her eyes cloud over as she recalls the day an Israeli shell killed four of her cousins and left her in a coma for 22 days. She has had almost 12 months to reflect on the tragedy, a time in which hatred and anger might have consumed the 13-year-old. Remarkably, though, not only has she survived shocking injuries and a dozen operations, with many more to come, but she has retained both her sweet nature and faith in a bright future.

Which makes it all the harder for her to return each day after school, dressed in the ubiquitous Palestinian uniform of blue-and-white-striped smock over jeans and trainers, to the scene of the massacre - her family home.

It was Friday 16 January and Ghiada was studying for exams. Her father, a pharmacist, woke from a nap, demanding tea and shouting at the younger children to be quiet. "Suddenly I could hear my cousin downstairs, screaming 'Dead! Dead!'" A shell had hit the building - a block of five apartments, housing the extended Abu Elaish family - smashing windows and causing extensive damage to the flat below.

In the ensuing panic, Ghiada defied her father and followed him downstairs. "One room was completely black. I saw Aya (my cousin), she was on the ground with wood on top of her. There was a big hole in the wall."

Ghiada tried pulling Aya out from under the furniture. A second shell struck. "There was a big light for a second," she says. "I saw some windows smash and I heard screaming all around. A piece of shrapnel hit me.

I started to scream for help and then fell down unconscious."

Ghiada's father, Atta Mohammed abu Elaish, rushed into the room. "I saw bodies without heads and legs. I saw my daughter. I saw her mother screaming." He ran outside to call an ambulance. "The Israelis stopped the ambulances 250 metres from the house. Some boys from the street came to start ferrying the bodies and the injured out of the building."

G2: Childhood in ruins: Last December, Israel began a 23-day bombardment of Gaza, killing around 1,400 people. One year on, a generation of children is growing

The attack was one of countless assaults during Israel's 23 days of war on Gaza - Operation Cast Lead - that began on 27 December. But it was also one of the most notorious because Ghiada's uncle - Aya's father - was a doctor who worked in Israeli hospitals and was well known to Israeli viewers for advocating peace and reconciliation. All through the conflict, Dr Izzeldin abu Elaish gave regular eyewitness accounts by phone in fluent Hebrew to Israeli television. Within minutes of the attack on his own family, he was back on the phone to a journalist in a Tel Aviv studio, weeping and begging for help as Israeli viewers listened: "My daughters have been killed."

Indeed, they had: Bissan, 20, Miar, 15, and Aya, 14, were dead, along with another cousin, 17-year-old Nour. Ghiada was in a critical condition; another of the doctor's daughters was also wounded.

The injured girls - thanks to that live TV broadcast - were unusually and swiftly evacuated to a hospital in Tel Aviv, where Ghiada was found to be suffering from multiple problems with her heart, kidneys, stomach and legs. She remained in hospital in Israel for four and a half months.

Now, Ghiada says, she thinks about that day "always", but tries not to let others see her pain. "When I am crying, I go to my room and cry alone," she says. Does she feel angry? No, she says, just sad. And she plans to stay put in Gaza: "Maybe others would like to emigrate, but that's not for me."

Toll of death and destruction

But if Ghiada expresses no bitterness, her father insists she is angry and so is the rest of the family. "It's very hard for us," he says. "That accident took Bissan, Nour, Miar, Aya - and my brother." Dr Abu Elaish has left Gaza for Canada. "He is the eldest brother, the father of the family, and now he's gone. How can we forgive?"

The shelling of the Abu Elaish family was unusual in that it caught the attention of the Israeli public, but what Ghiada continues to endure 12 months on is shared by many of Gaza's 750,000 children - half of its population.

More than 1,400 Gazans were killed in the 23 days of the Israeli assault, including several hundred children. The actual number is in dispute. The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) documented 313 deaths, almost 40% of them less than 10 years old. Other Palestinian groups say the toll was much higher. More than 1,600 children were injured.

But the 23-day war is only part of the story. The long history of Israeli assaults on Gaza, and the two-and-a-half-year-long blockade of the territory after Hamas took power, has exacted a toll on almost every aspect of children's lives: schooling, housing, leisure time, what they eat, what they wear, how they see the future.

A Gaza Community Mental Health Programme (GCMHP) survey earlier this year found that about 75% of children over the age of six were suffering from one or more symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder. Almost one in 10 ticked off every criteria.

"The majority of children suffer many psychological and social consequences," says Dr Hasan Zeyada, a psychologist with GCMHP. "Insecurity and feelings of helplessness and powerlessness are overwhelming. We observed children becoming more anxious - sleep disturbances, nightmares, night terror, regressive behaviour such as clinging to parents, bed wetting, becoming more restless and hyperactive, refusal to sleep alone, all the time wanting to be with their parents, overwhelmed by fears and worries. Some start to be more aggressive."

Dr Abdel Aziz Mousa Thabet, professor of psychiatry at al-Quds university in Gaza, says the conflict has a different impact on boys and girls. "Girls have more anxiety and depression, boys are more hyperactive."

Some children no longer look on their homes as a place of safety, security and comfort. Others don't even have a home to go to. The Israeli bombardment damaged or destroyed more than 20,000 houses, forcing some families into tents and others into crowding in with relatives. Hamas distributed money to displaced families to rebuild their homes but the Israeli blockade has created a desperate shortage of materials. Almost one year later, some children still have no roof over their head.

G2: Childhood in ruins: Last December, Israel began a 23-day bombardment of Gaza, killing around 1,400 people. One year on, a generation of children is growing

Hanan Attar, a slight 10-year-old wearing flip-flops several sizes too big for her small feet, is wistful as she recalls the house destroyed by an Israeli tank shell. "We had land, my father is a farmer," she says. "We used to grow watermelons, but the land was too close to the border and we can't get there now."

Home is now a tent on a patch of scrubby sand, shared by 10 members of her family, including a 50-day-old baby sister with a pinched face and a tin of formula milk perched on her rusting iron crib. The baby, Haneen, is seriously underweight at only 3kg, and is not growing. Her mother, Arfa, 40, cannot breastfeed because she is taking medication for back problems; the formula costs 45 shekels (£7.50) a tin, money that the family has to borrow. The father, too, is sick as well as unemployed. He reaches on top of a tall fridge that dominates the tent to pull down a sheaf of x-rays showing how his leg, broken in the conflict, is pinned together with metal.

"We are civilians, we don't belong to any faction," he says. "What are we guilty of so that we have to live like this? I spent my entire life building

up my home. In one hour everything was gone."

Hanan doesn't complain about the tent, but says "the house was better". She adds: "A snake came one night and bit my mother. I can't sleep at night; I'm scared of the snakes and the dogs."

Meals are cooked on a Calor gas stove; the toilets - a hut donated by an Arab charity - are shared by all the families in the compound of tents. "There are big queues," says Hanan. Winter is coming; the tent is "freezing", she says.

There is a community of tent families, circled round the shared lavatories. The children play as all children do, kicking a football, wrestling, dragging sticks through the sand. The families are doing their best in near-impossible circumstances. Some families have even planted small gardens in the scrub: corn and a few flowers.

But Hanan - who wants to be a doctor so she can treat the sick - says she spends most of her time in the tent with her seven brothers and sisters. Do they think they will ever go back to a proper home? "God knows," says Arfa.

Overcrowding, lack of privacy and poverty are contributing to what some in Gaza call the "mental siege" . Tensions within families are increasing, say Gaza's mental health experts. "Some parents themselves have depression and anxiety. Some become more aggressive towards their children," says Zeyada.

John Ging, director of UN operations in Gaza, puts it like this: "Parents are sitting there in their homes, very upset and very frustrated at the their situation, and that is of course having ramifications for the home environment." Has there been an increase in domestic violence? "Of course . . . children are losing respect because of the breakdown of the role-model structure. They see their parents as incapable of providing for them, they're seeing their parents

as a failure."

Lost childhoods

Part of the problem is the lack of release and entertainment for children. There are few gardens or parks, no cinemas or theatres, many sports facilities have been damaged or destroyed by Israeli bombing, and one of Gaza's great natural advantages - a 25-mile stretch of sandy beach facing the Mediterranean - is hiding a fresh danger.

In the summer months, families flock to the beach on Fridays and Saturdays. The sight of children splashing in the waves is cheering until one remembers that every day 20m gallons of raw sewage is pumped into the water. Since Gaza's sewage processing plant was bombed after the kidnap of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit in July 2006, there has been no alternative means of disposal. Now, according to Save the Children, children are developing skin diseases as well as bacterial infections from swimming in polluted water.

"There are not enough safe places for children to play," says Mona

G2: Childhood in ruins: Last December, Israel began a 23-day bombardment of Gaza, killing around 1,400 people. One year on, a generation of children is growing

al-Shawa, head of the women's unit at the PCHR. To counter this, the UN organised a hugely popular "Summer Games" during the long school break, despite objections from Hamas about boys and girls mixing together. "There were those on the political side saying kids should be going to summer camps, not doing sport and recreation, but preparing for a future life of militancy," says Ging.

Ging says schooling has also suffered. Thirty-two of the UN's 221 schools were damaged in the Israeli assault, plus scores more government ones. None have been repaired because Israel does not allow construction materials into Gaza, saying they could be used to make weapons.

"So the schools, where the windows were blown out or other damage was done, have been cleaned up, made safe, and continue in operation today without the physical repairs because we haven't been allowed to bring in one pane of glass or one bag of cement since last January," says Ging.

Israel did permit a consignment of wood into Gaza to make school desks for 8,000 children, but then blocked delivery of the steel necessary to complete them. "Now you see three kids squashed on to a desk," says Ging. "How are teachers supposed to give each child the attention they need?"

There is also a shortage of school books and pens, and what does arrive mostly has to be smuggled through underground tunnels from Egypt.

The result is children attending overcrowded schools on a double or even triple shift system that has contributed to a continuing decline in education levels. One in five of the 200,000 pupils at the UN's 221 schools in Gaza failed basic Arabic and maths exams this year.

Engendering extremism

"It's shocking for them but it's also alarming for us in terms of the future," says Ging. "The objective of the (Israeli) policy is to counter extremism. Education is probably the most effective tool through which you will counter extremism, by developing a positive and well-educated mindset. And yet we are being prevented by the policy from educating these children."

It is, he says, "facilitating the destruction of a civilised society and, worse than that, the development of an extreme society".

One of the starkest examples of school destruction is the American International school, Gaza's elite fee-paying institution in Beit Lahiya, which was bombed in the early hours of the morning of 3 January. The Israeli military claimed it was being used as a rocket-launching site. Now, where once stood science laboratories, computer rooms, a music centre and sports fields, there is a mountain of crushed masonry, twisted metal girders, broken glass and droppings from the sheep that roam the deserted site. To the side of what was once the main building lies a row of burned-out schoolbuses. The odd fragment of textbook can be seen amid the rubble.

Then there is the difficulty of trying to concentrate in class when children are clawed by hunger. Three-quarters of Gazans rely on food handouts, according to the UN. Save the Children says it is seeing newborn babies suffering from malnutrition. Anaemia, especially among girls, is common.

The UN has started feeding children in its schools because, says Ging, "they're coming to school without breakfast and therefore their attention span is very short and the academic results will then reflect that".

Food, at least, is something that is relatively easy to fix. There are many less tangible issues that concern child experts, such as a lack of healthy role models. "During the war, children could see that their parents could not fulfil their needs," says Zeyada. "They see their fathers as weak, powerless. They see parents can't give them feelings of security, can't protect them. So they look towards other figures. That might be God as an absolute power - so children might go towards religion, become more fanatic. Some identify with fighters from Hamas and other groups.

G2: Childhood in ruins: Last December, Israel began a 23-day bombardment of Gaza, killing around 1,400 people. One year on, a generation of children is growing

"Without hope, we are moving fast towards more aggressive children, more fanatics. If the siege ended you would see positive changes among children. They (Israel) are creating their enemies. They are pushing a new generation of children to believe in violence as a way of solving their difficulties. They are creating their own enemies of the future."

In September 2007 Israel declared Gaza a "hostile entity". "I said at that time, and I continue to say it, that's a self-fulfilling prophecy," says Ging. "You designate it as a hostile entity, you treat it as a hostile entity and in fact what happens is you generate hostility. And that's precisely what we have been witnessing here at the grassroots level for the last two and a half years under this illegal siege . . . We have more extremism in Gaza every single day."

Yet through it all, it is striking how many Palestinians cling to a belief in a better future. For all her traumas, Ghiada hasn't given up. She attends a thrice-weekly English lesson after school to improve her chances of fulfilling her dreams.

The teacher hands Ghiada a question to answer to the class in English: If you were a colour, what colour would you choose? The girl doesn't hesitate. "Red," she tells the class.

The teacher asks the students what the colour red means to them. Blood, suggests one; danger, says another, both witnesses to last year's carnage. Ghiada considers for a moment, then replies: "It makes me happy. It's the colour of love."

And what will Ghiada do with her English? She wants to be an airline pilot, she says.

Ironically that's one career choice that will certainly require emigration: Gaza has no aeroplanes and the runway of its only airport was bulldozed to rubble by the Israeli army years ago.

Captions:

Children play in the rubble of their homes in Jabaliya, destroyed by the Israeli offensive in January Photograph Ashraf Amra/Polaris/eyevine

A Palestinian boy covers his ears as he sits behind **Hamas** militants during an anti-Israeli rally at al-Nuseirat refugee camp in Gaza this month

'When I am crying, I go to my room and cry alone' . . . Ghiada abu Elaish

Load-Date: December 17, 2009

Israel and Egypt eye movement on peace process; Israel Prime Minister Netanyahu and Egypt President Mubarak met in Cairo and discussed the Israeli-Palestinian peace process ahead of a visit by US envoy George Mitchell. The two leaders also discussed captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.

The Christian Science Monitor

December 29, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 1033 words

Byline: Ilene R. Prusher Staff writer, Liam Stack Correspondent

Body

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met in Cairo Tuesday with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in talks aimed at bringing Egyptian pressure on the Palestinians ahead of a flurry of diplomatic activity expected next week, including a visit from US Middle East envoy George Mitchell. The Israelis appear to be seeking more movement toward peace talks on the part of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, given what Mr. Netanyahu says are unprecedented moves toward peace by halting settlement construction in the West Bank. The 10-month freeze does not include East Jerusalem, where Israeli officials said yesterday they would build another 700 housing units, raising ire among Palestinians and summoning criticism from the Obama administration. The Palestinian Authority under Mr. Abbas has said it will not return to peace talks unless Israel has a full settlement freeze, including not just the West Bank, but East Jerusalem as well. Mr. Mitchell, on his visit, is expected to present a new draft for resuming peace talks.

Netanyahu was quoted in Tuesday's Yedioth Ahronoth as saying that his government had taken "courageous steps for the sake of peace that no other government has taken, but the Palestinians have imposed difficulties and preconditions and have climbed a high tree." He added, according to the interview: "The time for excuses is over, and the time for action has arrived." The comments seem to reflect an outlook that Netanyahu is trying to portray to the world: that he has done everything in his power so far to bring about a new era in peace talks, and that it's time for the Palestinian leadership to come forward with bold moves as well. "Everyone wants to make sure it looks like the ball is in the other guy's court," says Mark Heller, an analyst on the Middle East conflict at the Institute for National Security Studies at Tel Aviv University. In that way, he says, Netanyahu will be able to tell Barack Obama, who has made the peace process a foreign policy priority, that he's made as many overtures as he can without endangering the stability of his own government. Gilad Shalit's status discussed The talks, which Netanyahu's office characterized as held in a "friendly atmosphere" and "thorough," also focused on a long-anticipated prisoner exchange deal between Israel and **Hamas**. Israel is expected to exchange between 900 and 1,000 Palestinian prisoners for its captive soldier, Sgt. Gilad Shalit, held in Gaza since mid-2006. Though the talks have been taking place through a German mediator, Egypt has also played a role and is expected to be the exchange point for Mr. Shalit, if and when he is released. "Israelis at this point don't have a lot of belief in the Egyptians doing something substantial on a diplomatic front, but they are looking to them to increase their control of the border," Heller adds. Moves to do so, however, have raised anger in Cairo, not only with Egyptians but with international protesters marking the anniversary of the Gaza war, which started this week a year ago. Bad time for Netanyahu visit? In Cairo, local press focused on reports of a new Egyptian security wall on the border and autonomous cells of

Israel and Egypt eye movement on peace process Israel Prime Minister Netanyahu and Egypt President Mubarak met in Cairo and discussed the Israeli - Palestinian

international left-wing activists staging disruptive protests across the capital. Given that, some in Cairo say Netanyahu's visit is coming at a bad time. There is concern that Egypt has little to gain from the talks and could wake up on Wednesday feeling - and looking - like Israel's accomplice. "I am afraid that my country will find itself in the same position that it was this time last year during the Israeli invasion of Gaza," says Diaa Rashwan, a political analyst at the government-funded Al Ahram Center for Strategic and International Studies. "The Egyptian government will look like a partner in Israeli action against Gaza and Palestinians in general, and that also looks like action against the Egyptian people themselves." For the past week, Egypt's Gaza woes have been a hotter topic than usual in parliament and the press. Its leading independent newspaper has published daily reports on the construction of a new underground steel wall along the border with the Gaza town of Rafah, which is meant to sever smugglers' tunnels used to supply the embargoed Hamas-controlled enclave. Activists blocked Then there are the activists. Egypt has blocked as many as 2,000 international activists from travelling to its border with Gaza, leaving 500 stranded in the Jordanian port of Aqaba and 1,500 in Cairo. Unable to deliver their humanitarian supplies, the activists, part of the Gaza Freedom March, have decided to protest at Western embassies and UN buildings across the city, sparking havoc in some neighborhoods with sit-ins and an overwhelming response from Egypt's feared state security service. On Sunday, between 250 and 300 French nationals staged a sit in outside the French Embassy in the Cairo district of Giza, completely obstructing a major eight-lane thoroughfare and block traffic for three hours. Cairo is unaccustomed to this kind of direct action. In response, state security corralled the demonstrators onto the sidewalk in front of the embassy and held them there with several hundred baton-wielding riot police for two days. On Tuesday morning, weary-looking French protesters wrapped in black-and-white checkered Palestinian scarves and bright green t-shirts that said "Viva Palestina!" - including a number of elderly women - were being slowly released from their makeshift pen in twos and threes. Some seemed intent on regrouping elsewhere in the city for another protest, while others looked badly shaken and just wanted to leave. "The police said we have to get out of here now because otherwise they are going to assault us," said one young girl, who would not give her name. "They say we don't have a right to be here." Loubna Amar, another protester leaving the scene of the sit-in, was angry at Egypt for blocking their attempt to travel to Gaza, despite having previously approved their plan to travel to the Rafah crossing. Gesturing at the bedraggled group of protesters, and the rows of riot police surrounding them, she joked, "we started to call this the Giza Strip."

Load-Date: February 19, 2010

End of Document

**Hints of change as old friends get back together; Syria takes new direction
as it reconnects with a more modern Turkey**

The International Herald Tribune

December 16, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 6

Length: 1030 words

Byline: ROBERT F. WORTH

Dateline: ALEPPO, Syria

Body

Ever since Syria and Turkey lifted their visa restrictions in September, Turkish visitors have poured into this picturesque northern city. Hawkers in Aleppo's ancient souk now call out to shoppers in Turkish, and cross-border commerce has soared. The two countries have embarked on a very public honeymoon, with their leaders talking about each other like long-lost friends.

But this reconciliation is about far more than trade, or the collapse of old Turkish-Arab enmities. At a time of economic and political uncertainty here, the new warmth with Turkey has stirred hopes about Syria's direction in areas that include religion, oil and gas, and peace with Israel.

For some here, the new closeness with a secular, moderate Turkey represents a move away from Syria's controversial alliance with Iran. For others, it suggests an embrace of Turkey's more open, cosmopolitan society. And for many - including Syria's president, Bashar al-Assad - it conjures different dreams of a revitalized regional economy, less vulnerable to Western sanctions or pressure.

"It's much more than an economic relationship," said Samir al-Taqi, director of the Orient Center for International Studies in Damascus. "It's about regathering the region, and a feeling that the West is much weaker, less liable to do anything here. I think Syria has lots of ambitions to redefine its geopolitical position."

Those ambitions became apparent in October, when Syria delayed signing an economic agreement with the European Union that it had sought for years, hinting that it wanted better terms. The agreement had been initiated in 2004, when Syria felt threatened by the United States invasion of Iraq and desperate for economic and political succor. Now Syria's leaders feel far more confident, analysts say.

That confidence has less to do with Syria's ailing economy than with its political position. The West's isolation of Syria has given way to engagement, despite Syria's continuing support for the militant groups ***Hamas*** and Hezbollah. The United States is expected to send an ambassador to Damascus soon, ending a long freeze in diplomatic relations.

Syria's relationship with Turkey - which has been slowly warming for years - helped bring about this political realignment. Turkey mediated indirect talks between Syria and Israel in 2008, fostering renewed hopes in the West for a peace deal.

Hints of change as old friends get back together Syria takes new direction as it reconnects with a more modern Turkey

But the widespread notion that Turkey will draw Syria toward moderation and a regional peace deal may be something of a fantasy. Turkey's alliance with Israel has cooled noticeably since Israel's war in Gaza a year ago, which provoked outrage in the region and reaffirmed the political value of Syria's ties to Hamas. Israel expressed interest in restarting indirect talks with Syria this month, but many here are skeptical. Syria is keenly aware of the backlash it might face from domestic radicals - or even from Iran - if it drew closer to Israel.

Instead, the new Turkish alliance may be valuable precisely because it helps Syria hint at change while keeping its options open, said Peter Harling, a senior analyst in Damascus with the International Crisis Group and lead author of a report published Monday on Syria's foreign policy.

"In a region full of unresolved conflicts, Syria has chosen to hedge its bets," Mr. Harling said. "Aligning with Turkey helps Syria to offset competing pressures from Iran and the West while strengthening its position economically."

But the relationship is not just about providing Syria with political cover. Mr. Assad, the Syrian president, has made clear that he hopes to foster a regional energy network, building on Turkey's natural gas pipelines. Trade between the countries doubled between 2007 and 2008, and doubled again in 2009, to an estimated \$4 billion, according to the Aleppo Chamber of Commerce.

"I think there is a sort of vision developing between Syria and Turkey, where they could serve jointly as a regional trade hub, linking Europe with the Gulf and other parts of the East," said Nabil Sukkar, an economic analyst in Damascus.

It is too soon to tell how far that vision will go, or whether Syria will start to feel swamped by imports from Turkey's more powerful economy. In the meantime, the political opening has corresponded to a real social and cultural rediscovery, with Turks and Arabs warming to each other after long years of hostility. Syria, after all, was born out of the Ottoman Empire's dismemberment in 1920, and its identity was built in large part on the rejection of its former masters in Istanbul.

On a popular level, there was bitter resentment over Turkey's annexation of the Arabic-speaking Hatay District, which had been Syrian. As recently as 1998 the two countries were on the brink of war over Syria's support for Kurdish rebels. Relations improved slowly after Syria expelled Abdullah Ocalan, the rebel leader.

The thaw has accelerated strikingly in recent months, with Turkish journalists writing glowing accounts of their travels here. Many Syrians say Turkey feels much closer to them culturally than Iran or Saudi Arabia, two important allies of recent decades. Turkish films and television shows are often dubbed into Syrian Arabic and become huge hits here. One film, "Valley of the Wolves: Iraq," portrayed Turkish agents taking revenge on American soldiers for massacres carried out on Arabs in Iraq, in a neat parable of recent policy shifts.

For Syrians, the warmth is partly aspirational: Many of them hope that Turkey's gradual shift over the past decade from military autocracy to a more democratic and tolerant political system will be replicated here. For the moment, they must be content with having new friends.

"Before, we were afraid to come here," said Omer Sonmez, a Turkish businessman who first visited Syria three months ago and now crosses over regularly to trade roasted pumpkin seeds and other foods. "We thought it would all be so closed, with no women on the street. But when you talk to Europeans, they say the same thing about Turkey!"

"And look," Mr. Sonmez added, glancing around at the crowds emerging from Aleppo's covered market. "We are not so different. Even our faces are similar."

Hints of change as old friends get back together Syria takes new direction as it reconnects with a more modern Turkey

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TV Satire: A sign of free speech or distraction from the lack of it?

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

September 11, 2009 Friday

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THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 1080 words

Byline: Daily Star Staff

Body

Palestine TV was once the boring channel that viewers tended to skip over while searching for entertainment. Nowadays, the state-run television station has picked a winner - an irreverent comedy show that mocks and often bites the hand that feeds it: The government. "Homeland on a Thread" satirizes inept Palestinian politicians, police bullies and Muslim extremists.

Mohammed Daraghmeh

Associated Press

OCCUPIED RAMALLAH: Palestine TV was once the boring channel that viewers tended to skip over while searching for entertainment. Nowadays, the state-run television station has picked a winner - an irreverent comedy show that mocks and often bites the hand that feeds it: The government. "Homeland on a Thread" satirizes inept Palestinian politicians, police bullies and Muslim extremists. It's Palestine TV's first-ever attempt at political satire, an art form that remains rare in the Arab world where authoritarian regimes abound.

The 30-minute program's popularity is a sign that audiences are thirsting for more openness, said Manal Awad, one of three comedians featured in the skits broadcast every evening for the duration of the month of Ramadan - when watching musalsals (television mini-series) is as integral to the festivities as fasting and feasting.

"The group is trying to break the three red lines of Palestinian society - politics, sex and religion," said Awad, and added: "We want to send a clear message to audiences: We need to say things as they are in reality, not avoid them."

Palestinians have much tragedy to mine for black humor.

In the occupied West Bank, the Israeli military is ubiquitous, while the Palestinian Authority of President Mahmoud Abbas runs most day-to-day affairs.

In Gaza, Palestinians are confined to a narrow coastal strip by an Israeli-Egyptian border blockade and live under the rule of the militant Islamist Hamas, which has controlled the territory since clashes with Fatah gunmen in 2007.

TV Satire: A sign of free speech or distraction from the lack of it?

In a recent skit, an actor portraying Abbas chaired his Fatah party's seventh convention - the sixth was just held in August, after two decades of delay. In the skit, the seventh convention is 500 years in the future, and the president is actually Abbas the 13th - mocking the tendency of Arab leaders to pass on their jobs to their heirs.

"The president watched it and laughed," said Yasser Abed Rabbo, aide to the real-life Ab-bas. Abed Rabbo was appointed to head Palestine TV this year and is credited with allowing the satire to go on the air.

Of course, it pays to be careful. TV executives acknowledged they asked Abbas' permission before running the episode. It was the only skit featuring Abbas. Other Palestinian politicians have also been skewered, including senior Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad.

In one episode, a Palestinian negotiator is shown giving his pants to Israeli officials who agree to take down an Israeli military checkpoint in return, the paltry reward for years of peace talks. Erekat is not identified by name, but viewers recognize him when the actor portraying him uses some of Erekat's catch phrases in the dialogue.

In a third segment, a young man tried to take his girlfriend to a quiet place to talk. But the young couple gets caught in a maze of Palestinian checkpoints manned by different branches of the security forces, including police, firefighters and paratroopers. Palestinians don't have paratroopers, let alone an air force, and the scene skewered the Palestinian Authority's many grandly named security branches which often harass residents.

Palestinian media don't use ratings but the show's popularity is demonstrated by its prime-time slot, and the buzz it has created. Palestinians throughout the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem say they watch it with their families.

Families gather after the iftar, the evening meal that ends the dawn-to-dusk fast of Ramadan, to watch "Watan al-Watar," or "Homeland on a Thread" - a title that suggests the Palestinians are barely hanging on.

On a recent evening in the West Bank town of Ramallah, Zaal Abu Ruqti shushed his loudly laughing adult children, watching the show together over a table of coffee, sweets and cigarettes.

That night the show featured a Muslim extremist in the Gaza Strip who didn't recognize one of his many wives because she was draped in a black cloak and face veil, a uniform of piety associated with hard-line Muslim women.

"I think the actors are going to get in trouble," said Abu Ruqti's son Firas, 30, echoing the views of other Palestinians.

In the past, the Palestinian Authority has shown little tolerance for criticism, and the Abbas government's embrace of the comedy show has been surprising. In Palestine TV's 15 years of operations, politicians routinely rejected requests of station officials to broadcast political satire, said the show's production director, Jaber Khedeir.

Abed Rabbo, the new TV chief, said putting the show on the air signals a new approach. "The program," he said, "shows the development in speech and press freedom in the Palestinian Authority."

Imad Farrajine, 31, one of the show's writers, said he is given a free hand, noting that Tuesday's episode tackled de-tentions of political rivals, both by Abbas' forces and Hamas, a particularly sensitive subject.

"We have no red lines," Farrajine said. "We have a political decision to criticize whatever we want."

Gaza analyst Talal Okal said he believes the internationally backed Abbas government's step toward openness may be a cynical move to show residents it supports free speech, even as it keeps cracking down on dissent.

In July, Palestinian Authority officials closed Al-Jazeera operations for days, because the pan-Arab station aired a claim linking Abbas to the death of his predecessor Yasser Arafat. Palestinian newspapers at times censor themselves and won't run stories that could be seen as too critical of the government.

"They are allowing an outlet to show that everything is OK," Okal said of state officials.

TV Satire: A sign of free speech or distraction from the lack of it?

Still, any political satire is relatively rare in the Arab world, with Lebanon standing out as the country with perhaps the greatest freedom of expression. In Israel's freewheeling culture, biting satire has long been a staple of TV entertainment.

Farrajine, a stand-up comedian whose material formed the show's script, now hopes to take his material to a bigger audience on an Arab satellite channel.

"I want to make people laugh at their tragedies," he said, "and try change their situation."

Load-Date: September 11, 2009

End of Document

The self-righteous left's simplistic world

Guardian.com

July 28, 2009 Tuesday

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theguardian

Length: 1116 words

Body

ABSTRACT

Carlo Strenger: Gal Wettstein invokes the smug left on censorship in Israel. Democracy there is healthier than in most Middle Eastern states

FULL TEXT

There is a phenomenon, the self-righteous left, which lives in a simple black-and-white universe, governed by what I call SLES, short for Standard Left Explanatory System - a concoction that is ruining the left's credibility and integrity. This system, which started to evolve in the 1960s, says: "Always look for the underdog and then blame the stronger party for anything the underdog does, particularly if the stronger party belongs to the west. Never hold the underdog (particularly when non-western) accountable for anything."

SLES, when applied to the [Middle East](#), is remarkably simple. If Palestinians, Muslims or Arabs say something that isn't nice (like "It is a religious duty to kill Americans", or "[Israel needs to be wiped off the map](#)"), or do something even less nice (like blowing up the Twin Towers, killing entire families on the first evening of [Passover in Netanya](#), or attacking London's public transport system) you have a very quick explanation for it: "There is something that the Jews/Americans did that must have hurt him/her terribly. We must try to understand him/her."

A good example is Gal Wettstein's [recent article](#) in which he says that he doesn't feel that there is true freedom of expression in Israel because, among other reasons, his superiors may re-evaluate their views on him. He says he has even lost some dates because of his political views. I'm sorry for his loss, but turning this into an indictment of Israel's freedom of speech is, to put it mildly, preposterous.

Voicing political opinions generally has consequences. I am critical of many Israeli policies; I voice my views in several venues and I know the price for this - even though I doubt that it is higher in Israel than in other democracies. I do not always get accolades and have been called anything from being "anti-Israeli" to "antisemitic" to "Nazi" (paradoxically by those from right and left, the latter mostly from outside Israel). A recent gem from my inbox is: "You inside out disgusting fat, skinhead, Swiss intellectual Lilliputian thug. Go away from Israel brownshirt Nazi excrement thug! ... Raus!"

Pondering this masterpiece, I need to admit that my head is shaved. I am originally Swiss, so that's not to be disputed. "Lilliputian" is obviously not meant physically, since I'm 187cm tall; I don't currently own a single brown

The self-righteous left's simplistic world

shirt, so I'll pass over the fashion part of the compliment. As to "thug", I haven't used physical violence except in the [dojo](#), since the age of 10. "Excrement" I don't quite know how to interpret. So I am left with the embarrassing truth that I should lose at least five kilograms.

Do I feel that this restricts my freedom of speech? Absolutely not. Arab members of the Knesset can call Avigdor Lieberman's [proposal to outlaw](#) commemoration of the "nakba" "racist" and "fascist" without risking life or their parliamentary immunity. I don't have parliamentary immunity, and I completely agree with the Arab MKs; the law is fascist, racist, and utterly stupid to boot, because no law will suppress consciousness of the nakba. And I can write this without fear of retribution or persecution by the state.

Israel does a lot of reprehensible things. Nevertheless, flawed as it is, Israel is a flourishing democracy in which people like MK Ahmad Tibi, Wettstein and I - along with centrists and rightwingers, can voice our views. We can argue about them - often in bitter anger - but the state does not persecute us for it, and so far Lieberman's anti-democratic attempts to silence us have failed to gain sufficient support. Israel is maintaining a very noisy, often uncivilised, but lively democracy through a history of constant threat to its security and existence.

There is not a single state in this area where I could express my views freely except Israel. In [Gaza](#), the ***Hamas*** regime has just imposed a rule requiring women to wear veils to comply with Islamic modesty laws; in Iran gay people are hanged and critics of the recent elections threatened with death - or actually killed. Egypt and Syria incarcerate political opponents, and [Saudi Arabia](#) is a highly repressive regime - and the list goes on. This is not meant to characterise Islam: it's a description of the facts in the Middle East.

While I feel strongly for Wettstein's lost dates, I feel even more strongly about the disproportion between the condemnations of Israeli policies and the silence of Europe's self-righteous left about horrors ranging from the mass murder of members of Fatah by ***Hamas***, to the genocide in Darfur, to rocket attacks on Israeli civilians.

Critical though I am of Israel's policies, I have nothing but disdain for the self-righteous left hiding behind a simplistic SLES that enables them to spill venomous condemnation of Israel as if it were nicely placed between the US and Canada, and for completely unintelligible reasons behaves as if it were under threat.

The psychological mechanism behind applying SLES to Israel is rather simple: the Middle Eastern conflicts (there are a number, of which the Israeli-Palestinian is the most prominent) have been intractable for a long time. The autocratic and sometimes totalitarian structure of most of the regimes is a huge problem, and the west is stuck with its dependence on Middle Eastern oil.

Europe is actually in a worse conundrum than the US: the population of all European states is shrinking, and their economies depend on immigration. So far most of these immigrants are Muslims, and Europe doesn't have the faintest idea how to integrate them into its societies. Meanwhile the Muslim world is choking on a huge youth bulge along with stagnating economies and a tribal social system that almost completely blocks modernisation.

Nobody in Europe and the Middle East knows what to do about this, but SLES provides a wonderfully simple solution: why not say that Israel is the culprit, and that all problems would go away if Israel were to cease the occupation, or, even better, would disappear. I fight the occupation day by day, because it's wrong, not because I have the slightest illusion that this would solve Europe's geopolitical problems or those of the Middle East.

The self-righteous left should listen to the honest voices of a left that retains its moral and intellectual integrity, like [Bernard-Henri Lévy](#) and [Alain Finkielkraut](#), who refuse to live in the simplistic world of SLES and believe that you actually need to tackle the complexity of our situation rather than enjoy the simple pleasure of self-righteousness that SLES shares with the right.

Load-Date: July 28, 2009

Inside The Times

The New York Times
August 16, 2009 Sunday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Metropolitan Desk; Pg. 2

Length: 1019 words

Body

International

IRANIAN OPPOSITION LEADER FORMS 'GRASS ROOTS' GROUP

The opposition leader Mir Hussein Moussavi announced a new social and political movement, defying a renewed campaign by the Iranian government to intimidate him and his supporters. PAGE 4

U.S. TO COUNTER PROPAGANDA

The Obama administration is creating a new State Department team to counter Taliban propaganda in Afghanistan and Pakistan. PAGE 6

CAUGHT IN A BATTLE IN N. IRAQ

Ethnic and religious minorities continue to serve as fodder in the struggle between Iraq's central government, the Kurdish government and insurgents for control of a strip of land in northern Iraq. PAGE 8

ISLAMIST LEADER SLAIN IN GAZA

A shootout at a mosque in Rafah between Hamas and a more extreme Islamist group, the Warriors of God, ended with 22 dead, including the leader of the group and a senior Hamas security officer. PAGE 10

FLOODS IN SRI LANKA CAMPS

Downpours in northern Sri Lanka have flooded camps housing more than 250,000 refugees of the government's fight against rebels. Hundreds of families have had to flee for higher ground. PAGE 10

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National

TO PROMOTE HEALTH REFORM, OBAMA CITES GRANDMOTHER

As President Obama works to sell Americans on the need for overhauling health care, he is using a familiar tactic: trying to make the political personal by putting a human face on a complicated and sometimes abstract debate. PAGE 21

A SLAVE'S WHITE HOUSE

Dozens of descendents of Paul Jennings -- a slave in James Madison's White House who became the first person to put such experiences into a memoir -- will gather next week for a reunion in President Obama's White House. PAGE 12

Dodd Is Home After Surgery 14

U.S. to Deport Ex-I.R.A. Militant 18

Metropolitan

IN A WET SUMMER,

A Mosquito Wave

This summer's rains have created ideal breeding conditions for mosquitoes, and from the Jersey Shore to the Bronx, people have been giving a lot of blood lately. PAGE 1

CULTIVATING SOBRIETY

Renewal Farm in Garrison, N.Y., is run by two dozen recovering addicts and alcoholics from New York City, who tend the neat rows of vegetables and bright flowers while fighting for their lives. PAGE 1

Sports

AT FIRST EAGLES PRACTICE, VICK TAKES IT AT SLOW PACE

Michael Vick spent most of his first practice with an N.F.L. team in nearly three years talking to the Philadelphia Eagles' quarterbacks coach. PAGE 1

A DEEP MEN'S TENNIS FIELD

Beyond the considerable shadow cast by Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal, the rest of the top 10 in men's tennis remains exhibits more speed and strength than the men's players of earlier eras. PAGE 1

3 SIZES FOR **FEMALE** BOXERS

At the 2012 Olympics, **female** boxers, whose sport was just added to the games, will have to fit into one of three noncontinuous weight classes. And if their weight falls into once of the gaps, they may end up shut out of the Olympics after all. PAGE 8

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Obituaries

RICCARDO CASSIN, 100

A climber who used crude equipment, he scaled hundreds of the world's most daunting peaks with daring, tenacity and technical brilliance. PAGE 23

Sunday Business

THE QUICK BUCK JUST GOT QUICKER

A study of changes made this year in pay practices at 191 of the nation's largest companies shows that instead of turning to a greater reliance on long-term incentives, firms are making short-term incentive pay a bigger part of the compensation pie. PAGE 1

AFTER A LAYOFF

After a layoff, self-esteem and personal relationships may take a hit. Bank accounts and quality of life may spiral downward. And then job seekers are supposed to go out and convince employers how great they are. The Search by Phyllis Korkki. PAGE 6

Arts & Leisure

OUT OF EXILE, BACK IN SOULSVILLE

Al Bell, who led Stax Records during the label's heyday in the 1960s and '70s, has returned to Memphis to resuscitate the city's once great music industry as chairman of the Memphis Music Foundation. PAGE 1

A COUPLE'S LOVE IN DANCE

The cinema has had many classic couples. But it has never had a couple who enshrined romantic love in terms of dance more perfectly than Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. PAGE 1

Magazine

NOW YOU CAN BE A BEATLE

With a new video game, the Beatles are entering a time when listening to music means simulating and embracing the fantasy of being a musician. PAGE 26

Book Review

AFTER THE DELUGE

In "Zeitoun," Dave Eggers tells the full-fleshed story of a family flooded by Hurricane Katrina, and he hits hard the giants of the disaster. It's the stuff of great narrative nonfiction, Timothy Egan writes. PAGE 1

Travel

SONGS WITHOUT BORDERS

To find the heart of Mexican Los Angeles, follow the narcocorrido -- the "rap of modern Mexico" -- as it moves through the sprawling, multilayered city. PAGE 1

Automobiles

A STYLE BOTH WET AND WILD

Kevin Mueller's collectible that draws the biggest crowd at car shows isn't one of his cars. It's a 1958 Glastron Seaflite, a fiberglass boat with tailfins much like those on the '57 Chevy that tows it. PAGE 1

Week in Review

EXPAT GOES FOR A CHECKUP,

Here and Abroad

Inside The Times

The debate over health care reform is raging here in the States. Sarah Lyall, an American who now lives in Britain, has seen firsthand the arguments from all sides. PAGE 1

Editorial

WATER IN THE DESERT

Walt Staton was convicted of littering after he put water jugs in the Arizona desert for illegal immigrants crossing from Mexico. Week in Review, Page 7

Op-Ed

FRANK RICH

It is AMC's "Mad Men," not Woodstock's 40th, that resonates most in our anxious summer of 2009. Week In Review, Page 8

THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN

The curse and blessing of being in the Land of "No Service" in Africa. Week In Review, Page 8

MAUREEN DOWD

Sarah Palin paints a sci-fi vision of a cruel future, starring an Emanuel brother as Dr. Death. Week In Review, Page 9

PUBLIC EDITOR

The Times last week dealt with fallout from two articles with major sourcing problems. Week In Review, Page 8

<http://www.nytimes.com>

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World Briefs

Windsor Star (Ontario)

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Body

NORTH AMERICA

U.S. TRANSIT GETS SECURITY BOOST

NEW YORK -- A top U.S. official announced Wednesday a US\$78-million boost for counterterror teams on public transport nationwide, with almost half going to New York.

Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, speaking at New York's Grand Central rail terminal, said the extra funds would pay for 240 new officers at 15 transit systems, with an emphasis on terror prevention and explosives detection.

About \$35 million will go to New York, which has the nation's busiest transit system.

Napolitano, speaking just after her first visit to Ground Zero, site of the Sept. 11 attack on Manhattan, said "we always have to assume (New York) is a target."

Mayor Michael Bloomberg said the city remained "a prime target" and the new funds would allow creation of 30 new counterterror teams.

The announcement was made in the bustling, ornate center of Grand Central.

Dozens of uniformed police and at least one serviceman in camouflage and armed with an automatic rifle could be seen guarding the location.

EUROPE

TOURISTS MISS ISLE AFTER GPS BLUNDER

ROME -- Two Swedes expecting the golden beaches of the Italian island of Capri got a shock when tourist officials told them they were 650 kilometres off course in the northern town of Carpi, after mistyping the name in their GPS. "It's hard to understand how they managed it. I mean, Capri is an island," said Giovanni Medici, a spokesman for Carpi regional government, told Reuters Tuesday. "It's the first time something like this has happened."

RUSSIA BOOTS OUT DIPLOMATS

World Briefs

MOSCOW -- Russia's foreign ministry said Wednesday it had summoned the Ukrainian ambassador to ask that the postings of two Ukrainian diplomats in Russia be cut short, invoking a similar move by Kiev.

"Russia is proposing that Ukraine ends the missions of the Ukrainian consul general in St. Petersburg and the ambassador's adviser in Moscow," it said in a statement.

This step was "linked to unfriendly actions" by Kiev which saw the early departure of the Russian consul general in Odessa in southern Ukraine and an adviser to the Russian ambassador to Kiev, the statement said.

That move had been "overtly anti-Russian and harmed the development of relations between Russia and Ukraine," it added.

Ties between the two countries have been strained over Russia's opposition to Ukraine's moves to join NATO and the European Union as well as a dispute over gas payments.

UN RELEASES \$430M TO KUWAIT

GENEVA -- The United Nations released \$430 million in Iraqi compensation to Kuwait on Wednesday, in the latest round of payments in the war reparations scheme that began in 1994.

The payment brings the total amount paid by Iraq so far to US\$27.62 billion, for distribution to individuals, companies, governments and international organizations, the UN Compensation Commission said in a statement.

Iraq, which faces further payments of about \$25 billion, recently complained about the financial burden of overall reparations.

The UN compensation scheme is financed by five per cent of the revenues from Iraq's oil and gas sales, following the 1991 invasion of Baghdad's oil-rich neighbour under Saddam Hussein's regime.

The Iraqi government has called for the percentage it pays to be halved.

IRELAND TO TAKE GITMO INMATES

DUBLIN -- Ireland said Wednesday it will accept two detainees from Guantanamo Bay, the latest European country to help U.S. President Barack Obama's bid to close the controversial camp.

The two men, reportedly Uzbeks, are expected to travel to Ireland in the "next couple of months," Justice Minister Dermot Ahern said after informing U.S. ambassador Dan Rooney of the decision.

The move follows a visit by Irish officials to Washington and the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo on the southeastern tip of Cuba.

MIDDLE EAST

FATAH BARRED FROM LEAVING FOR CONGRESS

GAZA CITY -- The Hamas movement ruling the Gaza Strip said on Wednesday it will bar members of the rival Fatah party from leaving the territory to attend their first congress in 20 years.

The Islamist group "has decided not to allow members of Fatah in the Gaza Strip to go to the West Bank to participate in their sixth congress," Mahmud Zahar, a senior leader of Hamas in Gaza, said in a statement.

The travel ban would be lifted if Fatah freed all Hamas prisoners in the occupied West Bank.

"If they want their members to go to the congress, they must free all our prisoners," Zahar said.

The ban affects the more than 400 Fatah members who currently live in Gaza and are eligible to attend the congress, according to officials in Gaza and the West Bank.

World Briefs

Fatah is due to hold a congress on Wednesday in Bethlehem, its first such meeting in 20 years, with some 2,000 delegates expected to attend from around the world.

KIDNAPPING SUSPECTS RELEASED

BAGHDAD -- Two members of the group suspected of kidnapping five Britons in Iraq two years ago were released to their homes on Wednesday, local residents told AFP.

Hassan Salim and Saleh Jizan were set free just hours after British Prime Minister Gordon Brown said that two of the hostages, Alan McMenemy and Alec MacLachlan, were "very likely" dead.

Local residents in the predominantly Shiite Baghdad district of Sadr City said Salim was escorted to his home by Iraqi soldiers, while residents in the southern port city of Basra said Jizan had also returned home.

The two latest deaths mean that only one of the five men kidnapped in May 2007 is still alive, as the remains of two others were handed over to Britain last month.

Wednesday's release of Salim and Jizan was similar to that of Laith al-Khazaali who was freed on June 9, 11 days before the previous two bodies were handed over.

The British foreign ministry in London declined to comment on the release of the two men.

Peter Moore, thought to be the lone survivor, was working for U.S. management consultancy BearingPoint, while his four guards were employed by Canadian security contracting firm GardaWorld, when they were kidnapped.

IRAQ SECURITY, REBELS CLASH

KHALES, Iraq -- Clashes flared for a second day on Wednesday between Iraqi security forces and residents of a camp housing Iran's main exiled opposition, a day after violence left two policemen dead.

Around 420 people were also wounded after Iraqi soldiers stormed the camp on Tuesday, sparking unrest that prompted the deployment of riot police to quell resistance from Camp Ashraf's residents.

"Fighting resumed when Iraqi police established a police station and hoisted the Iraqi flag," police Lt. Col. Ibrahim al-Karawi said, adding that Iraqi security forces were controlling about 75 per cent of the camp.

Another police officer said clashes continued into the evening.

The opposition People's Mujahedeen said seven residents of the camp, in Diyala province northeast of Baghdad, were killed but there was no independent confirmation of those deaths.

AFRICA

WOMAN FACES WHIPPING FOR PANTS

KHARTOUM -- A Sudanese woman facing 40 lashes for wearing trousers in public made her first appearance in a court packed with supporters on Wednesday, in what her lawyer described as a test case of Sudan's decency laws.

There were chaotic scenes as Lubna Hussein, a former journalist who works for the United Nations, attended the hearing wearing the same green slacks that got her arrested for immodest dress.

Indecency cases are not uncommon in Sudan, where there is a large cultural gap between the mostly Muslim and Arab-oriented north and the mainly black and Christian south.

But Hussein has attracted attention by publicizing her case, inviting journalists to hearings and using it to campaign against dress codes sporadically imposed in the capital.

World Briefs

The case was adjourned on Wednesday as lawyers discussed whether her status as a UN employee gave her legal immunity.

ISLAMISTS FLEE AS ARMY OVERRUNS BASE

MAIDUGURI, Nigeria -- Members of a Nigerian Islamist fundamentalist sect fled the northern city of Maiduguri on Wednesday after the military overran their base, an army commander said.

"We have taken over their enclave, they are on the run and we are going after them," Col. Ben Ahonotu, who is commanding the operation to rout the self-styled Talibans told AFP after four days of deadly fighting.

Residents of Customs Bridge suburb neighbouring the Bayan Quarters enclave of the group, said they saw a convoy of the militants fleeing their area.

Mortar shells and guns ran silent in the lull that followed the military claims of seizing the camp as dusk fell.

Four days of fighting in the north have seen the death toll surging past 300 and thousands of people forced from their homes, the majority in Maiduguri.

MOROCCO GRANTS ROYAL PARDONS

RABAT -- Morocco's King Mohammed VI, on the eve of commemorations of his 10th anniversary on the throne, granted Wednesday pardons to 24,865 prisoners, and commuted 32 death sentences, the government said.

The Moroccan monarch traditionally gives hundreds, even thousands, of pardons to inmates each year as the country celebrates the Feast of the Throne.

In selecting who should be pardoned, the king took into account "humanitarian considerations in allowing the prisoners back into society," which led to the release of 517 women who are pregnant or have children and 137 minors, the justice ministry said in a statement.

ASIA

MODERATE QUAKE HITS TAIWAN

TAIPEI -- A moderate 5.4-magnitude earthquake struck southern Taiwan today, the U.S. Geological Survey said, but there were no immediate reports of casualties or damage.

The undersea quake hit at 12:53 a.m., with an epicentre 70 kilometres south-southeast of the southern city of Kaohsiung at a depth of 1.7 kilometres.

Taiwan is regularly hit by earthquakes as the island lies near the junction of two tectonic plates.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Romeo Ranoco, Reuters; FATHER ASKS FOR PRAYERS: A nurse checks the heartbeat of newly born conjoined baby girls at the Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital, a government hospital in Manila on Wednesday. The conjoined twins, weighing about 3.8 kilograms, were born on Tuesday night and share a heart. They were placed in the neonatal care unit because of their weak condition. Salvador Arciaga Jr., the baby's father and a tricycle driver, asked the public for prayers for his daughters with his wife Chateria. ;

End of Document

[UN rights boss targets women's rights in Sudan](#)

defenceWeb

September 15, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 455 words

Byline: Reuters

Highlight: [Women](#) around the world are denied fundamental freedoms, the top United Nations human rights official said, citing in particular the Gulf States, Sudan and Afghanistan.

Body

"[Women](#)'s rights continue to be curtailed in too many countries," and efforts must be made to address this, Navi Pillay, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights told the UN Human Rights Council. She pointed to a "severe backlash against [women](#)'s rights" in the contested Afghan elections and urged authorities there to take care to stamp out violence related to the vote, [Reuters reports](#). In its latest three-week session, which Pillay opened today, the Council will assess violations around the world, including allegations of war crimes during Israel's invasion of the [Hamas](#)-ruled Gaza Strip in December and January. It will be the first session of the 47-state body in which a US delegation participates as a voting member, following its election in May. Washington is expected to back Israel, a close ally, during the Gaza debate set for September 29. While citing some positive developments in the Gulf region including the election of four [women](#) to Kuwait's parliament and the appointment of the first [female](#) deputy minister in Saudi Arabia Pillay said "the overall situation of [women](#) falls well short of international standards." Gulf countries must remove the many exceptions they invoked when ratifying key international human rights treaties, and grant full rights and freedoms for [women](#), she said. In [Sudan](#), which has signed many rights pacts, a pattern of discrimination against [women](#) nevertheless persists, according to the UN rights chief who grew up in apartheid-era South Africa.

Lubna Hussein, a former UN staff member in Sudan, was sentenced to prison last week by a Khartoum court on charges of dressing indecently in trousers. Pillay welcomed her subsequent release, after a journalists' union paid her fine, but called on Sudan to "take all necessary steps to address the equality gap". People smuggling She also voiced alarm that migrants who pay traffickers to attempt to cross the Mediterranean, Caribbean, Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden are risking their lives in search of a better life. "Today, on the assumption that boats in distress carry migrants, ships pass them by ignoring their pleas for help, in violation of international law," Pillay said in her remarks prepared for the session. "In many cases, authorities reject these migrants and leave them to face hardship and peril, if not death, as though they were turning away ships laden with hazardous waste," she said. Migrants are turned away without being given a chance to lodge their requests for asylum, she said. Italy was accused by the UN refugee agency this year of mistreating Africans who were stopped from crossing the sea to Europe and diverted to Libya.

UN rights boss targets women's rights in Sudan

Pic: UN High Commissioner for Human Rights- Navi Pillay

Load-Date: December 13, 2012

End of Document

Nation & world

Charleston Daily Mail (West Virginia)

July 27, 2009, Monday

Copyright 2009 Charleston Newspapers

Section: NEWS; Pg. P3A

Length: 464 words

Body

Old church turned

into fitness center

BARBERTON, Ohio - A developer has found new life for an old church in northeast Ohio by redesigning it as a workout center.

Developer and bodybuilder Al Horvath converted a Methodist church in Barberton into a training facility he calls Faith Gym.

Horvath kept the church's original 1892 stained-glass windows and added murals depicting such biblical characters as David and Goliath and Samson and Delilah.

He created a Superman theme for the church's sanctuary and replaced the pews with rows of workout equipment. He donated the pews to a Kentucky church gutted by fire.

Dozens rescued

from freezing water

LONDON - Lifeguards say a dramatic rescue operation saved dozens of children after a sandbank collapsed and plunged 40 people into freezing waters in Wales.

Three lifeguards led efforts to rescue 36 children and four adults who fell into the sea when the banking was washed away in the tourist resort of Tenby, in western Wales.

Coast guard officials said on Sunday that the volunteer lifeguards had undoubtedly saved lives in the incident on Saturday.

He's Neil Armstrong

but not the astronaut

CINCINNATI - Sharing a name with someone who lives in your area isn't usually a big deal - unless your name is Neil Armstrong.

Nation & world

Thirty-eight-year-old Neil Allen Armstrong, a financial services professional from Symmes Township in suburban Cincinnati, says he constantly gets calls and packages from autograph seekers, school kids and reporters. He tries to explain he's not the Neil Armstrong who was the first man to walk on the moon. But people don't always believe him.

Neil Alden Armstrong, the 78-year-old former astronaut, lives in nearby Indian Hills. He rarely appears in public but was back in the news recently with the 40th anniversary of the Apollo 11 mission.

Zoo recaptures bird

that flew the coop

PHILADELPHIA - Officials at the Philadelphia Zoo say they're happy that an AWOL avian has been found and is returning to its perch.

Zoo spokesman Bill Larson says a tropical bird that flew the coop two days ago was recaptured Saturday morning in the city's Fairmount Park.

The juvenile sun conure disappeared Thursday during the Festival of Flight bird show.

Female lawyers

must wear scarves

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - Gaza's top judge says he has ordered **female** lawyers to wear Muslim headscarves when they appear in court.

The move is the latest sign that Gaza's Islamic militant rulers are increasingly imposing on residents of the coastal strip their strict interpretation of Islamic law.

Hamas seized power in Gaza in June 2007 and vowed never to force its conservative values on others. But it has taken a series of steps in recent months that appear to be aimed at forcing residents to accept its Islamic-oriented social agenda.

COMPILED FROM WIRE REPORTS

Load-Date: July 28, 2009

Egypt refusing permission for Gaza convoy to dock in Nuweiba

Daily News Egypt

December 25, 2009 Friday

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Length: 463 words

Body

CAIRO: Egypt has continued to refuse permission for the Gaza aid convoy headed by British MP George Galloway to dock in the port of Nuweiba, insisting that it must head by sea to the port at the city of Al-Arish.

The third edition of the Viva Palestina convoy, named Lifeline 3, is currently in Jordan at the Gulf of Aqaba, having arrived there last Tuesday. The convoy consists of some 210 vehicles laden with aid for Gaza, accompanied by some 500 activists, including 150 from Turkey, 30 from the US and a number from Europe.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Hossam Zaki told AFP that there would be "no entry from Nuweiba. Entry can only be through El-Arish." Additionally, a foreign ministry statement said, "The Egyptian government welcomes the passage of the convoy into the Gaza Strip on Dec. 27, on condition that it abides by the mechanisms in place for humanitarian aid convoys to the Palestinian people, including most importantly the entry of convoys through the port of El-Arish."

Zaki also said in press statements Friday that the "media circus" surrounding the entry of the convoy was "unjustifiably contrived", because Egypt had been clear from the start regarding its approval of the convoy's entry, but through the correct channels for the transport of humanitarian relief.

For the convoy to travel to Al-Arish as opposed to Nuweiba, it would need to travel all around the Sinai peninsula and up through the Suez Canal, instead of just travelling across the Gulf of Aqaba to dock in the port of Nuweiba.

Galloway was critical of the Egyptian government for refusing entry to Nuweiba in an interview with Press TV, saying, "We are very sad not yet angry, but we will get angry if the days go by."

The MP also alluded to a possible diplomatic spat between Turkey and Egypt as a result of the refusal to allow the convoy into Sinai.

"It's a very complex situation. We have on the Turkish level quite a diplomatic activity going on, because the Turkish prime minister personally appeared on live television in Damascus three days ago and asked the Egyptian government to facilitate this convoy; so this is a slap in the face, you can say, to the Turkish government," he said.

Egypt refusing permission for Gaza convoy to dock in Nuweiba

"We don't yet know exactly what tactics we will follow. That would depend on the diplomatic situation, but one thing we are not going to do is run away. We came all this way to Aqaba," he added.

Ever since the Israeli offensive on Gaza earlier in the year which led to the death of 1,400 Palestinians (including 400 children and 200 women) and the injury of another 5,000, the Viva Palestina convoys have travelled across the globe to transport aid, food and medical supplies to people in the Gaza Strip.

Gaza has been under a blockade for two and a half years, since Hamas took control of the territory.

Load-Date: December 25, 2009

End of Document

IN BRIEF

therecord.com

December 11, 2009 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A5

Length: 495 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Body

BEIRUT

Hezbollah will be allowed

to keep its weapons

The Lebanese parliament overwhelmingly approved a national unity government Thursday that will allow Hezbollah to keep its weapons, despite strong criticism from pro-Western lawmakers angry at the militant group's refusal to disarm. The vote in parliament was a further indication that Hezbollah will continue to defy a UN resolution calling for it to give up its weapons, which include rockets that can reach deep into Israel.

ALLENTOWN, Pa.

Man tries breaking into museum

owned by his artist father

A Pennsylvania man used a backhoe to break into a museum owned by his father - the pioneering fantasy artist Frank Frazetta - in an attempt to steal 90 paintings valued at \$20 million US, police said Thursday. State police charged Alfonso Frank Frazetta, 52, of Marshalls Creek, with theft, burglary and trespass after they say he was caught loading the artwork into his trailer and SUV.

CAIRO

Metal sheets installed along

border to keep weapons out

Egypt is installing a series of metal sheets some 20 metres deep along its border with Gaza in an attempt to block tunnels that serve as a key conduit to bring weapons into the Palestinian territory, border guards and area residents said Thursday. The work poses a risk to Egypt's relations with **Hamas**, a Palestinian militant group that has controlled the Gaza Strip since 2007, and could undermine its role as a regional mediator.

HAVANA

IN BRIEF

Government supporters break up

human rights day marches

Government supporters screaming insults and slogans broke up two tiny International Human Rights Day marches Thursday and chased away a British diplomat onlooker, pounding on his car as he drove away. Hundreds of enraged Cubans confronted a march led by Yusnaimi Jorge, wife of Darcy Ferrer, a black physician and veteran dissident who had headed demonstrations every Dec. 10 but has been behind bars since this summer for buying black market cement.

PASADENA, Calif.

Space officials try to free

rover from Martian sand trap

A faulty wheel on the Mars rover Spirit is complicating efforts to free it from a sand trap on the red planet where it has been stuck for the past eight months. NASA said Thursday it will continue to run tests to see if there's any movement in the right rear wheel. Spirit, which landed on the red planet with six working wheels, lost the ability to move its right front wheel three years ago. BUENOS AIRES

Argentina may soon

start importing beef

Argentina, a nation that prides itself on having more cattle than people, may soon be forced to import beef to keep its meat-loving citizens happy at the dinner table. Intense government efforts to keep meat affordable through taxes, export restrictions and price controls have enabled Argentines to eat record amounts of beef this year, but the short-term bonanza has come at a very steep cost. With little or no profit left in meat, ranchers are selling out, slaughtering even the **female** cows needed to maintain their herds.

Load-Date: December 11, 2009

CHINA HAILS ITS FOUNDING

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

October 2, 2009 Friday

SOONER EDITION

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Section: WORLD; WORLD BRIEFS; Pg. A-4

Length: 527 words

Body

BEIJING -- At the end of a gala yesterday celebrating Communist China's 60th anniversary, President Hu Jintao and his predecessor, Jiang Zemin, got down from their podium and joined hands with the dancers in Beijing's Tiananmen Square.

It was a symbolic gesture designed to soften the image of a remote and authoritarian leadership that was reinforced by a military parade earlier in the day.

The parade featured a precision display of military bravado that included, improbably, a **female** militia unit toting submachine guns and attired in red miniskirts and white jackboots, and a fleet of floats with representations of a giant fish and Mount Everest.

The celebration of the founding of the People's Republic of China was immense, powerful and flawless, down to the crystalline skies which, just a day earlier, had been laden with smog.

Poverty rising in Gaza

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip -- The number of Gazans living in "abject" poverty has tripled this year to 300,000, or one in five residents, the Gaza head of the U.N. agency helping Palestinian refugees said yesterday.

Gaza's economy has foundered under an Israeli-Egyptian border blockade imposed after the Islamic militant group **Hamas** seized control of the territory in 2007 from forces loyal to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

The blockade's toll on Gaza residents was compounded by Israel's winter offensive in the strip that aimed to stop Palestinian rocket fire at southern Israel. Thousands of homes, government buildings and businesses were destroyed during the Israeli campaign.

Life expectancy lengthens

LONDON -- Most babies born in rich countries this century will eventually make it to their 100th birthday, new research says.

Danish experts say that since the 20th century, people in developed countries are living about three decades longer than in the past. Surprisingly, the trend shows little sign of slowing down.

CHINA HAILS ITS FOUNDING

In an article published today in the medical journal Lancet, the researchers write that the process of aging may be "modifiable."

Ireland to vote on EU pact

DUBLIN -- Ireland's voters would inflict "extraordinary uncertainty" on the European Union if they fail to ratify the 27-nation bloc's reform treaty, Prime Minister Brian Cowen said yesterday.

Mr. Cowen said he was confident a majority would vote today for the Lisbon Treaty, a painstaking negotiated 2006 agreement already backed by the parliaments of all other EU members.

Ireland alone requires the complex document to win support in a grass-roots referendum.

New elections urged

CONAKRY, Guinea -- A top figure in Guinea's opposition appealed yesterday for outside help to hold elections after troops loyal to the military leader fired live ammunition at 50,000 pro-democracy protesters earlier this week.

Opposition leader and former prime minister Sidya Toure told AP Television News that he cannot have any kind of discussion with the government of Capt. Moussa "Dadis" Camara after Monday's massacre.

A human rights group says 157 people were killed in the protest against Capt. Camara. Witnesses say soldiers raped women in the streets.

Mr. Toure, a former prime minister, was arrested during the protests and released Tuesday.

Load-Date: October 2, 2009

End of Document

LTTE propaganda machine worming into Aussie Parliament

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

September 29, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 491 words

Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Sept. 29 -- The Sri Lankan diaspora in Australia warned the shrewd LTTE propaganda machine was worming its way into the Australian Parliament through local sympathisers to distort the country's image and push for a human rights case against the Lankan Government.

Society for Peace Unity and Human Rights in Sri Lanka (SPUR), said the LTTE which was pushed under ground after its 'hard to swallow' military defeat, was very much active in its vicious propaganda campaign in Australia as well as elsewhere.

SPUR is a Victoria based LTTE counter propaganda group comprising Sinhala and Tamil diaspora.

SPUR President Jeanne Jayasinghe said: "These propaganda campaigns have taken the shape of seminars and conferences." Most of these conferences are held in the meeting rooms of the Parliament House where parliamentarians can drop in and listen. These meeting rooms can be rented out for private conferences.

"The ultimate goal of these invisible operatives are to take the Sri Lanka leaders before International Criminal Court demeaning the country's victory against one of the most ruthless terror outfits in the world."

The US Federal Bureau of Intelligence (FBI) in its website identified the LTTE as one of the most dangerous terrorist organisations in the world which has pioneered the use of females as human bombs, perfected the suicide bombers, an act it has drawn credit for, more than the Al Qida, Hezbollah or Hamas.

Speaking to the Daily News in Colombo during a recent visit, Jayasinghe said LTTE operatives there went under ground soon after the military operations wiped out all its top rung leaders. But she said, despite their low profile the Tiger lobbying arm was still 'very destructive.'

"It's a shame that now they are using the IDPs as a cover to further their evil intentions."

These conferences, sometimes organised through prestigious universities, are intentionally blocked for moderates or for those who hold opposite views.

She said the propaganda rallies, protest marches which were very rampant during the last stages of the Eelam war IV, have almost died down now, but in its place there is the outcry for human rights violations in IDP camps. These are orchestrated through certain Parliamentarians, bias media institutions and known social figures.

"They operate like a cancer, invading every nook and corner."

LTTE propaganda machine worming into Aussie Parliament

The SPUR President said the former TRO head in Australia who was a economic adviser to the LTTE and who represented LTTE in the 2002 Geneva peace talks was a paid worker in the Australian state broadcasting service.

Some of the operatives run their own community radio programs in Tamil language, brainwashing the moderate Tamil community but there was very little being done on an official level to redeem the country's good name. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: September 29, 2009

End of Document

Blaming Jewish 'provocation,' Arabs riot in capital. Despite no presence on Temple Mount, Jews accused of 'defiling' the Aksa Mosque * Nine policemen hurt and 21 rioters arrested in clashes

The Jerusalem Post

October 26, 2009 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 1083 words

Byline: ABE SELIG

Body

Fears that Arab violence would erupt on or around the Temple Mount on Sunday materialized, as nine police officers were lightly injured and 21 rioters arrested during clashes between Arabs and police on the Mount, in the alleyways of the Old City's Muslim Quarter and in east Jerusalem

A **female** Australian journalist was also injured during Sunday's unrest when she was struck in the head with a rock, apparently after being caught between rioters and security forces at an entrance to the Temple Mount in the Old City's Muslim Quarter. She was treated at the scene.

The violence began around 8 a.m., after police security cameras recorded a number of Arabs on the Temple Mount gathering rocks together and pouring oil onto the ground to hinder the access of security personnel to the site.

Following the discovery, police stormed the mount and were pelted with stones and a fire bomb by rioters. Police responded with stun grenades, among other means at their disposal, and after dispersing the rioters, tense calm was briefly restored to the area.

Nonetheless, a police helicopter was seen repeatedly flying low over the Temple Mount throughout the morning, and at one point, a cleric on the mount, presumably inside the Aksa Mosque, was heard using the mosque's loudspeaker to call Muslims to the site in "defense of Al-Aksa."

Security forces stormed the mount for the second time at around 11, after Arab rioters again began hurling rocks, as police officers were negotiating with Wakf Islamic trust officials in a bid to convince some 100 Muslim youths involved in the earlier violence to come out of the Aksa Mosque, where they had holed themselves up.

Police spokesman Mickey Rosenfeld said that the officers had promised not to arrest the young men if they descended from the mount peacefully.

Forces didn't enter the mosque, but throughout the day, protesters inside occasionally opened the shuttered doors to throw various objects, such as chairs, at security forces.

Palestinian medics accused Israel of preventing ambulances from reaching the area. Two rioters were seen being taken away with injuries, including an elderly man who was shot in the leg with a rubber bullet, but an official number regarding injured rioters was unavailable.

Blaming Jewish 'provocation,' Arabs riot in capital. Despite no presence on Temple Mount, Jews accused of 'defiling' the Aksa Mosque * Nine policemen hurt and 2....

By early afternoon, a group of young Arab men, their faces wrapped in T-shirts, had begun hurling rocks at police in the alleyways of the Muslim Quarter and setting garbage and pieces of wood on fire in the streets.

A number of arrests were made throughout the Old City on Sunday, including an additional three rioters, who were taken in for questioning around 6 p.m.

Clashes also erupted in the nearby neighborhood of Ras al-Amud, where again, a number of young Arab men, their faces wrapped with shirts, pelted border policemen with stones, and three rioters were arrested. That violence concluded shortly after midday.

In all, 21 Arab rioters were arrested for disorderly conduct and attacking police officers. Among them were Ali Abu Sheikha, the third-highest ranking official from the Islamic Movement's northern branch, and senior Fatah official Hatem Abdel Kader, who was arrested on charges of attacking an officer and inciting the violence.

Abdel Kader was arrested on charges of incitement during similar unrest in the capital over Succot. The former Jerusalem affairs adviser to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas had been banished from the Old City for 15 days.

In a press briefing on Sunday morning, Police Commissioner Insp.-Gen. David Cohen laid the blame for the flare-up of violence on the northern branch of the Islamic Movement.

"Throughout the day, very large groups of Arab residents of east Jerusalem and other Israeli Arabs have come to the area at the encouragement of the Islamic Movement," he told reporters. "I urge [the Islamic Movement] to show restraint and not to incite."

Cohen went on to say that police would deal with all rioters on the Temple Mount as well as those inciting the violence "with a strong hand."

Police also released a separate statement blaming Hamas for inciting the violence in a bid to "disrupt order on the Temple Mount."

Meanwhile, Hamas condemned Israel for "infiltrating the Aksa Mosque" and "defiling" it.

The group also called on Palestinians to rise up against Israel, and for Arabs and Muslims worldwide to punish Israel.

"The real battle begins again," declared the movement's spokesman Fawzi Barhoum.

In the West Bank, the PA also blamed Israel for the unrest.

"Jerusalem is a red line that Israel should not cross," Nabil Abu Rudeineh, a spokesman for Abbas said on Sunday.

Israeli Arab MKs also laid the blame on Israel for the escalation of tensions, as they had done during previous clashes.

MK Ahmed Tibi (United Arab List-Tal) said that Israel had "broken the law," complaining that he had waited 50 minutes to ascend to the Temple Mount.

UAL-Tal MK Taleb a-Sanaa said that Israel was provoking "a billion Muslims" and sparking unnecessary riots by allowing "extremist elements to defile the mosque."

National Union MK Michael Ben-Ari, stated that security forces may be taking the wrong tack. Israel was "forfeiting" the Temple Mount, he said, suggesting that a "Muslim autonomy" was being created in the capital.

Blaming Jewish 'provocation,' Arabs riot in capital. Despite no presence on Temple Mount, Jews accused of 'defiling' the Aksa Mosque * Nine policemen hurt and 2....

While police had said that they hoped to keep the Temple Mount open to worshipers despite the violence, the Temple Mount compound was closed to visitors and worshipers by 4 p.m. on Sunday, after police said that the remaining young men inside the Aksa Mosque had departed the site without incident.

The already high alert level in the capital had come in response to what police said were previous calls by both Jewish and Islamic religious leaders to ascend the Temple Mount.

Calls to Muslim worshipers to come to Jerusalem Sunday largely came from clerics in east Jerusalem and their counterparts from the northern branch of the Islamic Movement.

While police had only generally referred to calls by "right-wing Jewish elements" for Jews to ascend the Temple Mount over the weekend, Sunday had been publicized as the day to commemorate the visit by Maimonides to the Temple Mount 843 years ago. In the past, Jews have ascended the mount to mark the anniversary.

While there was no Jewish presence at the site on Sunday, and Jewish prayers at the Western Wall went on undisturbed, a conference was planned for Sunday evening in which a number of rabbis and politicians were to call upon the Jewish public to "assert their rights" on the Temple Mount, and arrive there "in purity."

Graphic

2 photos: MASKED PALESTINIANS throw stones at policemen in the east Jerusalem neighborhood of Ras al-Amud, while in the Old City, a man hides after he hurls a stone at policemen, seen in the background. (Credit: Ariel Schalit, Sebastian Scheiner/AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Iran: U.S. Congress and Middle East Conflict

Right Vision News

November 16, 2009 Monday

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Length: 1233 words

Dateline: Pakistan

Body

Pakistan, Nov. 16 -- The surest way to make a problem a conflict is by embracing the attitude that only your view matters. When any party refuses to accept any view but its own, peaceful resolution of differences becomes impossible. The problem is exacerbated when those differences feed the anger, hate and distrust of both sides. This is relevant with respect to our U.S. Congress and the Middle East Conflict. Here are some facts.

Israel has demolished more than 18,000 Palestinian homes since 1967. Last year it demolished 107 Palestinian homes in the West Bank alone. According to the Palestinian Center for Human Rights hundreds of Palestinians have died at Israeli checkpoints in previous years due primarily to denial of travel and an inability to reach timely medical care. The walls and barriers in the West Bank do not merely separate Palestinians and Jews -- they limit Palestinian movement, access to work, basic resources, trade and business. Unemployment in the West Bank hovers at 23% versus 7.3% in Israel. More than 10,000 Palestinians are estimated to be in Israeli prisons, hundreds held without trial and many deprived of family visits. Israel has barred Palestinians from suing Israel for death, injury, civil rights abuses or damages caused by Israeli security. Israeli Defense Forces admit their killing of Palestinians is investigated only under "exceptional" circumstances. Palestinians in the West Bank receive less than 20 Liters of water per day, while the average Jewish settler gets 300 Liters/day. Palestinians in occupied territories have no legal voice or rights comparable to Israelis. The U.S. Congress has responded to these conditions in the last 10 years with a singular view. Last week, the U.S. House passed HR 838 telling Obama and Clinton to oppose the Goldstone report critical of Israel's Gaza war. Earlier this year Congress passed HR 34 stating Palestinians in Gaza were wholly responsible for the conflict with Israel. The more than 1,500 Palestinian deaths -- many of them women and children -- from that conflict was merely a reaffirmation of Israel's right to defend itself. HR 557 this year condemned the UN Human Rights Council for placing Israel human rights abuses and its treatment of Palestinians in the occupied territories on their permanent agenda. In July of 2004 HR 213 complained of misuse of the International Court of Justice for political purposes because it decided to address the legality of the Gaza and West Bank walls enclosing Palestinian people. Congress has been unequivocal in finding Palestinians at fault for the problems. HR 1069 condemned Hamas for its hateful TV programming. HR 951 condemned Palestinian rocket attacks on Israeli civilians. In July 2006, HR 415 condemned terrorist attacks against Israel and reaffirmed Israel's right to defend itself. In February 2006, HR 79 stated no Palestinian Authority could be provided direct U.S. support if its majority called for the destruction of Israel. In December 2005, HR 575 stated Hamas should not be allowed to participate in elections held by the Palestinian Authority. In March 1999, H.Con.Res.24, submitted by Arizona Rep. Matt Salmon, with 280 co-sponsors, stated Congressional opposition to any unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state. Not one bill introduced in the U.S. House in the last 10 years has ever found Israel at fault for any problem in the Middle East. The House has never criticized Israel even once for violation or abuse of human or civil rights of Palestinians, for denial of their political or legal rights, illegal detention, restriction of their right to free movement, deplorable living conditions, harassment or persecution, illegal arrests, violation of their human dignity or the deaths

of Palestinian civilians. By this inaction, the U.S. Congress has provided its tacit approval of Israeli treatment of Palestinians. Meanwhile, Congress has shown great sensitivity for Israel and Jewish people as reflected in no less than 18 different House Resolutions in the last 10 years supportive of Israel and Jewish views. Not a single House Resolution in this time has suggested support of Palestinian rights, freedoms, justice or equality. The outcome of such a myopic view is predictable. The U.S. Congress has approved the Israeli course in the Middle East. A course based on maps of this region showing territories occupied or controlled by Israel to be well advanced toward total annexation. Congress has approved Israeli expansion and control of the occupied territories, their annexation of Beit-ul-Moqaddas (Senate bill 1322, 1995) and collateral slaughter of any Palestinians associated with those who would resist Israel by force. If history is a guide, the U.S. Congress will approve the sale of more weapons to Israel to kill any or all Palestinians who dare to pick up a stone and fight back. Hezbollah arose from the hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians after the 1949 and 1967 wars that expanded the borders of Israel and forced Palestinians out of Israel into Lebanon. Millions more displaced Palestinians will be kicked out of their homes as Israel continues its expansion into the West Bank for "natural growth," and this will merely swell the ranks of current angry displaced Palestinians. Peace, reconciliation and understanding do not result from denying human rights, intolerance and imposition of oppressive living conditions. By encouraging Israel's present path that feeds the hatred and conflict in the region, the U.S. Congress seals the future for all who live there. Will Palestinians displaced from their homeland, witness to the slaughter of family and relatives by U.S.-made missiles and bullets, daily humiliation by the Israeli Defense --see the U.S. as anything other than benefactor, supporter, enabler and patron saint of a hated and despised enemy? Will any see the tepid efforts at peace by sequential prior U.S. administrations as anything but cover for the far more consistent and heavy handed support of Israel by a U.S. Congress already enshrined by its multiple resolutions and support for Israel's ultimate solution to the Palestinian issue? What then will protect the U.S. public from the hate, anger, retribution and terrorism these outcomes will inevitably produce later? Peace has its benefits and failure has its costs. Anger, hate and revenge stroked to the point of conflict and war are not easily calmed until they have exacted their price in death, destruction and suffering. No one has to agree with terrorism to understand how it developed the deep roots that sustain its growth. And we encourage these roots by facilitating a process that feeds the hate, anger, suffering, injustice and neglect we blindly support with Congressional approval of the killing, displacement, subjugation and oppression of one group by another. What then will be the epitaph of countless innocent U.S. civilians in the future? Will they be killed because no one bothered to question, care or demand answers to these problems until it was too late to make a difference, or it had become too difficult to correct them? Certainly no correction or peace will ever be possible if all we see is a single, limited perspective of the problem. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Right Vision News. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Our smug leaders have done nothing to see off the BNP; Politicians ignore the grievances that allow twerps; like Griffin to thrive, argues Charles Moore

The Daily Telegraph (London)

October 24, 2009 Saturday

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The Daily Telegraph

Section: FEATURES; Comment; Pg. 26

Length: 1133 words

Byline: Charles Moore

Body

In the modern Anglican Baptism service, the congregation is warned to avoid "the glamour of evil". No danger of that with Nick Griffin, is there? On Question Time on Thursday night, he resembled a disgruntled commuter on a late-night train from Liverpool Street - the sort who engages you in conversation with superficial, beery geniality and then inflicts his unpleasant opinions without a break until debouching at Romford. Not a bat-squeak of Nuremburg Rally glamour - only the drone of banality.

Yet the appearance of Mr Griffin on the programme produced the greatest coalition of the British establishment since the Yes campaign in the European referendum of 1975. The sledgehammer portentously cracked the nut.

Three state-funded politicians of the three main parties denounced the dismal Griffin. The state-funded millionaire, David Dimbleby, forsaking all chairmanly impartiality, even told the wretched man not to smile. The audience, much younger and more "ethnic" than the actual composition of the population, cheered each sally against him. Bonnie Greer, an American, spoke of the "good sense of the British people" in rejecting the BNP. But if Mr Griffin had not been so charmless, I think I would have felt another traditional British quality - sympathy for the underdog.

The message coming out of the programme, reinforced by the BBC's self-congratulatory coverage, was: "Free speech triumphed. Vile Griffin was allowed his say, but we saw him off. Aren't we all marvellous?"

No, we aren't marvellous. We are smug. We are missing two important points.

The first is that we are slipshod in our definition of extremism. The BNP certainly is extreme, because hate is intrinsic to its message. But our Government has active links with people who are more extreme. There are Islamist groups which support ***Hamas*** suicide bombings, the killing of homosexuals (Mr Griffin merely finds it "creepy" when they kiss in public) and the killing of British troops in Afghanistan. These groups engage with the state, and even get taxpayers' money. The Government justifies this with the weird theory that it is only the hard men who can hold back the even harder men from violence. So the hard men get the leverage.

Our smug leaders have done nothing to see off the BNP Politicians ignore the grievances that allow twerps like Griffin to thrive, argues Charles Moore

In Northern Ireland, Labour has set up a system which permits and pays Martin McGuinness to be Deputy First Minister. Mr McGuinness was for many years Chief of Staff of the IRA, planning its terrorist operations. He has dropped this occupation, but never renounced it. He has proved the favourite terrorist argument - well-calculated murder wins you power. When Martin goes on Question Time these days, there is no Griffin-style bashing, just the solemn nodding of panel heads when he explains how to bring peace to our troubled world.

On Thursday night, Jack Straw fiercely engaged Nick Griffin on the subject of Holocaust denial. But when he was Foreign Secretary, Mr Straw led the attempt to appease President Ahmadinejad of Iran, who denies the Holocaust on the global stage and is trying to build a nuclear bomb to wipe out Israel.

When establishment figures say that the attitudes of the BNP help prepare the ground for violence, they are right. But they do not apply this logic to their engagement with Islamism - the only form of extremism which nowadays kills large numbers of our fellow citizens.

As for the BBC, it devotes hours of broadcasting to straining after links with racists among the Tories' eurosceptic allies at the European Parliament. Yet it approvingly (I heard it on Today yesterday) reports Hamas without ever mentioning the anti-semitic libels which are in that organisation's founding Charter.

The second error shown by the Question Time panellists - and by virtually all political leaders in this country - is to ignore the problems that are winning the BNP votes. Exposing Holocaust denial is worth doing, but easy. The hard bit is the real resentment on which the BNP can capitalise.

This week, a campaign called Nothing British (full title: "There's Nothing British about the BNP") launched. It draws attention to how the BNP steals British military symbols and tries to recruit among service families. I wrote the foreword to the manifesto. Focus-group research done by colleagues involved in the campaign finds certain common features among BNP voters. They are not all racists. Many have black friends or have intermarried with non-whites. But they all raise immigration straightaway as their biggest concern. They feel it diminishes their chances in life.

It threatens their jobs, they believe. Ten years ago, a self-employed painter and decorator in, say, Barking might have earned pounds 120 a day, enough to get a reasonable mortgage and sustain a modestly secure family life. Today, after the Government underestimated the number of Eastern Europeans likely to come here by almost 20 times, he would get pounds 70 or pounds 80. If his ailing father pays regular visits to hospital, he may be denied a bed because so many foreign women are giving birth. If his child has special needs, he may find the local school neglects them because it is desperately trying to teach English to children who do not speak it at home. If his brother is a soldier, he may return from risking his life to be insulted on the streets of his country by people who hate it.

The strongest common characteristic of such BNP supporters is pessimism. They feel they are sinking to the bottom of the pile, and that people from other countries are being privileged over them by the public services. If they complain, they are told they are racist. It is not surprising that they say things like "My country is being taken away from me". They are not completely mistaken.

Nick Griffin made one good point on Thursday night. After he had been mocked for speaking about the "indigenous" people of Britain, he countered that Jack Straw et al would not dare mock Maoris or American Indians for insisting on their indigenous status. Why shouldn't British whites, he asked, do the same?

The answer, of course, should not lie in giving group rights to any race or tribe, but in offering a reasonable degree of hope to all citizens of our country. It shows how much that hope has been extinguished among poorer whites that twerps like Mr Griffin are now in with a chance.

There was only one good thing about Thursday night's programme. Somewhere in among the baiting of Mr Griffin and his own confused and unattractive theories, a few people seemed to be searching for something unifying out of the history of Britain. They could see Mr Griffin's version was all wrong, but they lacked their own. To use the

Our smug leaders have done nothing to see off the BNP Politicians ignore the grievances that allow twerps like Griffin to thrive, argues Charles Moore

current buzzword, they seek a "narrative". To use an unfashionable phrase, they want to hear our island story. Until our leaders can give us one, it is broken Britain indeed.

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Israel vs. Human Rights Watch

The Jerusalem Post

July 17, 2009 Friday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 13

Length: 1772 words

Byline: HERB KEINON

Highlight: DIPLOMACY. After years of Israel largely ignoring NGOs such as HRW, the group's fund-raising mission to Saudi Arabia triggers a change in policy

Body

A group of Soviet dissidents gathered in a Moscow apartment nearly 35 years ago and courageously formed the Moscow Helsinki group, with the aim of monitoring how the Soviet Union was living up to the human rights component of the 1975 Helsinki Accords that dealt with ways to improve ties between the communist bloc and the West.

One of those involved was Natan Sharansky. Using this group as a model, Helsinki Watch, an NGO founded largely by Robert Bernstein, an American Jew concerned with human rights, was established soon after, also as a way to monitor Soviet compliance. In the intervening 31 years, Helsinki Watch has morphed into Human Rights Watch (HRW), a mammoth human rights NGO that went to Saudi Arabia in May and used its work castigating Israel as a way to solicit funds in one of the world's worst human rights violators.

That transformation, at least for Sharansky, is simply too much.

"Here is an organization created by the goodwill of the free world to fight violations of human rights, which has become a tool in the hands of dictatorial regimes to fight against democracies," he said this week. "It is time to call a spade a spade. The real activity of this organization today is a far cry from what it was set up 30 years ago to do: throw light in dark places where there is really no other way to find out what is happening regarding human rights."

Calling a spade a spade is what Bar-Ilan University political science professor Gerald Steinberg, executive director of NGO Monitor, has been trying to do for years, monitoring the work and methodology of HRW and other human rights organizations, issuing reports pointing out faulty methodology and conflicts of interest. But his has largely been a voice in the wilderness, one dismissed by the NGOs themselves - and some in the media - as nothing more than that of a propagandist with a right-wing Zionist agenda.

Now, however, the government is listening, and after years of choosing largely to ignore damning reports put out by HRW and similar organizations, it has decided to go on the offensive and attack the organizations for essentially using human rights and legal lingo to delegitimize Israel. The last month has seen a wave of reports from various NGOs, including HRW, blasting Israel for its conduct during Operation Cast Lead.

"We are going to dedicate time and manpower to combating these groups; we are not going to be sitting ducks in a pond for the human rights groups to shoot at us with impunity," said Ron Dermer, director of policy planning in the

Israel vs. Human Rights Watch

Prime Minister's Office. "We will insist that they defend their record and their values. When I see a human rights organization try to raise money in Saudi Arabia, it speaks to the collapse of the human rights community."

The reports of these organizations are an attempt to undermine Israel's legitimate right to self-defense, Dermer said, adding that those who are attacking Israel for defending itself against terrorists using civilians as human shields are playing Hamas's game.

"Every NGO that participates in this adds fuel to the fire and is serving the cause of Hamas," he said. "This is exactly what Hamas wants to do. They use innocent civilians to hide, Israel defends itself, there are unintentional casualties, and they turn that into a great political victory. What then happens is that these tactics of warfare will become more anchored and more likely to happen around the world."

The NGOs, he said, are "blaming the firefighter, not the arsonists. We have to devote more time and resources to getting this out there. We must focus more time and effort in pushing back, in unabashedly seizing the moral high ground."

One thing that these organizations must do to retain "their moral compass" is to distinguish between democratic and nondemocratic governments, he said. "During the Cold War the reason the human rights community was so effective was because it made the distinction between good and bad regimes and how good and bad regimes do in terms of human rights. I would hope that they would regain their moral compass by doing this again, by laying down a marker, and not looking only at this or that violation, but rather looking at the overall nature of the regimes. Once they make that distinction, every single human rights violation is put in the proper perspective."

But Sarah Leah Whitson, director of HRW's Middle East and North Africa division, said the organization will never make these types of distinctions.

"No regime deserves a pass, whether it is a democratic or totalitarian form of government," she said. "There is one human rights law, one standard. Democratic governments are no more exempt from abiding by international law than are totalitarian regimes."

Whitson said that the "unfortunate truth is that democratic regimes are also quite capable of human rights violations."

"It might be that what is disappointing Mr. Sharansky and others is that we don't rank a government as to who is worse and better because we think that each government has to stand by its own record according to the standard of international law," she said.

She said Steinberg, Sharansky and other HRW critics "overplay" the assertion that the organization is giving other countries in the Middle East a pass, while focusing almost obsessively on Israel. "They just don't like it when we also point the finger at their misconduct."

"If the democratically elected president of France is making policy statements as to what women should and shouldn't wear, it doesn't make it better that he is the democratically elected president," she said of recent comments made by Nicolas Sarkozy saying that Muslim women should not wear the full-length burka in France.

"That the Venezuelan president, who is democratically elected, should be barring free speech and press, it doesn't make it okay just because he was democratically elected. The matter in which one is elected is not relevant to the particular human rights violation we are looking at. And in the case of Israel, where our focus is primarily on the violations of international law and humanitarian law in the occupied Palestinian territories, the fact that government is a democracy is completely irrelevant because the rule in place in the occupied territories is military rule, it is not a democracy."

Whitson also disputes assertions that one of the reasons the organization focuses on Israel is because it can report in Israel, something it cannot do easily in Saudi Arabia or Syria.

Israel vs. Human Rights Watch

"It is not true that we are doing more work in the open countries," she said. "A woman who works closely with HRW, who just completed a mission with HRW, was killed in Chechnya today [Wednesday] - so frankly I don't want to hear about their griping and whining because they don't like the fact that we criticize Israel, and they would rather only criticize the people they don't like. Go do a better job than our organization is doing in Syria and then come back and talk to me."

Senior government officials said that as a result of the new approach to the NGOs, their reports will be examined carefully, because they are based on faulty methodology that relies uncritically on Arab and Palestinian sources, testimony and witnesses, while dismissing Israeli evidence.

"This is a blanket accusation that groans, 'Your witnesses are Palestinians, therefore they must all be lying,'" Whitson said, saying the methodology HRW uses here is the same methodology it uses all over the world. "Please, if there is something we got wrong, if one of the incidents or attacks we described is wrong, I would love to hear it. Because the Gerald Steinbergs of this world, and I guess now the Sharanskys of this world, love to give blanket denials, love to give blanket dismissals. But let's get down to the facts and let me know, did we get the fact wrong on any of these cases."

She said the acts of malfeasance her organization has documented are also documented by other organizations, even by Israeli ones. "OK, are we all lying? Are we all enemies of Israel? Are we all making this up? Are we all falsifying evidence? Notwithstanding that we do this work everywhere else in the world - when it comes to Israel, are we all just making it up because we just hate Israel? Come on! Come on!"

But Steinberg said there is actually "plenty of evidence" that HRW comes to Israel with "unclean hands," carrying emotional and political baggage it does not bring to other parts of the world.

"All the evidence shows that when it comes to Israel, they are not a human rights organization, but a political one using the language of international law to isolate Israel," he said. "To deny that there is a campaign, closely linked to the terrorist campaign, to demonize and delegitimize Israel is to ignore fact, and HRW is central to this."

According to Steinberg, who is due to publish an 80- page monograph looking at HRW in the near future, it is disingenuous for Whitson to talk - as she does - of intensive HRW work in other Middle East countries, since the attention Israel gets is way out of proportion to those given those countries, and since much of the work in countries like Saudi Arabia and Syria only really began after 2006 because some of the organization's key donors earmarked their funds for reporting there.

Contrary to what Whitson claims, Steinberg said, his organization points out factual and methodological problems with HRW on a regular basis, only to be dismissed by the group as a Zionist organization with an agenda whose research is not worthy of serious attention.

He said there is much to document, and calls HRW's reports "pseudo-research" passed off to the media as serious investigation. He said HRW does not have the expertise or wherewithal to conduct the types of investigations that it does, in the time frame that it allows. Determining where shots were fired, from what type of weapon, in what circumstances is not something that can be determined using the means at HRW's disposal, he said.

"Human Rights Watch is an organization with a budget of \$40 million a year; they are a superpower, and what they are trying to tell you is that they are above criticism," he said. "In the thousands of pages they have written over the years about Israel, they have never admitted a single mistake. They have no problem critiquing democratically elected governments, but they scream and deny everything when they are criticized."

If that's the case, much "screaming and denying" is in store, as HRW and other human rights NGOs will face increasing criticism from a source that up until now has largely ignored and dismissed them: the Israeli government.

Graphic

Israel vs. Human Rights Watch

3 photos: RAIN OF FIRE: The Human Rights Watch report on Operation Cast Lead. 'We are not going to be sitting ducks in a pond for the human rights groups to shoot at us with impunity,' says Ron Dermer, director of policy planning in the Prime Minister's Office. DERMER. The NGOs are blaming the firefighter, not the arsonists. SHARANSKY. HRW has become a tool in the hands of dictatorial regimes.

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Tall tales from the has-been bunch

The Jerusalem Post

August 14, 2009 Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 6

Length: 1202 words

Byline: SARAH HONIG

Highlight: Another Tack. Fatah's convention unanimously demanded an international inquiry into Israel's role in terminating the Nobel Peace laureate

Body

Anyone familiar with the Arabian Nights tales knows they depict a reality comprised of layer upon shadowy layer, one concealed behind another. Cloaked schemers abound, each exploiting another schemer, each duping someone for secret ends. Life is an interminable complex of nefarious conspiracies in which it's best not to trust anyone but suspect everyone.

In the Arab Middle East one and all assume you're conning them and you can never prove otherwise. Truth isn't only immaterial, it's downright undesirable. This after all is the region that regarded Gamal Abdel Nasser as a victor following his 1956 and 1967 debacles. This is the region that spawned the Palestinian persecution scam and which convinced its masses that Israel was behind the 9/11 destruction of the Twin Towers.

By such fanciful yardsticks, it's no stretch for unanimously reelected Fatah chief Mahmoud Abbas (aka Abu Mazen) to claim that he honors his undertakings to eradicate terror while making cozy affable deals with it and glorifying its perpetrators as role models to be emulated by the youths educated in his schools, indoctrinated by his media and preached to in his mosques.

His proven penchant for duplicity makes Abbas eminently worthy of the mantle of his predecessor at the PA helm, Yasser Arafat. Abbas assiduously toes Arafat's footsteps. This can be gleaned from the testimony of Muhammad Dahlan, Arafat's longtime sidekick, who, like his boss, carefully cultivated a reputation for ostensible moderation. Singing Arafat's praises on a recent interview broadcast from Ramallah on PATV, Dahlan took pains to extol Arafat for "having never turned his back on the armed struggle" against Israel, his lip service to the Oslo process notwithstanding.

Arafat had condemned terror attacks "during daytime, but did the honorable thing at night," Dahlan stressed in his audience's own Arabic idiom. Proficient in their milieu's nuances, Dahlan's listeners understood that "the honorable thing" meant fostering terror and that "at night" meant surreptitiously. In other words, Dahlan profusely praised Arafat for saying one thing upfront while doing the precise opposite behind the backs of the international community and his peace partners.

NO LESS adept at subterfuge, Abbas postures as Israel's hapless victim. His heart is artlessly in the right place. He seeks to do the right thing - which he would sincerely do were it not for those obstructionist Israelis. The watching world voluntarily falls for Abbas's fabrications and encouragingly promotes the PA figurehead's pose. Seemingly in

Tall tales from the has-been bunch

the enlightened vanguard of the global good-guy brigade, Abbas convinces willingly gullible saps that he substantially differs from Hamas warlords.

When there's nobody else to appoint as an interlocutor, it's facile to pretend that the supposed lesser evil is humanity's great hope for the greater good. After all, Abbas respectfully promises on every occasion to quell incitement within his latifundia, for example.

That's why no big deal was made anywhere of Abbas's choices last year to receive the PLO's highest medal of heroism, the Al-Kuds Mark of Honor. Five women - all behind Israeli bars - were named as "a humanitarian gesture," geared to highlight their "sacrifice and suffering as Israel's captives, to raise their morale and pay tribute to them."

The five include Ahlam Tamimi, who participated in the August 9, 2001 attack on Jerusalem's Sbarro pizzeria. She escorted the suicide bomber to the eatery where he killed 15 people, including seven children and five members of a single family. Another of Abbas's heroines is Amana Muna, insolently unrepentant and the most aggressive despot of the women's security wing in whichever penitentiary she's transferred to. She is the fetching Fatah operative who via Internet chats lured 16-year-old Ophir Rahum from Ashkelon to a cruel death outside Ramallah on January 17, 2001.

Only weeks ago Abbas inaugurated the Martyr Dalal Mughrabi Girls' School in Hebron. Mughrabi was among 11 terrorists who on March 11, 1978 waylaid a cab and two buses on the coastal highway, murdered 35 (among them 12 children) and wounded 71. She presumably is the inspiration for the youngsters who'd be inculcated with her legacy at the institution that bears her name.

IN THE same vein, remorseless Khaled Abu-Usba, one of Mughrabi's two surviving accomplices (he was released in 1985's Jibril deal) was accorded a hero's welcome at last week's Fatah convention in Bethlehem. Abbas's Fatah is lauded worldwide for apparent pragmatism.

Abu-Usba's atrocity doubtlessly stirred pleasurable nostalgia among the mostly geriatric delegates to the first Fatah convention in 20 years. The majority were politically over-the-hill and tainted by corruption. Abbas wouldn't have summoned this elderly lot had he not been threatened by Hamas and Fatah's own militant younger generation. This has-been bunch is hardly likely to recognize Israel as a Jewish state with legitimate sovereign presence here. It's least likely to drop insistence on the "right of return" - the right to obliterate Israel via inundation by untold millions of hostile Arabs. Indeed, it's too feeble and frightened to negotiate, much less end warfare.

The only ace up its sleeve is the deceased Arafat's charisma. No wonder all sides to Fatah's rife domestic disputes lay claim to his moral authority. Fatah cofounder Farouk Kaddumi - who significantly brands the two-state solution "just a temporary phase" - showed Al-Jazeera TV what he asserted were protocols of a three-way collusion by Abbas, Dahlan and Israel's then-PM Ariel Sharon to assassinate Arafat.

To counter Kaddumi's accusation, Abbas recruited the "face of terror," Bassam Abu-Sharif, Arafat's consigliere. But did Abu-Sharif deny the calumny? Heck no! Tall tales of a plot to murder Arafat are too good to pass up in a setting where fact and fiction are inherently indistinguishable. Since no one would anyhow believe Arafat died a natural death, better just blame all foul play on Israel.

According to Abu-Sharif's 1002nd Arabian Nights tale, he knows for a fact that Israeli agents clandestinely substituted poison for medications Arafat was taking. Moreover, the lethal Israeli concoction was deliberately brewed especially for this purpose by a leading Israeli pharmaceutical firm.

Nobody asked how Abu-Sharif came to possess this information, whether he can back it up or why he chose to divulge it only now. Instead all delegates - without a single redeeming skeptic among them - raised their hands in favor of a resolution proclaiming that Israel is culpable for Arafat's demise. The convention unanimously demanded an international inquiry into Israel's role in terminating the Nobel Peace laureate.

The canard became gospel. Invaluable energy was expended on it at the expense of tackling real problems.

Tall tales from the has-been bunch

Scheherazade herself couldn't have come up with a more convoluted plot for the 1002nd tale. Its fantastic twists and turns certainly won't lead where Barack Obama, Gordon Brown, Nicolas Sarkozy, Angela Merkel and additional assorted foreign meddlers cynically assure us - road map in hand - that it will. Where the culture of mendacity reigns, trustworthy accords cannot grow.

Graphic

Photo: AN ANTIQUE Arabian Nights illustration by Rene Bull (1912). Just like in the intrigue-filled tales, in the Arab Middle East one and all assume you're conning them and you can never prove otherwise.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Weekend Australian

November 7, 2009 Saturday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 15

Length: 2719 words

Body

Prime Minister must get tough

Continued delays in resolving Oceanic Viking stand-off risk further damage to our reputation

PERHAPS the only way the 78 asylum-seekers aboard Kevin Rudd's Love Boat, the Oceanic Viking, will be processed in Indonesia is to follow the lead of the people-smugglers and scuttle the boat in Indonesian waters.

While the Prime Minister has tried to portray himself as the tough but fair Captain Ahab on this issue, the longer the stand-off continues the greater he risks looking like Captain Stubing. Either bite the bullet and force them off, or take them to Christmas Island. Delays only risk further damage to Australia's reputation.

Marc Hendrickx, Berowra Heights, NSW I'M confused. The Prime Minister's recent strident assertion that it's his responsibility to act in the "national interest", popular or not, suggests that he is prepared to assert that his government's asylum-seeker policies are unpopular but in the national interest. How so? If the recent Newspoll is anything to go by, they are perceived as being neither popular nor in the national interest. What is it that he doesn't get? His response to the negative message characteristically was to hit the airwaves and start spinning like crazy.

Please, Prime Minister, desist. Say no more. Face the facts by recalling the Oceanic Viking to Christmas Island with its 78 soon-to-be migrants and then reverse the softening of our border security regime immediately.

Elizabeth Mooney, Fremantle, WA

REFUGEES fleeing oppression will accept any safe harbour. I suggest that the actions of the Sri Lankans aboard the Oceanic Viking confirm that they cannot be refugees. They have them on board -- let the vessel set sail for Colombo and discharge them there.

Yes, I was an immigrant who went through the grind to come to Australia. Queue-jumpers don't have my sympathy.

John Cribbes, Sale, Vic

SUPPORT for the emissions trading scheme seems to be on the wane as its likely cost becomes more apparent. This being so, one could be forgiven for wondering if support for an open-door policy for asylum-seekers will also diminish significantly, if and when the likely long-term costs (per refugee/asylum-seeker) of such a policy are estimated and divulged to the Australian community.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Perhaps the supporters of an open-door policy would care to outline their proposals for funding the long-term costs of same, be it by increases in taxation across the board (including the GST), reductions in welfare payments across the board, and/or by a reduction in public services. If the latter, which public services do they suggest should be reduced?

E. J. Ash, Peregrine Springs, Qld

THE most effective and logical way Sri Lankan authorities could solve the asylum-seeker problem is to improve human rights within the country, not export the problem to Australia.

Monica Brown, Hunter Valley, NSW

OCEANIC Viking -- cruise ship, or workhorse? If the ship was chartered to do a job and is being prevented from doing it by protracted "civil disobedience", for want of a better description, that suggests to me that all the time the disruption is supinely tolerated the work was not all that important in the first place. On the other hand, if the job is important and needs to be done, the ship should be returned to work as soon as possible, regardless. Take these Sri Lankans to Christmas Island and offload them, and get the ship back to doing whatever it is supposed to be doing.

Michael Strangways Price, Mandurah, WA

DESPITE identifying himself as a professor in anthropology, Michael Roberts ("Taken in by Tamil tall tales", Commentary, 4/11) fails to describe the holistic nature of Tamil migration. While touching upon the under-representation and discrimination towards Tamils in the past, Roberts' piece ignores the state-sponsored violence in Sri Lanka that continues to oppress Tamils today.

Nearly 300,000 Tamils are held against their will in government-run internment camps.

Whether the recent asylum-seekers originate from these camps or not, their mere existence is evidence that structural and cultural violence continues to be perpetrated against the Tamils.

Showing little interest in responding to its crisis, the Sri Lankan government has instead chosen to revel in the glory of censoring its human rights emergency.

With the plight of the Tamil people systematically concealed from the international community, it's sadly ironic that Roberts suggests "Australians engaged in public debate about Sri Lanka need to be better informed".

In responding to his suggestion, I would say Roberts's gross misrepresentation of Tamil refugees succeeds in broadcasting a structural culture of fear and loathing towards the marginalised people of Sri Lanka.

Gobie Rajalingam, Cherrybrook, NSW

The pan-Asia

idea was put to

us once before THE Taliban's Mustafa Hamid must be getting desperate ("Join Muslim Asia or perish: Taliban", 6/12). A militaristic Japan once offered Australia related embleishments in 1942. The unmasked threat was clear. Australia was importuned to join Tokyo's "New Order in Asia". After we'd rejected that initial "courtesy", Japan then issued grim threats that Australia would be destroyed by its air power if we did not break off ties with England and the US.

No divide and rule for us: thousands of Australians had to die to ensure that a free Japan could re-join the civilised world. There is no appeal in joining any new bloc in Asia where one religion and its societal customs must be dominant.

Mike Fogarty, Weston, ACT

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I'M sure Australians will appreciate the latest lead article in the Taliban monthly magazine Al Sumud lecturing us that we must bow to the moral order dictated to by that enlightened organisation. Presumably we will need to follow its moral lead in denying 50 per cent of our citizens the right to an education and shrouding them in sackcloth to prevent the other 50 per cent becoming hopelessly inflamed with lust. Then I guess we should switch the primary use of our agricultural land from feeding people to cultivating the opium poppy.

Ian Mastin, Woodgate Beach, Qld

Voluntary acts of

non-violent resistance

ROBERT Goot ("A blind eye to Hamas atrocities", Commentary, 6/11) is being disingenuous when he condemns the Goldstone report for "condemning the many civilian deaths in Gaza", while dismissing "without reason photographic and video footage taken, showing Hamas gunman using civilians as human shields".

The only video footage Israel has produced in support of such claims seems to show a Palestinian gunman picking up a child in the middle of a street and dragging him to safety.

Goot also cites Fathi Hamad's claim that Hamas used "the women, the children, the elderly and the mujahideen, in order to challenge the Zionist bombing machine" as proof of a Hamas "policy of using Palestinian civilians as human shields". Yet Hamad's remarks were made in February 2008 and referred to an action in which hundreds of Gazans prevented an Israeli airstrike on a Palestinian house in what the Christian Science Monitor described as "perhaps the most effective act of non-violent protest in the six-year Palestinian uprising".

Does Goot really equate voluntary acts of non-violent resistance with the forcible enlistment of civilians to shield military targets?

Michael Shaik , Australians for Palestine

Hawthorn, Vic

Where were condolences

for innocent Iraqis? IN the glare of hypocrisy, one thing was lacking in anti Iraq-war Senator Faulkner's conferring of an honorary Order of Australia on General Petraeus for his distinguished service in Iraq: he should have appended to the award some 100,000 or more messages of condolence from the Australian government to be sent to the surviving family members of those innocent Iraqi citizens killed in that US-initiated conflict.

Ken Collins, Sandy Bay, Tas

Tanner, Rudd must

think we are all mugs LINDSAY Tanner's latest economic manifesto ("Reforms are micro more than macro", Commentary, 5/11) is a lame attempt at setting out a bold and visionary reform agenda. After less than two years in government, Tanner appears to have decided that any "big ticket" reform agenda is too hard for and, instead, his focus will be in "incremental" and "micro" initiatives.

Am I missing something? Wasn't the Rudd government elected on a platform of big, sweeping initiatives? Weren't they supposed to "fix the federation", take over public hospitals, run budget surpluses and put "maximum downward pressure on interest rates"?

These were all very big "macro"- sized promises. Now they're in government, they find they don't have the inclination, or the ability, to keep any of their "macro" commitments and try to convince us that it's all about "micro" issues instead. Tanner and Kevin Rudd must think we are all mugs.

Dale Peterson, Greensborough, Vic I'm no cheer-leader

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

for any politician AS a newspaper whose vision often ends at the Murray, I imagine your editorial writers have not had much opportunity to hear my interviews with John Howard ("Talkback to the future", 6/11), which is why I'm surprised that you describe them as "generally sympathetic". I have 40 years of mistakes behind me as an independent journalist and commentator but I don't believe those mistakes include acting as a cheer-leader for any politician.

I also wonder why, if my interviews were so bland and gentle, your newspaper and others regularly reported their content the next day, usually without attribution.

Neil Mitchell, 3AW presenter

Don't levy infrastructure

costs up front THE question of infrastructure costs of growing cities -- in particular who should pay for new infrastructure on the urban fringe -- is raised yet again (Letters, 6/11).

The answer is obvious -- home buyers. But this is the wrong question. The question is not "who should pay?" but "when should they pay?" Local government believes home buyers should pay "up front" for the cost of their infrastructure.

Others, like me, believe home buyers should pay for their infrastructure as they use it, not before they use it, as was the case in previous generations.

It's simply not equitable to expect young home buyers -- those least able to afford it -- to pay for the cost of infrastructure before they've used it when existing home owners who live in established suburbs (many of whom do not even have mortgages) were not asked to pay for their infrastructure before they used it but were able to pay for it as they used it through their rates.

Bob Day, Adelaide, SA

Say what you like

but he's a very

clever politician

Kevin Rudd damns his opponent with faint praise in an interview with 5AA's Matthew Pantelis on July 11, 2007

THESE will be all tough challenges for Labor because we're up against a very cunning and very clever politician in Mr Howard.

Labor identity Graham Richardson on ABC1's Q & A on Thursday:

WHEN you look at Kevin Rudd, whether you love him or you hate him, you've got to admire him because this guy is one of the better politicians I've ever seen. He's very good at it.

Shadow treasurer Joe Hockey: Kevin Rudd is a very, very clever politician. As Richo said tonight, he is a very clever politician. He is a master at manipulating the media.

Former federal Liberal leader John Hewson in The Australian Financial Review yesterday:

WHAT is surprising, yet instructive, is just how accepting the media has been [of] the government's failures here, far too ready to excuse the inexcusable. This reveals the might of the Rudd . . . spin machine. Try to image the media frenzy that would have ensued if John Howard had let 78 asylum-seekers bob around at sea for a couple of weeks, with no real policy, and a host of excuses about sea rescues, enforcement of deals with Indonesia, and suggestions that they were escapees from refugee camps in Indonesia.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Columnist Miranda Devine in The Sydney Morning Herald, however, has a gripe with the Prime Minister:

THE spread of brain-dead supplicants to the state has grown with the rise of the bureaucratic class, which reached its zenith when the former Queensland bureaucrat and chief jargon generator Kevin Rudd became Prime Minister. He may be a perfectly fine human being but he believes . . . that systems and processes can solve any problem, that if you have enough meetings, summits, talkfests, reviews, studies, probes, resolutions and facilitations, preferably with some connection to a United Nations body, solutions will miraculously occur without hard decisions being made. Try getting a passport renewed at Neutral Bay post office. It is like being lost in a Kafka play.

Nationals senator Barnaby Joyce warns Alan Jones's 2GB listeners of worse to come under an emissions trading scheme:

THEY don't have to prove you made a profit, they just have to prove you exist and they tax you. When you wake up in the morning, Alan, your alarm clock will go off and that is the sign that Kevin Rudd is taxing you. He's in your alarm clock. But he's been there all night because he's been in your fridge. Anything that's plugged into the wall is now part of a taxing regime. He's in your shopping trolley, and if you want to get away from it, Alan, and fly up to Cairns, he's on the plane with you. But you go to Fiji and he's not. It's a great way of getting all the industry from our nation into another nation.

Round in circles. The Sydney Morning Herald, August 7:

[NSW health minister] John Della Bosca is expected to challenge [Premier]ed Nathan Rees's leadership, possibly within weeks.

The SMH, August 26:

REES cannot escape speculation that he's on borrowed time with reports that Planning Minister Kristina Keneally may replace him as early as Monday.

The SMH on Monday:

PRESSURE is mounting on Deputy Premier Carmel Tebbutt to take over as leader after disastrous polling by Nathan Rees .

Yesterday, it was Della again:

DELLA Bosca, the MP described as delusional by colleagues, believes he could still be premier.

Tony Jones put's the Herald's David Marr on the spot on Q & A on Thursday:

I'LL just come back to you, David Marr, because it was your paper that began a front-page story: Joe Hockey is preparing to take over the Liberal Party.

Marr: Well, I mean, you know, I didn't write that story. But of course I endorse every word of it.

Jones: Do you have the courage of someone else's convictions?

Marr: I'm desperately trying to remember who that somebody else was.

cutpaste@theaustralian.com.au

LAST POINT

It's looking increasingly like the sole purpose of the ``hoax of the century" (climate change), so passionately promoted by bankers and governments, is to divert our attention from the crime of the century (GFC), so artfully perpetrated by the very same bankers and governments.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Richard Fisher, Sinnamon Park, Qld

Were our Prime Minister to attend a June Dally-Watkins course, he would learn that it is incorrect to commence every response to a media question with the words, "Can I just say this . . ." The correct, if mind-numbing, terminology is, "May I just say this. . ."

Mark Weeks, Elizabeth Bay, NSW

Spin spelt backwards is "nips" -- what you get when spin comes back to bite you.

Mick Parr, Shelley, WA

Correction, N. Bailey (Letters, 6/11): spin doesn't merely "incorporate" nonsense, it "idolises" it!

Stuart Partis, Kingston Park, SA

Hurrah. Telstra has finally recognised that the new fee purported to be "A" for administration was actually "A" for arrogance.

R. James, East Fremantle, WA

When we fly our soldiers to Afghanistan, we could backload the Afghan men who are planning to pay a people-smuggler for the voyage by boat to a better life. That cuts out the middle man!

Rex Holden, Doonan, Qld

What about offering asylum to any seeker who gives information leading to the conviction of a people-smuggler?

Peter Hay, Islington, NSW

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Load-Date: November 6, 2009

Ambassador: Scotland is a hotbed for Israeli-haters

Scotsman

December 4, 2009 Friday

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Length: 540 words

Byline: David Maddox

Highlight: SCOTLAND has become a centre for anti-Israeli sentiment in the UK, the Israeli ambassador to Britain said last night.

Body

Speaking after visiting Glasgow to watch Hapoel Tel-Aviv play Celtic in the Europa League, Ron Prosor questioned the values of Scots campaigning against his country's treatment of the Palestinians.

He dismissed an attempt by campaigners to hijack the match at Parkhead on Wednesday after the Scottish Trade Union Congress tried to persuade fans to wave Palestinian flags as a protest.

Activists gave out paper flags, but most were thrown on the ground. Many Celtic fans were angered by the attempt to politicise the match. Only a handful of flags were waved during the game.

"I had to use my binoculars and a microscope to see them," Mr Prosor joked. "It was strange they should target Hapoel, which until recently was owned and run by the unions. It was the workers' team."

But he claimed that the UK had become a centre for anti-Israeli feeling and told The Scotsman this was "more concentrated in Scotland".

He said organisations like the STUC, many Scottish politicians and SNP ministers, who wrote in protest over Israel's actions in Gaza in January, did not understand the situation properly.

"They might think differently if Scotland was surrounded by enemies who want its complete destruction," he said.

He acknowledged that mistakes had been made, particularly with shelling of a UN school in Gaza in January. "But you have to remember that Hamas used their own population as a human shield," he said. Mr Prosor also took on "misconceptions" about the way Israel dealt with the Palestinians, such as the separation barrier around the Gaza Strip.

"This famous wall is ten kilometres long in a line of 300km of fence," he said. "Imagine if you are going to a restaurant and you always have to look at the door not because you are interested in the doorman but because a suicide bomber may walk through the door any moment."

Ambassador: Scotland is a hotbed for Israeli -haters

"When we put up fences, surprise, the suicide bombs stop. But one-third of the Palestinian territory has a border with Egypt. Why doesn't anybody put pressure on Egypt to let supplies through?"

He also warned that Scots and other British critics were losing sight of values over what was happening in the Middle East.

"The story that is never told is what happens in Gaza. The law there and in Arab countries is Islamic law - women and gays are persecuted, shoplifters have their hands removed.

"It mystifies me why supporters of liberal democracy are so enthusiastic about making common cause with groups like that."

He suggested that it was Israel's democratic approach which lay behind its "bad press".

"The Arab world has one view because it is not democratic. We are a democracy so there are diverse views coming out and that is perversely used against us."

Dave Moxham, the deputy general secretary of the STUC said: "There was a level of protest within the ground, but it was minimised by the opposition of Celtic Football Club and its stewards.

"That contrasts enormously with the general level of support for the Palestinian cause that we tried to raise.

"We will reflect upon the fact that we had many more supporters around the ground than people who were prepared to show flags, but we don't think the support of the Palestinian people among Celtic fans, or the Scottish people generally, is in any way diminished."

Load-Date: March 14, 2011

OFFICIAL QUILTS OVER AIRSTRIKE OFFICIAL QUILTS OVER AIRSTRIKE

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

November 28, 2009 Saturday

SOONER EDITION

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Section: WORLD; WORLD BRIEFS; Pg. A-4

Length: 536 words

Byline: Compiled from news services

Body

BERLIN -- Germany's labor minister resigned yesterday after conceding that he didn't see a military report on a deadly September airstrike in northern Afghanistan while he held the government's defense portfolio.

Labor Minister Franz Josef Jung made the announcement a day after the head of Germany's armed forces, Gen. Wolfgang Schneiderhan, and deputy Defense Minister Peter Wichert also stepped down.

An Afghan commission has said 30 civilians were killed along with 69 armed Taliban fighters in the NATO airstrike, which was called in by a German colonel who feared the Taliban might use two tanker trucks they had seized to attack troops.

Pilgrims 'stone the devil'

MINA, Saudi Arabia -- Vast crowds of pilgrims cast stones at walls representing the devil on the third day of the annual hajj yesterday as Muslims around the world began celebrating Eid al-Adha, the most important holiday of the Islamic calendar.

The pilgrims -- more than 3 million this year -- file past three stone walls representing Satan and stop to pelt them with stones in a symbolic rejection of temptation.

The first day of stoning also marks the start of Eid al-Adha, or feast of sacrifice, when Muslims around the world traditionally slaughter sheep and cattle in remembrance of Abraham's near-sacrifice of his son.

Women sexually mutilated

DAVAO CITY, the Philippines -- Most or all of the 22 **women** among the 57 people massacred Monday in the southern Philippines were sexually mutilated, the authorities said yesterday.

"Even the private parts of the **women** were shot at," the justice secretary, Agnes Devanadera, said on national television. "It was horrible. It was not done to just one. It was done practically to all the **women**."

About a dozen of the victims were the relatives, lawyers or supporters of Esmael Mangudadatu, a local politician whose determination to challenge the entrenched Ampatuan clan in a gubernatorial election touched off the violence.

OFFICIAL QUILTS OVER AIRSTRIKE OFFICIAL QUILTS OVER AIRSTRIKE

Andal Ampatuan Jr., a local mayor who is suspected of having ordered the killings, turned himself in Thursday, protesting his innocence. He is expected to be charged with murder next week.

Ex-Khmer-Rouge warden

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia -- Testimony in the nine-month trial of a former prison chief for the communist Khmer Rouge ended yesterday when the defendant, Kaing Guek Eav, 67, known as Duch, unexpectedly asked to be set free despite his repeated admissions of guilt.

The judges took no immediate action. They are expected to render their verdict early next year.

The Khmer Rouge caused the deaths of 1.7 million people when it ruled Cambodia from 1975 to 1979, and Duch is the first of five members of the regime to face trial.

Israel said to stop attack

JERUSALEM -- The Israeli military said the air force attacked a group of Palestinian militants in northern Gaza early yesterday as they were about to fire rockets at Israel, a week after the **Hamas** rulers of Gaza announced that they had secured the agreement of other groups to halt rocket fire in order to prevent retaliatory attacks.

Palestinian medics said four militants were wounded in the air strike, but the Israeli military said one member of the squad, from a small Islamic extremist group influenced by al-Qaida, was killed.

Load-Date: December 1, 2009

Bee sting therapy Gaza clinic uses bees to relieve medical conditions

Townsville Bulletin (Australia)

November 21, 2009 Saturday

1 - Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 69

Length: 511 words

Body

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bee sting therapy Gaza clinic uses bees to relieve medical conditions

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

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

The lack of medical options and the economic crisis gripping the territory has sent hundreds of men, women and children flocking to Mr Samur's clinic, where he pricks them with bees raised in dozens of backyard hives. A course of three injections costs just \$US2.50 (\$A2.69).

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

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

Load-Date: November 21, 2009

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Nimble, funny, thoughtful headlock on wrestling

The Philadelphia Inquirer

October 30, 2009 Friday

JERSEY-C Edition

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Section: FEATURES WEEKEND; Inq Weekend; Pg. W64

Length: 523 words

Byline: By Howard Shapiro

Inquirer Staff Writer

Body

On tonight's wrestling card, we have the American who stands for everything good we learned in civics, or from Mom or by eating apple pie - Chad Deity. He's pure of thought, black and beautiful, resplendent in ringside bling and a shining gold jockstrap. He's built like your proverbial brick facility.

(His given name is Darnell, but *shhhh!*)

Opposite him is the Fanatic, whose wrestling resumé has him representing al Qaeda, ***Hamas***, and for good measure, the French. He enters the ring with a prayer mat. He takes on fighters like Old Glory and Billy Heartland. He is their personal terrorist. ***Female*** fans bow in burqas.

(He's really Vigneshwar Paduar, a street-savvy American of East Indian descent. But *shhhhh!*)

This is wrestling, slyly scripted at best, pathetically cynical at worst, and constantly lucrative for the promoter who, in *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity*, manipulates fans by exploiting racial attitudes, geopolitics, fear, and the notion of patriotism.

It's also theater that puts you in a solid intellectual headlock and won't let up - funny throughout, thoughtful, and commanding, with a script as nimble as the champ it depicts. In its dynamic InterAct Theater staging by Seth Rozin, the company's producing artistic director, *Chad Deity* fills the ring with characters you wish you really knew, portrayed by actors who make sure you'll know them.

It fills the ring, literally. The play by Kristoffer Diaz, a fine writer of Puerto Rican descent, is not being performed in InterAct's usual space at the Adrienne on Sansom Street. It's a block away, at the Philadelphia Shakespeare Theatre, where Adam Riggat's scenic design has turned the larger performance space into a mini wrestling arena, with three big TV screens and a ring, the audience on three sides.

The play is lighted meticulously by Peter Whinnery and features live stage action simultaneously projected in TV close-ups - a fine-tuned mockery of the genre, captured mostly by camera operator Samantha Kristina Clarke, who plays a ringside showgirl.

Nimble, funny, thoughtful headlock on wrestling

InterAct is presenting *Chad Deity* at the same time the play is in its world premiere at Chicago's Victory Gardens Theatre. The cast here is impeccable: Juan Pacheco as the narrator, the guy who always loses and does all the work to make the winner look great; a superbuff Donté Bonner as Chad Deity, who masters the choreography and the showbiz of the form; Jeb Kreager as the promoter with a mental sack of cheap tricks; and Shalin Agarwal as the impossibly hip street guy who becomes the improbably fearsome Fanatic.

They're supported by Nick Martorelli in several roles in the ring and by Eric "The Smoke" Moran, a real-life pro wrestler. Fight choreographer John Bellomo teamed with wrestling consultant Tony "Hitman" Stetson to make the action as real in the ring as it is in a play that rings true.

The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity

Presented by InterAct Theatre Company at the Philadelphia Shakespeare Theatre, 2111 Sansom St., through Nov. 22. Tickets: \$25-\$29. Information: 215-568-8079 or www.interacttheatre.org. Contact staff writer Howard Shapiro at 215-854-5727 or hshapiro@phillynews.com.

Graphic

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Load-Date: October 30, 2009

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Rocket fired from Lebanon prompts Israeli barrage

Times of Oman

October 28, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 601 words

Byline: AFP

Body

JERUSALEM: A Katyusha rocket fired from Lebanon hit northern Israel on Tuesday night without causing casualties, prompting Israel to retaliate with artillery, sources on both sides said.

The attack, which was not immediately claimed, was the latest incident in growing cross-border tensions, and an Israeli military spokeswoman laid ultimate blame on the Beirut government.

The rocket landed in open ground east of the Israeli town of Kiryat Shmona and started a fire but caused no serious damage, sources there said.

A security source in Lebanon said eight rockets fired from Israel then hit near the border village of Hula. There were no immediate reports of casualties. At about the same time, witnesses in Kiryat Shmona said Israeli artillery retaliated by firing on southern Lebanon.

An Israeli military spokeswoman later confirmed that "artillery had opened fire on the sector from which the Katyusha rocket was fired." She said the army considered the attack as "serious, and considers that responsibility for it falls on the Lebanese government."

UN peacekeeping troops and the Lebanese army cut off the road to Hula and searched the area, an AFP correspondent said. Hula residents said they heard a rocket being fired from the brush outside the village shortly before the rockets hit the area.

While no group claimed responsibility, Israel will have its eyes on Shiite movement Hezbollah, which fought a devastating 34-day war with Israel in 2006 and which has its stronghold in south Lebanon.

A rocket exploded in a village there on October 12 in the home of activist Abdel Nasser Issa. The Israeli military released footage from a drone that it said showed rockets being removed.

But Hezbollah's Al-Manar television broadcast pictures it said showed men outside a garage putting a rolled up metal shutter into a truck, watched by a Lebanese soldier and two UN troops.

Israel's military said the blast "proves again the presence of weapons forbidden in southern Lebanon" under UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which ended the 2006 war.

Rocket fired from Lebanon prompts Israeli barrage

The conflict killed more than 1,200 Lebanese, mostly civilians, and more than 160 Israelis, mostly soldiers. Resolution 1701 called for the removal of weapons in southern Lebanon from the hands of everyone except the Lebanese army and other state security forces.

Israel has repeatedly accused Hezbollah of rearming, and an Israeli military spokesman has claimed the group has "dozens of arms caches containing hundreds of rockets."

Following the October 12 incident, Israeli President Shimon Peres accused Hezbollah of turning Lebanon into a powderkeg. "It s not Israel that is endangering Lebanon, but rather Hezbollah, just as Hamas is endangering the Palestinians.

"There is no reason for Israel not to make peace with Lebanon," he said, adding that Israel s northern neighbour "could be, with the help of this peace, the Switzerland of the Middle East. But itâEUR(TM)s clear to everyone who is preventing this." Tuesday s attack on Israel was the fourth from Lebanon this year.

On September 11, at least two rockets fired from the southern village of Al-Qlaileh slammed into Israel without causing casualties but triggering retaliatory artillery fire. A group linked to Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility, according to US monitoring group SITE Intelligence.

In February, Israeli artillery bombarded Al-Qlaileh in response to a rocket attack. There were no casualties in Lebanon, while a few Israelis were lightly wounded. In January, during Israel s assault on the Gaza Strip, four rockets fired from Lebanon hit northern Israel, wounding two women.

Load-Date: October 29, 2009

In Brief News

Daily Dispatch (South Africa)

October 29, 2009 Thursday

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Daily Dispatch

Section: OPINION & EDITORIAL

Length: 564 words

Body

New round of Madagascar talks set up in Ethiopia

OUSTED Madagascar president Marc Ravalomanana has agreed to attend a summit in Addis Ababa next week to begin fresh talks on a transition government.

"It must not be a dishonest game of poker where cards have already been distributed", he said in Johannesburg, where he has been living in exile since the March 17 coup. The meeting between current leader Andry Rajoelina, who ousted Ravalomanana, and two former presidents Didier Ratsiraka and Albert Zafy, comes after a summit planned for Geneva was cancelled on October 16. - Sapa-AFP

US pilots lose licences

TWO airline pilots have had their licences withdrawn after they overflowed their destination and were lost for more than an hour while they were toying with their personal laptops.

The pilots' behaviour had been negligent and careless, US federal aviation officials said, adding the pilots had violated a series of aviation regulations, including failing to respond to traffic controllers.

The Northwest Airlines incident on October 21 triggered a security alert in the White House situation room. Two military jets were scrambled. - Sapa-DPA

Not coming here, says OZ

AUSTRALIA insisted yesterday it would not bring home a boatload of 78 Sri Lankan asylum seekers rescued off Indonesia.

Foreign Minister Stephen Smith said the Sri Lankans, picked up 10 days ago by an Australian customs ship in Indonesian waters, would be processed in Indonesia. - Sapa-AFP

Ice House installation

A PHOTOGRAPHER and architect plan to freeze one of Detroit's thousands of abandoned homes this winter, encasing it in ice to draw attention to foreclosures that have battered the region.

The project from Gregory Holm and Matthew Radune, dubbed Ice House Detroit, is the latest example of Detroit's population loss and industrial decline serving as both artistic inspiration and canvas. Holm, 38, plans to photograph the transformation of the house, which will be sprayed with water and gradually covered in ice. In the spring, crews will salvage building materials and demolish the home. The lot will be donated, probably for a community garden. - Sapa-AP

Polygamy award proposal

In Brief News

A STATE in Malaysia is proposing that lawmakers who wed single mothers as their second, third or fourth wives be given an award.

Legislators from the north-eastern state of Kelantan who marry single mothers with young children would be helping the state assist those women, who are often abandoned without financial aid by their ex-husbands, said State Women, Family and Health chairperson Wan Ubaidah Omar.

The government of Kelantan, which is ruled by the hardline opposition Parti Islam SeMalaysia, has often encouraged its married Muslim men to consider widows and single mothers as extra wives. - Sapa-DPA

Another Gaza tunnel down

SIXTEEN Palestinians were injured yesterday when a smuggling tunnel along the Gaza-Egypt border collapsed. Muawiya Hassanein, head of Gaza emergency services, said one victim was in a serious condition.

A network of hundreds of tunnels beneath the border provide a crucial economic lifeline to Gaza, which has been sealed off from all but vital humanitarian aid by Israel and Egypt since Hamas took over in June 2007. More than 120 Palestinians have died in cave-ins or been killed by Israeli operations targeting the network since then, medics say. - Sapa-AP

Load-Date: November 1, 2009

End of Document

Tensions in Jerusalem after new Al-Aqsa clashes

Times of Oman

October 5, 2009 Monday

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Length: 569 words

Body

JERUSALEM: Israeli police and Palestinian protesters on Sunday clashed near Al-Aqsa mosque compound, a flashpoint site in Jerusalem sacred to Muslims and Jews that saw similar unrest a week ago.

The altercation occurred after Israeli authorities closed the holy site in the Old City of Jerusalem and 150 to 200 people gathered to pray outside the Lion's Gate, which leads into the compound, police and witnesses said.

The clashes erupted shortly afterwards, with worshippers throwing stones and security forces hurling stun grenades and firing a water cannon, according to witnesses. Medics said seven people were wounded and police said three were arrested.

The Old City remained calm but tense hours after the clashes, with dozens of Israeli law enforcement personnel deployed throughout the narrow streets of the city, holy to the world's three main monotheistic faiths.

Police said they had closed access to Al-Aqsa compound, known to Muslims as Al-Haram Al-Sharif (the Noble Sanctuary) and to Jews as the Temple Mount, after mosque loudspeakers in the Old City urged people to gather there.

"We closed the access to the Temple Mount following incitations to violence over (mosque) loudspeakers," police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld told AFP.

Witnesses said the call followed rumours which swept through the Old City that Israeli authorities were going to allow Jewish settlers to enter the compound during the current Jewish festival of Sukkot.

"They want to keep us away so they can impose their will and allow settlers to enter Al-Aqsa," Yusuf Mukheimer, one of the organisers of Sunday's prayer, told AFP.

Overnight, a group of several dozen Palestinians entered the mosque compound to confront any such visits by Jewish extremists, witnesses said.

Access to the holy site on Monday will be allowed only to Muslim men over the age of 50 and women holding Israeli identity cards, police announced on Sunday evening.

The Islamist Hamas movement ruling the Gaza Strip meanwhile lashed out at Israel over the clashes, saying "the leaders of the occupation will bear the dangerous consequences of any escalation."

Tensions in Jerusalem after new Al-Aqsa clashes

"The continuation of these Zionist plots against the Al-Aqsa mosque and Jerusalem is a fuse that could ignite the entire region," the group's parliamentary bloc said in a statement.

The Palestinian Authority issued a statement urging the international community to "immediately intervene and bring the question of the Al-Aqsa mosque before the United Nations Security Council."

Jordan meanwhile on Sunday summoned Israel's ambassador in Amman to demand a halt to "repeated violations" by the Jewish state at the Al-Aqsa mosque compound, the foreign ministry said.

"Such actions are illegal and illegitimate and violate Israel's commitments as an occupying force and threaten the peace process," it said in a statement.

One week ago several people were wounded in unrest that erupted after a group of tourists entered the mosque compound. Police said the group was made up of French tourists, but the Palestinians insisted they were Israeli extremists.

The site of the mosque compound is the holiest in Judaism and third-holiest in Islam, and has often been the flashpoint of Israeli-Palestinian violence.

The second Palestinian uprising, or intifada, erupted there in September 2000 after a visit by Ariel Sharon, a right-wing politician who went on to become Israeli prime minister the following year.

Load-Date: October 5, 2009

Palestinians in Israel enjoy the same opportunities as Jewish residents

The Herald (Glasgow)
September 28, 2009 Monday
Final Edition

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The Herald

Section: FEATURES; Pg. 12

Length: 537 words

Body

JOYCE Carmichael is so intent on demonising Israel that she doesn't allow the truth to get in the way of a good story. (Letters, September 26).

Her account of brutality to people does not ring true. As for activists in Israel caring about the Palestinians, actually nearly all Israelis care and would like to live in peace. It would be good if that were also the attitude of the extremists in Hamas, Hizbollah and Fatah, and that they would stop so much brutality to each other.

It always interests me that no-one shows any concern about the way the Palestinians (and there are plenty of Jewish Palestinians living in Israel which people seem to forget), have been treated and denied citizenship in almost all of the Arab countries.

It seems Palestinians only matter to the do-gooding activists if they are living in the disputed territories.

As for medical centres and schools being demolished, maybe Ms Carmichael could give a single example of that.

A further false claim is that the standard of living of Palestinians in Israel is appalling and that "schools, hospitals, universities and all public services are decidedly inferior".

First, there are no segregated hospitals or universities in Israel and, quite rightly, Arabs, Druse and Palestinians enjoy exactly the same conditions, opportunities and services as their Jewish counterparts. Go to any Arab village in Israel, be it Abu Ghosh, Ein Naqquba, Tamra or Umm Batin, or better still go to Haifa and Beersheva, and see people from all backgrounds living and working harmoniously alongside each other, and you will not find the "appalling" conditions Ms Carmichael alleges. Where you might find them is in the Palestinian- and Hamascontrolled areas where for the past 61 years Palestinian people have been forced to remain as refugees while their leaders refuse to make peace with Israel and allow the people to enjoy the benefits that would have brought.

It is a widely accepted fact that Arabs living in Israel, particularly Muslim and Christian Palestinians and women, enjoy a better lifestyle than in most Arab countries. (Where else do the women go to university, hold down high-profile jobs and enjoy complete equality?) That is why so many of them rushed to claim their Israeli passports when

Palestinians in Israel enjoy the same opportunities as Jewish residents

they thought their areas might go back under Palestinian Authority rule, something they clearly did not want. Talk to most of them, and while they will say not everything about their living conditions and lifestyle is rosy, they certainly won't paint the same false picture as Ms Carmichael.

As for her taxi driver story, I regularly travel to the airport with an Arab taxi driver who has never given any indication that his licence could be threatened, but clearly it makes a nice embellishment to Ms Carmichael's story.

There is no policy which seeks the uprooting of her Palestinian taxi driver and his family and getting them to move to the West Bank, or, indeed, of moving any of the 1,498,000 Arabs (20.2 -per cent of the population) out of Israel. Interestingly, only 24-per cent of Israeli Arabs consider themselves to be Palestinians, and virtually none of them would choose to move out of Israeli jurisdiction.

Joy Wolfe, 24 Marchbank Drive, Cheadle, Cheshire.

Load-Date: September 28, 2009

End of Document

IN BRIEF

Herald Sun (Australia)

September 10, 2009 Thursday

1 - FIRST Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 16

Length: 587 words

Body

List of terror groups widens

THE Federal Government has added four groups to its list of known terrorist organisations after receiving intelligence warning of imminent attacks.

The four groups -- **Hamas** Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the Kurdistan Workers Party, Lashkar-e-Toiba and Palestinian Islamic Jihad -- had all previously been on the list.

The relisting followed advice from security agencies warning that the groups were either directly or indirectly engaged in preparing, planning, assisting or fostering terrorist acts.

Lashkar-e-Toiba, an extremist Islamic organisation based in Pakistan, has directly engaged in a number of terrorist acts, including suicide attacks, bombings, kidnappings, and assassinations in India.

The group was responsible for the November 2008 attacks in Mumbai that killed more than 170 people.

Dannii hits the comeback trail

DANNII Minogue (pictured) is planning to relaunch her pop career.

The reality-TV talent-show host hopes to team up with dance music producers Freemasons, who have co-produced songs for Dannii's sister Kylie Minogue and British singer Sophie Ellis-Bextor.

"I am all fired up to get back into the studio as soon as possible," Minogue, 37, told The Sun newspaper.

The former Young Talent Time star and Home and Away actor has had 12 consecutive No. 1 singles in the British dance charts. Her early hits in Australia included Love and Kisses and This is It in the 1990s.

Moths to become guinea pigs

MOTHS, caterpillars and fruit flies could soon take the place of millions of mice used every year by scientists testing drugs.

Biologists have discovered that certain key cells in mammals and insects react in the same way when attacked by infections and produce similar chemical reactions to fight them.

IN BRIEF

The findings could mean that up to 80 per cent of the mice used for testing new pharmaceutical compounds may no longer be needed.

Visa changes help women

WOMEN at risk of genital mutilation and ``honour killings" if they're sent home will be better protected under changes to Australia's migration law, Immigration Minister Chris Evans says.

The main change, ``complementary protection", widens the criteria for deciding whether people should be granted protection visas. Complementary protection would cover circumstances in which people may be refused a protection visa because the reason for the persecution or harm should they be sent back wasn't a reason specified under the Refugees Convention, which lists race, religion, nationality, social group or political opinion.

Courts martial may be restored

THE Federal Government will attempt to reinstate the old court martial system following the suspension of the Australian Military Court.

The High Court ruled that the body, although expressly not a court according to its legislation, was exercising the judicial power of the Commonwealth and that made it invalid under the Australian Constitution.

The AMC was set up in October 2007 and the High Court decision puts 171 finalised decisions in limbo.

Children found in booze bust

OFFICERS who pulled over a woman in Alice Springs were shocked to discover an unrestrained child fast asleep on top of a carton of booze.

A search of another car uncovered yet another child, also not wearing a seatbelt, sitting on a slab of beer which had been covered by a blanket, police said.

The drivers were pulled over at the weekend by police who were searching vehicles suspected of running alcohol to remote Aboriginal communities declared dry zones as part of the federal intervention.

Load-Date: September 9, 2009

The Week News Quiz

The Times (London)

October 10, 2009 Saturday

Edition 1, National Edition

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THE TIMES

Section: FEATURES; Pg. 120,114

Length: 513 words

Body

1 What were Boris Johnson's thoughts on a potential Tony Blair presidency of the EU? a It would mark a pupation "into an intergalactic spokesman for Europe" b It is his "perma-tanned apotheosis" c It is the "acme of a career built on the abolition of democracy"

2 Why has Woolwich Polytechnic been celebrating? a It is to be reconstituted as a technology college of the University of Greenwich b For the first time an alumnus has won a Nobel Prize c Its 1947 electronics teaching block has been given listed status

3 How did Silvio Berlusconi respond to news that he had lost his immunity from prosecution? a He ordered the editors of his newspapers to condemn the decision b He retreated to his villa, on a jet staffed by 15 air stewardesses c He clenched his fist and declaimed: "Viva Italia, Viva Berlusconi!"

4 When Wayne Rooney was asked if he wanted Portugal to qualify for the World Cup, how did he respond? a "They are a great team, and it would be bad for the game for Ronaldo not to play in 2010" b "It would be nice to see Portugal not there because in the last two tournaments they've knocked us out" c "We have unfinished business with Portugal - we need to meet them, play them and beat them"

5 Why is France's Culture Minister outraged with the far Right? a They have criticised him for writing about enjoying sex with under-age male prostitutes b They said he is unpatriotic c He was the target of a far-Right hate campaign

6 Why did the chief executive of Stonewall, the gay rights group, pull out of the Tory conference Pride event? a Their recent apology for Section 28 did not go far enough b They invited allies in the European parliament to speak, despite their holding allegedly homophobic views c His partner was refused a pass

7 What did not happen after the Conservative chairman imposed a champagne ban at the party conference? a An MP's researcher was arrested on suspicion of stealing a £150 bottle of bubbly b David Cameron knocked back a glass at the Spectator's party c Harvey Nichols closed the champagne area of its conference branch

8 How has Gaza zoo recently replenished its stocks? a It has smuggled in lions, using Hamas tunnels b It has erected a large net to catch storks mid-migration c It has painted two donkeys to look like zebras

The Week News Quiz

9 "We used to have a sense of humour about this." To what is Bruce Forsyth referring? a Calling Asian people "Pakis" b Calling homosexuals "Faggots" c Praising **female** co-presenters for their legs

10 Match the faces to the quotes

1 You know where you can get hold of me

2 I'm down with my feminine side

3 I have always urged the **females**, you should take more active role

4 When my BlackBerry burbled, it was David Cameron

News quiz answers (from page 120)

1 a - Intergalactic spokesman for Europe 2 b - Nobel Prize 3 c - "Viva Italia, viva Berlusconi!" 4 b - Does not want Portugal there 5 a - Sex with prostitutes 6 b - Allies in European parliament 7 c - Harvey Nichols 8 c - Painted two donkeys 9 a - Using the term "Pakis" 10 1 Liam Gallagher, b; 2 Harriet Harman, a; 3 General Sir Richard Dannatt, d; 4 Dalai Lama, c

Graphic

CARL RECINE / LIVEPIC / ACTION IMAGES

Load-Date: October 10, 2009

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Mubarak urges Israel to start final status talks

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

October 5, 2009 Monday

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THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 576 words

Body

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has urged Israel to open talks with the Palestinians on the full range of issues blocking the path to peace. Stuttering negotiations between the two sides on a step-by-step "road map" toward peace have been suspended completely since Israeli forces launched an assault on the Gaza Strip last December.

CAIRO: Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has urged Israel to open talks with the Palestinians on the full range of issues blocking the path to peace. Stuttering negotiations between the two sides on a step-by-step "road map" toward peace have been suspended completely since Israeli forces launched an assault on the Gaza Strip last December.

The Egyptian president said they should move straight to the six "final status" issues: borders, the status of Jerusalem, refugees, Israeli settlements in occupied territory, security and use of water.

"What is required now is political will, particularly by the leaders of Israel," Mubarak said in an interview with the newspaper Al-Quwat al-Musallaha (The Armed Forces).

Mubarak said he was in regular contact with Israeli leaders including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, President Shimon Peres and Defense Minister Ehud Barak.

He said talks should resume where they left off under the previous Israeli government.

"It is not reasonable or acceptable to start from scratch. I told them that the negotiations should address all six final status issues without exception," he said.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said last month that, for talks to resume, Israel must honor agreements on borders and Jerusalem that he says its previous government made in talks last year.

No clear agreements were ever published before talks were suspended. Netanyahu, a right-winger who took office in March, has made clear he does not wish to repeat any such offers that Olmert may have made.

After talks with US President Barack Obama and Netanyahu, Abbas also repeated a Palestinian insistence that Israel halt settlement building in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem.

But Netanyahu has fought off US and Arab pressure to freeze settlements.

Mubarak urges Israel to start final status talks

Since then, US diplomacy has focused on an immediate and unconditional resumption of negotiations.

Egypt signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979, the first Arab state to do so. Mubarak said that agreement, which saw Israel withdraw troops and settlers from Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, should be seen as a model for future pacts between Israel and the Palestinians and other Arab states.

Mubarak's comments, cited by the state news agency MENA on Saturday, are the latest in a string of calls for Israel to accept a framework for peace based on UN resolutions and a land-for-peace formula contained in the Arab Peace Initiative.

That initiative, launched by Saudi Arabia in 2002, offers normalization with all Arab states in return for withdrawal from territories occupied in 1967 and a just settlement for refugees.

Mubarak said peace was "difficult but not impossible."

Egypt has played a central role in negotiations to secure the release of a captured Israeli soldier in return for freedom for Palestinians held in Israeli jails.

On Friday, Israel freed 20 female prisoners after receiving evidence that the Israeli soldier is alive and well.

Egypt is also trying to broker reconciliation between the rival Palestinian factions Hamas and Fatah running Gaza and the West Bank respectively, and hopes they will sign a pact this month. - Reuters

Load-Date: October 5, 2009

IN BRIEF

Herald Sun (Australia)
September 10, 2009 Thursday
2 - SECOND Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 16

Length: 598 words

Body

List of terror groups widens

THE Federal Government has added four groups to its list of known terrorist organisations after receiving intelligence warning of imminent attacks.

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Lashkar-e-Toiba, an extremist Islamic organisation based in Pakistan, has mounted suicide attacks, bombings, kidnappings, and assassinations in India.

The group was responsible for the November 2008 attacks in Mumbai that killed more than 170 people.

Dannii hits the comeback trail

DANNII Minogue (pictured) is planning to relaunch her pop career.

The reality-TV talent-show host hopes to team up with dance music producers Freemasons, who have co-produced songs for Dannii's sister Kylie and British singer Sophie Ellis-Bextor. "I am all fired up to get back into the studio as soon as possible," Minogue, 37, told Britain's The Sun newspaper.

The former Young Talent Time star and Home and Away actor has had 12 consecutive No. 1 singles in the British dance charts. Her early hits in Australia included Love and Kisses and This Is It in the 1990s.

Here's some positive news

A CAMPAIGN by the Positive News Australia Association will be launched today calling for more positive news reports in the media.

The campaign, spearheaded by Lord Mayor Robert Doyle and Senior Australian of the Year Pat La Manna, is lobbying the Federal Government to ask media to include more good news in news reports.

IN BRIEF

PNAA founder Mr La Manna said: ``We should report bad news because it's a part of our life. I don't blame the media, I blame the public. When something bad happens, they call 000. When something good happens, they do nothing."

Visa changes help women

WOMEN at risk of genital mutilation and ``honour killings" if they're sent home will be better protected under changes to Australia's migration law, Immigration Minister Chris Evans says.

The main change, ``complementary protection", widens the criteria for deciding whether people should be granted protection visas.

Complementary protection would cover circumstances in which people may be refused one because their reason for fearing persecution or harm was not specified under the Refugees Convention.

Rush to universities

MORE people are attending Australian universities and many want to sink their teeth into dentistry.

University applications grew by 5.6 per cent this year -- the largest increase since 2002 -- according to the latest annual Undergraduate Applications, Offers and Acceptances report released yesterday.

Demand was strongest for dentistry, with applications increasing by a quarter this year.

Despite a five-year trend of declining interest in science, 2009 applications were up by 17 per cent.

Hollywood reporter dies

ARMY Archerd, a prolific reporter who chronicled the personal and professional lives of Hollywood stars and moguls for more than half a century from his columnist's perch at Daily Variety, has died at 87.

Archerd rocked the entertainment world when he announced in 1985 that actor Rock Hudson had AIDS.

Five years ago, he was diagnosed with a rare form of mesothelioma, which doctors ascribed to his exposure to shipyard asbestos in the navy during World War II.

He was best-known in recent years for his televised job as official greeter of stars outside the Academy Awards ceremony.

Load-Date: September 10, 2009

UN rights chief slams plight of women in Sudan, Gulf, Afghanistan

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

September 15, 2009 Tuesday

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THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 523 words

Byline: Daily Star Staff

Body

Women around the world are denied fundamental freedoms, the top United Nations human rights official said on Monday, citing in particular the Gulf states, Sudan and Afghanistan. "**Women**'s rights continue to be curtailed in too many countries," and efforts must be made to address this, Navi Pillay, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights told the UN Human Rights Council.

Stephanie Nebehay

Reuters

GENEVA: **Women** around the world are denied fundamental freedoms, the top United Nations human rights official said on Monday, citing in particular the Gulf states, Sudan and Afghanistan. "**Women**'s rights continue to be curtailed in too many countries," and efforts must be made to address this, Navi Pillay, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights told the UN Human Rights Council.

She pointed to a "severe backlash against **women**'s rights" in the contested Afghan elections and urged authorities there to take care to stamp out violence related to the vote.

In its latest three-week session, which Pillay opened on Monday, the Council will assess violations around the world, including allegations of war crimes during Israel's invasion of the **Hamas**-ruled Gaza Strip in December and January.

It will be the first session of the 47-state body in which a US delegation participates as a voting member, following its election in May. Washington is expected to back Israel, a close ally, during the Gaza debate set for September 29.

While citing some positive developments in the Gulf region - including the election of four **women** to Kuwait's Parliament and the appointment of the first **female** deputy minister in Saudi Arabia - Pillay said "the overall situation of **women** falls well short of international standards."

Gulf states must remove the many exceptions they invoked when ratifying key international human rights treaties, and grant full rights and freedoms for **women**, she said.

UN rights chief slams plight of women in Sudan , Gulf, Afghanistan

In Sudan, discrimination against women persists despite the many rights pacts the country has signed, according to the UN rights chief who grew up in apartheid-era South Africa.

Lubna Hussein, a former UN employee in Sudan, was sentenced to prison last week by a Khartoum court on charges of dressing indecently in trousers. Pillay welcomed her subsequent release, but called on Sudan to "take all necessary steps to address the equality gap."

She also voiced alarm that migrants who pay traffickers to attempt to cross the Mediterranean, Caribbean, Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden are risking their lives in search of a better life.

"Today, on the assumption that boats in distress carry migrants, ships pass them by ignoring their pleas for help, in violation of international law," Pillay said in her remarks prepared for the session.

"In many cases, authorities reject these migrants and leave them to face hardship and peril, if not death, as though they were turning away ships laden with hazardous waste," she said.

Migrants are turned away without being given a chance to lodge their requests for asylum, she said. Italy was accused by the UN refugee agency this year of mistreating Africans who were stopped from crossing the sea to Europe and diverted to Libya.

Load-Date: September 14, 2009

End of Document

Gay leader now on Merkel's radar

Weekend Australian

September 26, 2009 Saturday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 19

Length: 591 words

Byline: Roger Boyes

Body

Berlin

AN openly gay politician who can survive the brutish ribaldry of the Munich Oktoberfest should have little trouble sitting down with the likes of Hamas, Muammar Gaddafi or other tough negotiating partners.

Perhaps that was what was buzzing through Guido Westerwelle's mind yesterday as he sipped from his litre of frothing beer, clearly wishing it was chilled prosecco wine.

Mr Westerwelle, leader of the Free Democrats (FDP), is the man tipped to be Angela Merkel's foreign minister. The latest opinion polls suggest a government coalition between her Christian Democrats and the smaller, liberal FDP could still be on the cards after the election tomorrow.

“It went well,” said a spokesman for the party after Mr Westerwelle left the beer tent to address a rally in Munich. “Serious beer drinkers are also serious voters -- and they want tax cuts as much as anyone else.”

The FDP, polling 13 per cent, has pitched its campaign around Mr Westerwelle. He has been touring the country with Hans-Dietrich Genscher, a former foreign minister of West Germany, to make a point: small parties with strong personalities can change the tone of government.

Sophisticated German voters, of course, already know this. What they have been uncertain about is whether a gay man, who sometimes takes his partner on official overseas trips, can function as a foreign minister.

Could there, for instance, be snubs from Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (who, after the execution of two gay men, told a Western audience: “We don't have homosexuals, as in your country”). Or jokes from Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi (whose supporters recently used homosexuality claims to get rid of a critical editor)?

In 2004, Mr Westerwelle decided he should release more information about his sexuality, declaring he was in a long-standing relationship with a sports events manager, Michael “Micky” Mronz.

Last year, Mr Westerwelle went so far as to invite the press to photograph him meeting the mother of his partner, who described the politician as her “son-in-law”.

Public attitudes to homosexual politicians have evolved over the past five years. Berlin and Paris gained openly gay mayors and Iceland claimed the first openly lesbian prime minister.

Gay leader now on Merkel's radar

“Some countries may have had a problem with Angela Merkel becoming the first **female** Chancellor,” said Mr Westerwelle. “And naturally she doesn’t wear a veil when she visits certain Arab states.” It was up to the outside world to accept German representatives “based on our own political and moral standards”.

But the challenge is persuading conservative German voters that family values are not being undermined. Hence the visit to the Oktoberfest.

The three-week festival that attracts six million visitors every year and is viewed by many as a celebration of beer-slurping masculinity. Waitresses are routinely groped, dozens of children are conceived and fathers take their sons to the festival on the assumption that four or more litres of beer represents a male rite of passage.

The Oktoberfest, though, has been moving with the times, with a tent set aside for gays. A special section is reserved for those conforming to a fetishist dress code including leather (all-body, rather than the traditional Lederhosen), rubber and traffic cop uniforms. There are also gay evenings in which a drag queen yodels to an oompah band.

This tent -- indeed, all the Oktoberfest tents -- has been doing roaring business this year, which is seen by many as a sign of returning confidence in the German economy.

Load-Date: September 25, 2009

New report challenges B'Tselem figures on Operation Cast Lead deaths in Gaza

The Jerusalem Post

September 16, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 551 words

Byline: DAN IZENBERG

Body

A report issued on Tuesday by epidemiologist Elihu Richter and Dr. Yael Stein charged that a recent document released by the human rights organization B'Tselem on the number of Palestinian combatants and non-combatants killed in Operation Cast Lead "is flawed by major errors of commission and omission and possibly major misclassification biases."

Richter and Stein published the report for the Center for Injury Prevention and Genocide Prevention Program at the Hebrew University-Hadassah School of Public Health and Community Medicine.

So far, B'Tselem has published summary figures but intends to release the names of every Palestinian who allegedly died in the military operation along with basic information about each one, including whether they were combatants or non-combatants.

The summary figures are sharply at odds with the official casualty figures published by the IDF after the fighting. According to B'Tselem, 1,387 Palestinians died in Operation Cast Lead; according to the army, 1,166 Palestinians were killed. According to B'Tselem, 773 of the Palestinians who were killed were non-combatants while 330 were combatants; according to the army, 295 of the dead were non-combatants while 709 were combatants. The army could not classify 162 Palestinian males aged 16-50.

The army's figures also include about 240 Gaza policemen who were killed in IDF air attacks on their police stations on the first day of the fighting. B'Tselem does not include the policemen as combatants but acknowledges that some of them were also members of ***Hamas***.

The authors of the report charged that B'Tselem's classifications of combatant and non-combatant status were "flawed by restrictive definitions." B'Tselem wrote that its classification was based on "a new approach" of the International Committee of the Red Cross which declares that anyone who fulfills a "continuous combat function" should be considered a combatant even if he is not taking a direct part in hostilities at the moment he is killed. A person who does not fulfill a continuous combat function, but is killed when directly participating in hostilities is also considered a combatant. On the other hand, "persons who continuously accompany or support an organized armed group but whose function does not involve direct participation in hostilities maintain their status as civilians and are not legitimate objects of attack."

The authors also wrote that the raw data provided by B'Tselem were sufficient to indicate that many victims not classified as combatants by the human rights organization actually were.

New report challenges B'Tselem figures on Operation Cast Lead deaths in Gaza

For example, in the breakdown of the number of Palestinians killed from birth until the age of 18, the ratio of males to females increased dramatically as the age increased. Thus, B'Tselem found that 33 males and 27 females were killed up to the age of six (1.2 male/female ratio) compared with 26 males and 4 females between the ages of 17 and 18 (6.5 male/female ratio.) The authors concluded that "the findings suggest that a very large number of the 153 males, aged 11 to 18, could have been involved in, drawn into or exposed to combatant situations either as shields, fighters, circumstantial helpers, sporadic helpers or accidental bystanders."

The statistics regarding adult deaths listed as non- combatants showed similar trends.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

Seven days

The Courier Mail (Australia)

August 22, 2009 Saturday

1 - First with the news Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 48

Length: 581 words

Byline: Graham Clark

Body

SATURDAY

CHARLES Manson follower Lynette ``Squeaky" Fromme, 60 (pictured in 1975), was released from jail in the US almost three decades after trying to kill then president Gerald Ford.

A RADICAL Islamist sheik was among 22 people killed when Hamas police stormed a Gaza mosque after a defiant declaration of an Islamic emirate in the Palestinian enclave.

ITALIAN energy company Enel claimed it had opened the first industrial-scale zero-emissions powerplant fuelled by hydrogen in a \$80 million project near Venice.

SUNDAY

AMERICAN John Yettaw (pictured), jailed in Burma for swimming to the house of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who is under house arrest, was freed after a visit by US Senator Jim Webb.

THE former wife of the groom at a Kuwait wedding party which ended in the death of 43 women and children confessed she started the blaze to avenge her ``bad treatment".

QUEENSLAND'S oldest resident, Miriam Schmierer, who turned 110 this week, said her longevity secret was parsley tea.

MONDAY

AFGHAN President Hamid Karzai moved to try to broker election-day truces with local Taliban commanders in a bid to stem expected polling bloodshed, a move backed by the US and its allies.

A TSUNAMI warning was issued for southern Japan after a 6.8-magnitude earthquake struck off Taiwan's east coast.

A TOTAL of 2486 scuba divers took the plunge off North Sulawesi in Indonesia to set a world record for the largest mass dive, Guinness Books of Records reported.

TUESDAY

Seven days

AN accident during repair work at Russia's largest hydro-electric plant (pictured) in Siberia killed 12 workers with more than 60 others reported missing after an engine room flooded.

A THIRD of the state faced severe bushfire risk in what was expected to be Queensland's worst season in five years, Fire Commissioner Lee Johnson warned.

AUSTRALIA signed its biggest-yet trade deal, a 20-year \$50 billion contract to supply liquefied natural gas to China from West Australia's Gorgon field.

WEDNESDAY

TOMMY Suharto (pictured), the youngest son of Indonesia's late dictator, announced plans to seize control of his father's old political party despite lawsuits accusing him of corruption.

TALIBAN fighters staged a series of running battles with security forces across Kabul a day before the presidential poll, with three militants killed during a bank siege.

AT least 75 people were killed and more than 300 wounded in six attacks in central Baghdad, including two massive truck bombings in the Iraqi capital.

THURSDAY

NEW Mexico Governor Bill Richardson (pictured centre) said North Korea was seeking direct talks with the US after he held informal meetings with North Korean diplomats at his home. Pyongyang abandoned six-party talks and vowed to restart its plutonium-producing program after a censure from the UN Security Council for testing a long-range rocket.

ARGENTINE music promoter Omar Chaban, 57, was sentenced to 20 years in prison after being found responsible for a 2004 discotheque fire that killed 194 people.

FRIDAY

WESTERN powers have hailed landmark elections in Afghanistan as a victory for democracy despite reports of a low turnout amid fears of Taliban retribution, with US President Barack Obama (pictured) saying: ``We had what appears to be a successful election despite the Taliban's efforts to disrupt it."

AN American said she was suing a Chicago zoo for a fall near a dolphin exhibit, accusing zookeepers of encouraging the mammals to splash water and then failing to protect spectators from wet surfaces.

Load-Date: August 21, 2009

Dispute Over a Script Seminar for Muslim Students

The New York Times
August 12, 2009 Wednesday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 3

Length: 539 words

Byline: By MICHAEL CIEPLY

Dateline: LOS ANGELES

Body

An open invitation to a seminar for Muslim college students and recent graduates interested in Hollywood writing careers has placed the Writers Guild of America, West, at odds with the Council on American-Islamic Relations, which was planning to hold the session on Tuesday.

Things started simply enough.

In a news release dated July 29, the council's Los Angeles-area chapter said it planned to join the guild in hosting a "Writing for Hollywood" seminar with "a leading Hollywood filmmaker and writer" at an undetermined location. The program was to include "an overview of resources and opportunities available at the guild" and a tour of the Writers Guild Foundation library, which is in the same building as the guild's Los Angeles headquarters.

The planned seminar would have been unusual for the guild, said Daniel Petrie Jr., a former president who now serves on the governing board of its foundation. The writers' union has conducted programs about employment discrimination for older or female members, he said, but appears not to have systematically reached out to specific religious groups.

"I got a call on Friday night from a member who was upset about it," Mr. Petrie said. "It was the first I'd heard of it."

The council has known its share of controversy. In 2007 federal prosecutors named it as an unindicted co-conspirator in the Texas terrorism trial involving the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, whose leaders were eventually convicted of supporting terrorism by channeling money to Hamas. The council strongly challenged the co-conspirator naming as being an unfair "demonization" of things Muslim.

On ocweekly.com, the Web site of OC Weekly, an alternative newspaper, one writer, Matt Coker, had already poked fun at the session with a fable about a "talented and unlucky Jewish kid" who brushes up on the Koran and peddles his hitherto rejected script at the meeting under the name Aziz Rahman.

Responding to a request for access to the seminar, Neal Sacharow, the guild's director of communications, wrote in an e-mail message on Monday that the union was actually not connected to any of it.

"The event you're referring to is a CAIR event that the guild was going to make space available for," Mr. Sacharow wrote. "It is my understanding that CAIR has changed the location."

Dispute Over a Script Seminar for Muslim Students

Shortly afterward, however, Munira Syeda, the council's Los Angeles communications manager, said the guild had helped set up the session by lining up a speaker, the filmmaker Jeffrey Nachmanoff, who directed and wrote the 2008 thriller "Traitor."

Mr. Nachmanoff said he was recruited by the guild's diversity program, as was a moderator. "I'm a non-Muslim writer who happened to write a screenplay" that deals with terrorism and the Islamic world, Mr. Nachmanoff said in a phone interview. Mr. Sacharow did not respond to subsequent requests to comment further.

Ms. Syeda said that the council had held a similar seminar with Fox Entertainment, and that it hoped to do more in the future.

The Tuesday session, Ms. Syeda said, was closed to observers to keep its participants from feeling inhibited in their queries. "We don't want it to become censored in any way," she said.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Load-Date: August 12, 2009

End of Document

DOOM & GLOOM

Sydney MX (Australia)

July 23, 2009 Thursday

1 - SYD Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 10

Length: 521 words

Body

FIFTEEN DROWN AFTER CANOE TIPS

Fifteen people have been confirmed dead and 18 are missing after a boat capsized in the Pacific nation of Kiribati last week.

The head of the Kiribati police maritime service, John Mote, said 55 people were believed to have been on board a 17m double-hulled canoe when it capsized last week.

He said 22 people survived the incident, which happened as the canoe was taking passengers from the capital Tarawa to the island of Maiana, about 60km to the south.

The boat capsized during the attempted rescue of a crew member who fell into the water in rough conditions.

BUS COLLISION LEAVES 22 DEAD

A bus driver swerved at a sharp corner and collided with another bus in southwest Kenya, killing at least 22 people and injuring dozens.

The buses collided at Ntulele, about 17km from the town of Narok, said Narok police chief Charles Owino Okweya.

About 51 passengers were hurt, many with serious injuries, he said.

Okweya said the buses were carrying passengers between Nairobi and Kisii, a major town some 270km west of the capital, Nairobi.

WEDDING BOMB WOUNDS 52 GUESTS

Fifty-two people were wounded in Hamas-run Gaza after a blast ripped through a wedding of a relative of Mohammed Dahlan, an ex-strongman with the rival Fatah group, officials said today.

The explosion came late yesterday under a street stage set up in the southern town of Khan Yunis for the marriage of Dahlan's nephew, Mahmud, Palestinian medics said.

Dahlan himself was not present at the festivities.

The blast wounded 52 people, among them women and children, and five were still listed in critical condition today.

DOOM & GLOOM

The groom was among those badly hurt.

DOZENS KILLED IN MILITANT ATTACK

Clashes and a militant attack have killed up to two dozen people in northern Afghanistan, a once peaceful region where insurgent violence is spreading ahead of elections, officials say.

Fourteen civilians were "killed and injured" in an insurgent attack on Tuesday in the province of Kunduz, where Afghan forces have launched an offensive to root out Taliban-linked rebels, the local governor said.

In the south of the country, a bomb blast has killed two US soldiers, while a British soldier died in a separate blast.

PILGRIMS SHOT DEAD IN BUS AMBUSH

Eight people, including five Iranian pilgrims, have died in another day of violence in Iraq ahead of talks between Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and US President Barack Obama in Washington.

The pilgrims were shot dead by gunmen who ambushed their minibus near the restive city of Baquba, north of Baghdad.

The five victims were among about 30 pilgrims travelling on minibuses in an area northeast of Baquba.

Meanwhile in Abu Ghraib, west of Baghdad, US troops shot dead two attackers who tried to blast their convoy with hand grenades.

BROWN WARY OF GLOBAL RECOVERY

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown has warned there is "no room for complacency" over the state of the global economy and has stressed recovery cannot be taken for granted.

Brown said the global economy remained in a "fragile" state and that world leaders would focus on building growth at September's G20 summit in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Load-Date: July 23, 2009

On fourth anniversary of Gaza disengagement, Netanyahu vows there will be no more unilateral moves

The Jerusalem Post
August 3, 2009 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 5

Length: 545 words

Byline: HERB KEINON

Body

On the fourth Hebrew anniversary of the disengagement from the Gaza Strip, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu told his cabinet Sunday that the days of unilateral, unreciprocated Israeli actions were over.

In a swipe at disengagement, Netanyahu said, "peace will go back to being based on reciprocity, not unilateralism."

"In the framework of the peace agreements, Israel expects that the Palestinians will recognize the State of Israel as the national state of the Jewish people, that the problem of the refugees will be resolved outside Israel's borders and that there will be effective security arrangements and demilitarization, with international recognition and guarantees," he said. "These are not preconditions for the start of a peace process, but the basic conditions for establishing a lasting and stable peace. Palestinian moderates should internalize this."

Documents leaked to the Arabic press over the weekend indicated that Fatah, the party of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, will reject at its upcoming convention in Bethlehem Israel's call for the PA to recognize Israel as a Jewish state.

The prime minister emphasized that Israel was willing to open peace negotiations with the Palestinian Authority, Syria and any other Arab country, without preconditions. "Whoever sets preconditions for opening negotiations delays the peace process," he said. "We wholeheartedly support President Obama's regional initiative. In the framework of that initiative, the Arab countries, especially the main Arab states, must contribute with normalization steps towards Israel."

These comments came against the background of Saudi Foreign Minister Saud Al-Faisal's rejection in Washington on Friday of US efforts to get the Saudis to make some kind of gestures to Israel in order to help relaunch the diplomatic process.

"Today," Netanyahu said, "is the day Israel uprooted approximately 10,000 Israelis - men, women and children - from their homes. To our regret, Gaza has become a base for Hamas-led, Iran-sponsored terrorism. Thousands of rockets and missiles have been fired at us."

The prime minister said he was committed to a "full rehabilitation" of the evacuees "in order to enable them to rebuild their destroyed lives."

He said the cabinet would discuss the issue at length during next week's meeting.

On fourth anniversary of Gaza disengagement, Netanyahu vows there will be no more unilateral moves

Netanyahu reiterated that Israel would not tolerate rocket and missile fire of any kind, neither barrages nor individual attacks, adding that "all firing will be vigorously responded to." While bemoaning what has transpired in Gaza over the last four years, Netanyahu - during the cabinet meeting - pointed to the significant economic growth in the West Bank over the last few months, and said that if this pace continued, the West Bank economy could register 10 percent growth in 2009.

Netanyahu said this was due in no small part to Israel's removing both security and bureaucratic obstacles in the West Bank to help facilitate economic activity.

While saying that economic cooperation with the PA was limited because Abbas had put conditions on negotiations with Israel, Netanyahu said the influence of steps his government has taken on removing IDF roadblocks and cutting through bureaucratic red tape to move economic projects forward were being felt.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

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Israel blasted over drone strikes on Gaza civilians

Times of Oman

July 1, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 581 words

Byline: AFP

Body

JERUSALEM âEUR" Israeli armed drones killed scores of Palestinian civilians during the Gaza war despite their cutting-edge targeting technology, the US-based Human Rights Watch said yesterday.

In a new report based on forensic analysis and eyewitness testimony, the group says that at least 87 Palestinian civilians were killed by Israeli drones during the 22-day offensive on the **Hamas**-ruled territory launched in December.

âEURoelt is absolutely unacceptable, clearly unlawful and not what we expect from the worldâEUR(TM)s most moral military,âEUR Marc Garlasco, the author of the report, told reporters in Jerusalem.

âEURoelt looks as if they had almost an itchy trigger finger,âEUR said Garlasco, who was previously a Pentagon intelligence official in charge of strikes on high-value targets during the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq.

He added that the unmanned drones, which can hover over an area for more than 24 hours at a time and are equipped with precision cameras, are âEURoethe most precise, the most distinguishing of all weapons that any military has in its arsenalâEUR.

âEURoeWe were quite surprised during our mission in Gaza to actually find so many civilians killed by these weapons,âEUR he added, saying the level of civilian deaths from drone strikes in Gaza was âEURoenowhere near the levelâEUR seen in southern Lebanon during the 2006 war with Hezbollah. The Israeli military slammed the report and insisted it made every effort to spare civilians during the fighting.

âEURoe(The military) made use of advanced technology, tactics and weapon systems which minimised the risk to non-combatants and civilian property,âEUR it said.

âEURoeThis was done while confronting terrorists, who intentionally operated from within the Gaza StripâEUR(TM)s densely populated areas and used civilians as human shields,âEUR it added in a written statement. The military faulted the group for relying on the testimony of Palestinian witnesses âEURoewhose knowledge of military issues is doubtfulâEUR.

But the rights group, which reports on dozens of conflict zones across the world, said Israeli authorities did not respond to a list of detailed questions on each incident sent to them in March and reprinted in the report. Israel prevented media or human rights monitors from entering Gaza during and immediately after the war and has declined to meet with Human Rights Watch.

Israel blasted over drone strikes on Gaza civilians

The group provided a detailed analysis of six strikes in which drones killed 29 civilians, including eight children, and said it chose the cases because it was clear there were no fighting or militants in the area of the attacks.

In the deadliest incident, on December 27, an Israeli drone fired a missile at a group of people waiting at a bus stop in central Gaza City, killing nine students, two of them women, and three other civilians.

The attack took place in broad daylight during the opening air assault on the territory, several days before any Israeli ground forces entered.

In another case, on January 5, a drone missile struck the UN-run Asma primary school in Gaza City, killing three young men from the same family while they were using the toilet, the group said.

Meddling

Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman yesterday issued a tough rebuke after French President Nicolas Sarkozy was quoted as suggesting the ultra-nationalist Israeli official be fired.

“If this report is correct then this is an unacceptable interference in internal Israeli affairs,” Lieberman’s office said.

Load-Date: July 1, 2009

End of Document

Britain punishes Israel for Gaza naval bombardment

The Independent (London)

July 14, 2009 Tuesday

First Edition

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The  **INDEPENDENT**

Section: WORLD; Pg. 20

Length: 549 words

Byline: Donald Macintyre IN JERUSALEM

Body

The British Government has reacted to Israel's bombardment and invasion of Gaza last January by barring further exports of components used in naval gunships which took part in the three-week operation.

Britain has officially told Israel's embassy in London that it is revoking five licences for exports of equipment used in Saar 4.5 vessels because they violate UK and EU criteria precluding military sales which could be used for "internal repression".

Israel used naval vessels to bombard Gaza targets from the Mediterranean to augment the ground and air offensive after Operation Cast Lead was launched against Hamas on 27 December last year. David Miliband, the Foreign Secretary, told the Commons in April that there were "credible" reports that the Saar-class Corvette vessels had been used in "a naval fire support role".

The Saar vessels' 76mm guns are almost certain to have used British-made components because the Government had previously granted export licences specifically for them. It had also allowed exports of cabling for Saar-class ships and also components for radar which Mr Miliband acknowledged could be used for "fire control against surface targets" as well as its primary role in air defence.

The cancellation of the five licences follows a review started by the UK Government three months ago, in the aftermath of the Israeli offensive, of the 182 licences currently in force for arms exports to Israel.

The Israeli military acknowledges killing 1,166 Palestinians during the offensive, including at least 295 civilians, 49 of them women and 89 of them children under 16. Palestinian and other human rights groups put the total killed at up to 1,417, with a much higher proportion of civilians.

The revoked licences appear to involve the only military equipment directly exported from the UK to Israel identified as having been used during Operation Cast Lead. But Mr Miliband acknowledged in April that other British-made components had also been exported to US manufacturers of military equipment that was subsequently sold on to Israel.

Britain punishes Israel for Gaza naval bombardment

These included equipment for the avionics systems - specifically cockpit display units - for F16 aircraft, widely used during Operation Cast Lead for aerial bombing of targets in Gaza.

They also included parts used in the fire control systems of Apache helicopters, as well as navigation units and engine assemblies. Apaches were also regularly used in lethal air attacks during the Gaza operation.

There was a row in the British Cabinet at the peak of the Palestinian intifada during 2002 over the export of F16 avionic components. But although the then Blair government barred direct sales of F16 components to Israel, it continued to license the sale of parts to the US manufacturers on the grounds that it would disrupt Anglo-US relations not to do so.

Richard Burden, chairman of the Britain Palestine All-Party Commons Group, yesterday welcomed the decision to revoke the Saar licences and Mr Miliband's April announcement of a review of "all extant" military export licences in the light of Operation Cast Lead.

But he added that the criteria needed to be applied to indirect exports as well. "The vast majority of arms imports to Israel come from the US and unless any new policy addresses that issue it will simply not be effective."

Load-Date: July 13, 2009

End of Document

EX-REP. BACK AFTER WEEK IN ISRAEL JAIL

St. Petersburg Times (Florida)

July 9, 2009 Thursday

4 State / Suncoast Edition

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Section: NATIONAL; Pg. 5A

Length: 529 words

Body

Former U.S. Rep. Cynthia McKinney is back on U.S. soil after spending almost a week in an Israeli jail.

McKinney had been in custody since June 30, when she and 20 other members of the Free Gaza Movement were swept up by the Israeli navy while allegedly trying to sail through a navy blockade.

They had left Cyprus on the Greek-registered ship Arion with the intention of delivering humanitarian supplies to Gaza. Their ship was stopped when they tried to pass through the Israeli navy's security blockade at Ashdod. The ship was seized and they were taken into custody.

Gaza is controlled by **Hamas**, which the U.S. and European Union classify as a terrorist organization.

"The Israelis hijacked us because we wanted to give crayons to the children of Gaza," McKinney said in a statement posted on YouTube.

Friends met her at the airport and "they had a little ceremony for her in New York" before she traveled on to Washington to meet her son, who is starting law school there, said her father, former Georgia Rep. Billy McKinney.

Israeli officials promised to deliver the humanitarian supplies that were on the boat.

* * *

French lawmaker says burqaban doesn't have to be 'hasty'

French legislators took up the touchy subject of face-covering, body-length Muslim veils such as the burqa Wednesday, as a leading lawmaker softened his calls for an outright ban by suggesting the garments could be forbidden gradually. Conservative Jean-Francois Cope has called for a ban on the veils in France. But on Wednesday, he was quoted in Le Parisien as suggesting that any ban should not be "hasty." Instead, he suggested a two-stage effort, "a ban preceded by six months to a year of dialogue, explanation and warnings." He insisted that it's a "political debate, not a religious one." French President Nicolas Sarkozy said last month that burqas make **women** prisoners and that they would not be tolerated in France. An al-Qaida affiliate in Algeria has threatened attacks if they are banned.

* * *

N.J. man dies in 8-foot vat of chocolate

EX-REP. BACK AFTER WEEK IN ISRAEL JAIL

Authorities say a man died after falling into a vat of melted chocolate in a New Jersey processing plant. The Camden County prosecutor's office identified the victim as Vincent Smith II, 29. The accident happened Wednesday morning as Smith was loading chocolate into a vat where it's melted and mixed before being shipped elsewhere to be made into candy. Prosecutor's spokesman Jason Laughlin says a co-worker tried to shut off the machine and two others tried to pull Smith out of the 8-foot-deep vat. He was hit and fatally injured by the agitator that mixes the chocolate.

* * *

Bad brew leads to 43 deaths in western India

Tainted home-brewed liquor that poor workers living in slums drank over the weekend has left at least 43 dead in western India, police said Wednesday. Another 23 were battling for their lives in three hospitals in Ahmadabad, said S.S. Khandwawala, the director-general of state police. Deaths from drinking illegally brewed cheap alcohol are common in India, where few people can afford licensed liquor. Known locally as desi daru (THEY-see DAA-roo), illicit liquor is often spiked with pesticides or chemicals to increase its potency.

Graphic

PHOTO

Load-Date: July 9, 2009

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Israel blasted over drone strikes on Gaza civilians

Times of Oman

June 30, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 581 words

Byline: AFP

Body

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Load-Date: June 30, 2009

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Letters

The Jerusalem Post

December 20, 2009 Sunday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 14

Length: 1262 words

Byline: Henry Kaye, Marcella Wachtel, Prof. Hayim Granot, Cheryl Wadler Meskin, Rabbi Barry Schlesinger, Kate Hallgren, Dr. Lily Polliack, Yonatan Silver

Highlight: Readers' Letters

Body

Sauce for the gander

Sir, - Instead of running around like proverbial chickens with their heads chopped off, bemoaning the actions of the UK in allowing an arrest warrant to be issued for Tzipi Livni ("Outraged Jerusalem says Livni arrest warrant threatens ties with UK," December 16), why are the Jews of Britain not taking some solid action? After all, what's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. If a court will issue a warrant against her, the same rules can be applied against any number of other foreign leaders who have been involved in recent wars.

I'm sure that the British government's lack of action in the case of Livni will be rapidly eclipsed by the galvanization of its back bench once they realize that more than one set of players can play the same game and the warrants pile up.

HENRY KAYE

Mazkeret Batya

No warrior, but going the right direction

Sir, - Binyamin Netanyahu has taken an important, clearly defined step toward a solution in which both sides make compromises ("Rattling the Cage: How not to be a 'warrior for peace,'" December 17). The limited construction freeze gives the Palestinians an opportunity to take their long-awaited step toward peace. Netanyahu's move was not a grandiose gesture, but it was a concrete move in the right direction. One step, one promise kept, one small advance might finally end in a showing of real progress.

The article mentions Oslo as an example of... what, exactly? We are still suffering the effects of that one, just as we are still suffering the effects of Ariel Sharon's poorly thought-out decisions. The "peacemakers" Yitzhak Rabin, Sharon, Ehud Barak and Ehud Olmert didn't create any peace with their gestures and offers to the Palestinians.

On the other hand, in our successful peace with Egypt, Menachem Begin made the wise decision, painful though it was, to return the Sinai territory because such far-flung borders were impractical for us. Both sides had something to gain there. And that's the only way to make peace in real life.

Letters

Mr. Derfner ends his piece by advising us not to expect peace to be made by this prime minister from the Right. I seem to remember that the settler movement was put in place by a prime minister from the Left.

MARCELLA WACHTEL

Jerusalem

Cause and effect

Sir, - The report on child allowances seems to show that the researchers have fallen for the sophomoric error of mistaking correlations for cause and effect ("Child allowances strengthen Arab, haredi birthrates," December 17). As an undergrad, my first statistics assignment was to read *How to Lie With Statistics*. In it, the author points out that Brooklyn, New York, had the highest per capita number of churches and bars, trying to show cause and effect.

Family sociologists know that people have babies because of values - not because you give them money. The research findings in this study prove it: Secular families remain uninfluenced by changing child allowances.

The researchers' chronological findings have probably tapped into long-term changes taking place in both haredi and especially Arab family values in Israel.

PROF. HAYIM GRANOT

Petah Tikva

NBN is just 'far better'

Sir, - The two articles regarding Nefesh B'nefesh and the Jewish Agency really made my blood boil (Jewish Agency director-general: 'Nefesh B'Nefesh delegitimizing aliya from outside US' and "What American aliya?", December 16). Having made aliya from the US in December 2006, I can unequivocally state that had it not been for Nefesh B'Nefesh, and Nefesh B'Nefesh alone, our aliya process would have been the nightmare that my friends went through before NBN came into existence.

The Jewish Agency's Moshe Vigdor "praised Nefesh for being 'far better than us at marketing.'" Let me tell you from personal experience: NBN is "far better than us" at everything pertaining to aliya. How many pre-aliya meetings did the Jewish Agency set up for me to discuss job placement, kitchen appliances, what to expect upon landing or just simply life in Israel in general? After we made aliya, how many times did the Jewish Agency call me to see how things were doing? Not even once. To this day, I still get calls from the NBN office to see how our aliya is proceeding.

CHERYL WADLER MESKIN

Jerusalem

Outside the camp

Sir, - Rabbi Shlomo Amar's regrettable halachic decision regarding the burial of a conservative Jewish convert outside the borders of the Jewish cemetery in Madrid brings darkness to our Hanukka celebrations. How can a rabbi be so callous? There are rabbis and scholars who have taught us (Gittin 61a) that in the name of peace, we may even bury gentiles next to Jews. In addition, we have been taught (Brachot 43b) that one should enter a fiery furnace rather than embarrass another person. How humiliating it must have been for the Ben-David family, having been denied the elementary right to bury their son in the Jewish cemetery.

It's a sad day when the chief rabbi of Israel is insensitive to a Jewish family and disenfranchises them, placing them literally outside of the camp both in life and death.

RABBI BARRY SCHLESINGER

Letters

President of the Israeli

Rabbinical Assembly

Jerusalem

A halachic state

Sir, - How can Nahum Rakover say that it would be possible to run a modern state in accordance with Halacha when he admits that Halacha allows for women and non-Jews to be treated as second-class citizens ("Who's afraid of a halachic state?," December 11)? For instance, Rakover states that if witness are disqualified from testifying according to Jewish law (because they are women or non- Jews), "the two sides can agree to admit their testimony." That means that one side can object to their testimony on whatever grounds they like!

A modern and fair legal system would not allow the possibility of eliminating a witness's testimony on the basis of gender, race or nationality. That is called racism and sexism. Rakover also states several times that capital punishment is forbidden today in Jewish law. That doesn't mean Halacha wouldn't make violating Shabbat a crime subject to a severe punishment.

I think it speaks volumes that Rakover refused to answer questions about the appointment of women as judges in courts that rule exclusively in accordance with Halacha. As long as women are prohibited from such positions, women will never be able to participate fully or equally in society. All the laws impacting their lives will be decided, interpreted and imposed on them by men. That does not make for a fair or democratic country.

KATE HALLGREN

Jerusalem

Fly while you can

Sir, - In light of South Africa's growing animosity toward Israel and the Jewish people in general ("Row with South Africa over diplomatic passports for security guards may end EI Al flights to Jo'burg," December 16), my advice to South African Jewry is: Take EI Al flights while you still can!

DR. LILY POLLIACK

Jerusalem

Post-pourri

Sir, - In the last few days, I read of Hamas's reaction to a Miss Palestine contest ("Hamas raps Miss Palestine contest," December 13), wondered whether they would be less inclined to rap if they were exposed to the calming effects of Mozart ("Mozart music may help preemies gain weight, TA researchers find," December 14), was intrigued by joint Israeli-Saudi research ("Computer 'bot' problem sees TA University and Saudi researchers collaborating," December 14), and was concerned about our reputation of having more lawyers per capita than any other country in the world ("Time to raise the bar on lawyers," December 15).

These, and many other articles, make me pleased I get The Jerusalem Post every day.

YONATAN SILVER

Jerusalem

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Letters

End of Document

Letters

The Jerusalem Post

November 25, 2009 Wednesday

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Byline: Shlomo Feldman, David Star, Maurice Ostroff, Ben Gross, Thelma Susswein, Tova Wald

Highlight: Readers' Letters

Body

The fate of the nation - and our soldiers

Sir, - If it is true that Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu is agreeable to the prospect of releasing close to 1,000 terrorists, including the worst terrorists Israel has ever encountered ("Hamas confirms progress toward Schalit swap, but says 'it's too early to peak of an agreement,'" November 24), then we are inviting the next intifada into the streets of Israeli cities.

I wonder whether the prime minister will then show civil responsibility and resign in the wake of the disaster he will have brought with his own signature. Do we never learn from history? Would the USA release the 9/11 terrorists for a few US soldiers captured by al-Qaida? It seems we are losing our healthy survival instincts.

SHLOMO FELDMANN

Givatayim

Sir, - The debate over the fate of Gilad Schalit is heartrending. As the grandfather of 10 sabras plus two grandsons-in-law, I can imagine how precious Gilad is to his parents. Thus it is with a heavy heart that I oppose any prisoner swap.

Of those grandsons I mention, one is age 12, and another is due for induction into a combat unit in March. One is currently serving and is due to be discharged to the reserves in the same month, while another is a career officer. Another grandson is a married yeshiva student. The remaining grandsons all are reservists serving in combat units, including three in elite units.

If a prisoner swap goes through, they will all be in danger of the same fate as Gilad each time they are called to serve. Hamas has made no bones about their intent to kidnap others and to blackmail Israel.

DAVID STAR

Ma'aleh Adumim

A constructive reply

Letters

Sir, - I suggest that Mr. Leonard Zurakov reread my November 23 article "Gilo and the Green Line." Hopefully this will cause him to withdraw his incorrect statement that I said Gilo was not a settlement ("...Futilely attacked," Letters, November 24). I merely drew attention to the fact that it is a Jerusalem neighborhood with a population around 40,000, very different than the remote outposts in the West Bank. I pointed to the dictionary definition of a settlement and left it to the reader to categorize Gilo. Since Mr. Zurakov refers to a map, I suggest that he look at the map on my Web site, which clearly shows Gilo's location in southwest Jerusalem (<http://www.2nd-thoughts.org/id249.html>).

MAURICE OSTROFF

Herzliya

Commanders say jump, troops ask how high...

Sir, - Rabbi Stewart Weiss's article "For God - or country?" (November 24) raises the issue of obeying orders to dismantle a settlement. However, with all due respect to Rabbi Weiss (and I have a great deal of respect, as he has helped me with many personal issues), he says nothing new in his article. It is a brilliant piece of straddling the fence: on the one hand, but on the other hand. As someone who participated in the 2005 disengagement in Gush Katif and other places, I'd like to shine a slightly different light on the matter.

When your superior officer says jump, you ask how high. It's that simple. You should be 3 feet in the air before asking which direction you should be jumping in. That's what keeps an army ticking. You could like it or not like it. That's completely irrelevant.

When I was in basic training, we were sent off base for a week to stay in Latrun. There, we were given lessons in humanity, how to treat ourselves and others properly, regardless of race - how to be a mensch. The commanders and officers of the IDF all go through the same courses and the same seminars, and the same way we trust them with our sons' lives, we should trust that they can tell the difference between right and wrong. A commander or officer is chosen because he or she is deemed capable of shouldering the responsibility. A line soldier is not meant to think. As cruel and harsh as it sounds, most soldiers are there to fill the ranks; they are needed more for their accuracy with a weapon than for the validity of their arguments.

An IDF soldier is allowed to disobey a direct order on one condition only: If it is explicitly illegal - if it involves abusing the human rights on which our country was founded. In any other case, a soldier is expected to perform, and only afterward file a complaint through the proper authorities.

Unfortunately, and this is something many refuse to understand or accept, the great rabbis have no place when it comes to a question of this magnitude. When it comes to using the radio or driving on Shabbat, it is understandable and even commendable that they have worked to find loopholes. But even if they couldn't find the loopholes, the answer would still be simple: Get in the jeep, or go to jail. The needs of pikuah nefesh, of going on a patrol to protect others, supersede Shabbat. In the case of dismantling a settlement, it's a simple case of dina d'malchuta dina - the law of the land in which you reside is the law you must obey.

The government was elected by the people, for the people, and that includes every single soldier and every single rabbi. The same way we trust our commanders and officers to be responsible enough, so we should trust our leaders. Those leaders can be criticized, but their orders cannot and should not be pushed aside by a rabbi who has a following, no matter how large.

If you want to oppose something, do it in proper, legal ways: Stage a legal protest, raise a petition, give out fliers, etc. There are hundreds of options. But once we start breaking the law, no matter whose name it's in, the law is still broken.

BEN GROSS

Ra'anana

Letters

...But don't make them do the dirty work

Sir, - The issue of authorized or non-authorized settlements is constantly in the news. The nations of the world take great delight in deriding Israel for not forcibly evacuating the so-called unauthorized settlements ("Kouchner: Gilo regrettable, but won't stop the diplomatic process," November 19). The question of using soldiers to forcibly evict men, women and children is a moral one. Police should be used if the government feels that it must cave to international pressure.

Israel adheres to the highest moral codes in the world when it comes to its soldiers. Making soldiers do the dirty work of forcibly removing Israelis makes them party to many negative intentions and actions. This is not what an Israeli army should have to deal with, psychologically or physically.

The government should rethink its policy to arrive at the same sense of empathy and sympathy that we extend to anyone who loses a home.

THELMA SUSSWEIN

Jerusalem

Be a friend, America - free Pollard

Sir, - The continued incarceration of Jonathan Pollard is groundless and totally unjustified ("It's time for a fresh wind in the Pollard case," November 22). Pollard did not commit an act of treason for the benefit of an enemy. He leaked certain information to a friendly country. There has never been any question as to this relationship between Israel and the US. Pollard has paid the price for his actions with 25 years of his life that he can never reclaim.

The United States is the pinnacle of freedom and human rights. The Statue of Liberty in the New York harbor symbolizes these longstanding virtues. The United States, as our friend, should demonstrate mercy and compassion and effect this release now. We and our leaders have to be more forceful and insist on Pollard's rights - by petition, demonstrating or whatever it takes, He should be freed and allowed to come to Israel. Otherwise, how can we think of the United States as a friend?

TOVA WALD, Jerusalem

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World Report

Windsor Star (Ontario)

December 8, 2009 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Body

EUROPE

U.K.'S PM STRESSES AFGHAN RESOLVE

LONDON - British Prime Minister Gordon Brown pledged to "stay the course" in Afghani-stan on Monday as the British military death toll there this year reached 100.

A British soldier was shot dead in Helmand province, southern Afghanistan, on Monday, raising the total to 100 since January, the government said.

British troops have been involved in a U.S.-led assault on a Taliban stronghold in Helmand in the last few days.

ACTIVIST REFUSES TO END HUNGER STRIKE

LANZAROTE - A Western Sahara activist vowed Monday to push on with a three-week-old hunger strike at a Spanish airport to demand Morocco allow her to return home, despite pressure from Spain.

Aminatou Haidar has been consuming only sugared water since Nov. 16, days after Moroccan authorities denied her entry to her native Western Sahara, a disputed territory annexed by Morocco in 1975, allegedly confiscated her passport, and sent her back to Spain's Canary Islands.

The 42-year-old mother-of-two, who campaigns for the Western Sahara's independence from Morocco, is occasionally helped into a wheelchair to be taken to the toilet.

She appeared very weak and thin and spoke with a weak voice, but was still lucid and coherent.

NATO ALLIES AGREE TO TROOP SURGE

BRUSSELS - NATO allies have agreed to support the U.S. troop surge in Afghanistan with 7,000 more troops, the organization's Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said Monday.

And there would be more to come in 2010, Rasmussen added.

World Report

"On top of the 30,000 forces coming from the United States, NATO allies and partners have made pledges to add almost 7,000 extra forces to the mission," said a statement from Rasmussen released after a meeting of military leaders.

"There is now more work to be done to turn these basic figures into capability on the ground, and in particular to focus on the critical area of training the Afghan security forces," he said.

Military sources told AFP that France and Germany had nothing more to offer, at least not before the international conference on Afghanistan scheduled for Jan. 28.

A number of U.S. allies have promised to send extra troops to back U.S. President Barack Obama's new strategy to end the conflict in Afghanistan.

The 37,000-strong boost in troop numbers will bring the NATO-led ISAF force strength up to some 150,000 by 2010, of whom two-thirds are American.

UN COURT REJECTS KARADZIC CHALLENGE

AMSTERDAM - The UN criminal tribunal for former Yugoslavia on Monday rejected a motion by former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic challenging the legitimacy of the court to try him for war crimes.

Karadzic, facing 11 charges of war crimes arising from the 1992-95 Bosnian war, including genocide at Srebrenica, lodged a motion last month arguing that the court was a prosecuting organ of the U.N. Security Council.

The court said Karadzic's motion that the tribunal was not legally constituted was without merit and such a decision should not come as a surprise to him given the history of the case.

"The trial chamber wishes to emphasize to the accused, yet again, that his efforts and resources are best directed towards preparing for the resumption of his trial," the ruling said.

Karadzic, who faces life imprisonment in connection with such events as the 43-month siege of the Bosnian capital Sarajevo which began in 1992, has denied all charges and boycotted the first three days of his trial to demand more preparation time.

Since his arrival in The Hague in July 2008, Karadzic has argued he was promised immunity in a secret deal with U.S. peace envoy Richard Holbrooke on condition that he disappear from public life. Holbrooke has denied any such agreement.

The tribunal has also said such a deal, if it existed, would not limit the court's jurisdiction and opted to start the trial and appoint a defence lawyer. Karadzic has filed a motion to replace the counsel chosen for him.

HITLER SKULL FRAGMENT AUTHENTIC

MOSCOW - An officer with the Russian intelligence service the FSB on Monday dismissed a U.S. report suggesting a fragment of Hitler's skull held in Moscow is actually from a woman, insisting their relic is genuine.

"The FSB archives hold the jaw of Hitler and the state archives a fragment of Hitler's skull," said Vassili Khristoforov, head of the FSB archives, told Interfax.

"With the exception of these remains, seized on May 5, 1945, there exist no other bits from the body of Hitler," he added.

In September academics from the University of Connecticut said their DNA analysis showed the skull fragment to be that of a woman, aged between 20 and 40.

They did not test the jawbone.

World Report

The researchers had not approached the FSB archives about testing the jawbone, said Khristoforov.

"And even if they had the DNA of our fragments, with what could they then have compared it?" he asked.

"These remains are unique, there is nothing comparable. We are talking about the only evidence of this kind of the death of Hitler, and that is why the FSB had kept it in its archives."

Some Russian officials and scientists had in any case already expressed doubts about the skull fragment.

But the latest comments came against a background of doubts over what really happened in Berlin during the last days of the Nazi regime.

For decades, there has been speculation that Hitler might have escaped -- despite reports from both Soviet troops and British intelligence agents at the time that concluded that Hitler and his mistress Eva Braun died in the bunker.

NORTH KOREA URGED TO OPEN UP

GENEVA - North Korea on Monday faced a barrage of demands from western countries to open up to international organizations and independent monitors in order to improve the human rights situation there.

During a hearing at the UN Human Rights Council, countries including France, Australia and Britain called on Pyongyang to work with UN organizations and non-governmental organizations to help feed its population and provide essential aid such as medicines.

Others such as the United States also asked North Korea to grant access for the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and allow an independent assessment on the situation in the isolated country.

VIOLENCE ERUPTS AT ATHENS DEMO

ATHENS - Riot police clashed with stone-throwing youths in Athens on Monday as violence marred a second day of demonstrations held to mark the fatal shooting of a teenager by police a year ago.

Police charged the crowd with tear gas and made 21 arrests after scores of youths, some as young as 12, hurled stones at store windows and the security forces as some 5,000 demonstrators set off towards parliament.

Two of the youths were arrested earlier for pelting a police station with stones as thousands of students rallied to pay tribute to Alexis Grigoropoulos, who was shot dead at age 15 last year, a police source said.

Two other police stations in the suburbs of Agia Paraskevi and Kallithea were also pelted with debris, police said.

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SOUTH AMERICA

POLICE USED TOO MUCH FORCE

RIO DE JANEIRO - Brazilian police in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo "routinely" carry out unlawful executions, worsening a spiral of violence in the cities, the group Human Rights Watch charged Tuesday.

A forensic study of 51 suspect deaths by police found that at least 33 were likely examples of unjustified lethal force, the New York-based rights group said in a 122-page report to be released at a Rio press conference.

Seventeen of the cases "show that police shot their victims at point blank range," it said.

"The 51 cases do not represent the totality of potential extrajudicial killings, but are indicative of a much broader problem," the report added.

World Report

The study was released amid rising international concern about rampant crime in Brazil and the reliability of law enforcement as Rio prepares to host the 2016 Summer Olympic Games.

In October, Rio police launched a big operation against drug gangs that rule many of the city's slums after one of them shot down a police helicopter, killing three officers.

MILLIONS STOLEN DURING SOCCER FINAL

RIO DE JANEIRO - Thieves took advantage of Brazil's passion for soccer to steal about \$6 million from a cash delivery firm, as the nation was transfixed on championship games, media reported on Monday.

Police suspect the thieves tunneled into the firm's building in Sao Paulo and waited until Sunday afternoon, when the final games of the national championships were played, to break in and steal more than 10 million reais (\$5.7 million).

POLICE BREAK WORK VISA FRAUD RING

SAO PAULO - Brazilian police on Monday broke a vast international ring that netted \$50 million from applicants paying to fraudulently obtain U.S. work visas, U.S. and Brazilian officials in Sao Paulo said.

At least 11 people were arrested under 19 warrants issued in Brazil, Sao Paulo state prosecutors said in a statement.

The ring allegedly took up to \$15,000 per applicant on the promise to obtain an H-2B temporary work visa for them for the United States.

The U.S. consulate first detected fraud in the visa paperwork in 2003, launching a long joint investigation with Brazilian authorities called Operation Anarchy that involved wiretaps and a Brazilian undercover agent infiltrating the ring.

ARRESTS MADE IN 1982 ASSASSINATION

SANTIAGO - Chilean officials on Monday arrested six people, including four doctors, for their role in the alleged assassination in 1982 of former president Eduardo Frei Montalva, court sources told AFP.

Frei, the father of former president and current candidate for next Sunday's presidential elections, Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle, died from infection following what had begun as a routine surgery at a private clinic in Santiago.

The former Christian Democratic party leader's family is convinced he was victim of assassination by secret police operating under the 1973-90 military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet.

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MIDDLE EAST

SWINE FLU DEATHS REPORTED IN GAZA

GAZA CITY - A baby and two women have died in Hamas-run Gaza after contracting swine flu, the first deaths from the virus in the densely populated Palestinian territory, officials said on Monday.

Hassan Khalaf, a spokesman for the Hamas health ministry, declined to give details, but said there were four new cases on Monday of people infected with the disease in the Gaza Strip.

Khalaf added, however, that the condition of three of five people who had been confirmed on Sunday as having the virus was improving.

World Report

Those were the first of the A(H1N1) flu reported in Gaza, which Israel and Egypt have kept under a blockade, allowing in only essential humanitarian aid, since the Islamist **Hamas** seized power in June 2007.

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AFRICA

5.9 EARTHQUAKE HITS MALAWI

WASHINGTON - A magnitude 5.9 quake struck northern Malawi today, close to the Tanzanian border, the U.S. Geological Survey reported.

The quake, only 10 kilometres deep, followed a series of quakes in the same area, the uranium-rich Karonga district, for two days running.

The epicentre was 175 km north of Mzuzu, Malawi's third largest city, and 125 km southeast of the Tanzanian town of Mbeya.

There were no immediate reports of injuries or damage.

Authorities in Karonga were on high alert in the aftermath of the tremors, which on Sunday injured six people, two seriously, and caused extensive damage to houses, schools and some government offices.

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ASIA

CHINA SCHOOL STAMPEDE KILLS 8

BEIJING - Eight children died and 26 were injured in a stampede in a school stairwell in central China, local media reported today.

Students at the Yucai Middle School in Hunan province were leaving their classrooms after evening study on Monday when one tripped, setting off a deadly crush, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

Students at the school in Xiangxiang city were crowding the stairs, reluctant to step into heavy rain outside, state radio news reported.

Officials there told Xinhua the dead included seven boys and a girl aged from 11 to 14. Of the 26 injured, five were seriously hurt, said the report.

Thousands of people die in work, traffic and school accidents across China every year. But in a country where the government enforces a one-child policy in cities, the deaths of children can unleash especially volatile anger, often directed at officials.

Graphic

Photo: Hugh Gentry, Reuters; People walk along the beach as waves break along Waimea Bay on the North Shore of Oahu in Haleiwa, Hawaii on Monday. Waves up to 15 metres and bigger are expected through Wednesday.

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End of Document

Obama gets serious on Middle East

Weekend Australian

August 1, 2009 Saturday

2 - All-round First Edition

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Byline: GREG SHERIDAN FOREIGN EDITOR

Body

CAN Barack Obama really bring peace to the Middle East? In the past week Obama sent his Defence Secretary Robert Gates, National Security Adviser Jim Jones and Middle East envoys George Mitchell and Dennis Ross to Israel and other points in the Middle East. These visits may mark something of a turning point. They suggest Obama is moving beyond his role of psychotherapist to the Arab world and getting down to business.

I still don't think Obama will bring peace to the Middle East, but a few interesting things are going to happen in the next few months.

The Americans were notionally in Israel to discuss a freeze on Jewish settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories. But they also discussed Iran and Syria. They took a friendly and engaging tone with Israel. They know they are not going to get a complete freeze on the settlements, especially in East Jerusalem. They may get a temporary freeze that starts after existing building work is completed.

But the Americans are coming to realise they have oversold the settlements issue. It's not the roadblock to Israeli-Palestinian peace or the key to the Middle East. At most, it's a symbol. Obama is moving beyond symbols.

Here are three big dynamic-changers we'll get in the Middle East in the next few months.

* Decision time looms regarding Iran's nuclear ambitions. Obama has set a new tough deadline of September for a serious response to dialogue offer. The Iranian regime is weakened by the election it stole, but also enraged, savage, fearful and full of spite. It's not going to see its domestic humiliation replicated by the international humiliation of giving in to the Americans and Israelis on nukes. That means there will be tough sanctions against it or a military strike. Either way, it will mark a tough decision and the end of Obama's attempted universal love-in with all of America's enemies. Or, if the US response is meaningless, it will mark the beginning of a steep decline in Obama's international credibility.

* The international public face of the Israeli government will become friendlier. Controversial Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman will be indicted on corruption charges. He will then leave the government. Whether unfairly or not, he is a visual roadblock to a better look for Israel. With the Iran issue up for decision, Kadima leader Tzipi Livni, or some big faction of her party, may join Benjamin Netanyahu's government. This will make it easier for Obama to love the Israelis.

Obama gets serious on Middle East

* The emphasis will switch from the Israel-Palestinian track to the Israel-Syria track for possible peace talks. In some ways now is a good time to pursue Palestinian peace negotiations because all the Arab nations, except Syria, are scared of Iran and therefore would help the US. But in reality talk of a Palestinian peace is meaningless right now. Nearly half the Palestinian population is controlled by the ultra-rejectionist, terrorist death cult Hamas.

More important, perhaps, all of Israel's neighbours, including the Palestinians, are fed a diet of anti-Semitic propaganda and hate material. A permanent peace with Israel means an end to all territorial claims against Israel and the acceptance of Israel as a Jewish state. For the moment, that's impossible.

But the US has real business to transact with Syria. Above all it wants Syria not to interfere with Iraq. Syria-Israel negotiations could provide cover for the US's business with Damascus. Syria's motivation is that its economy is a basket case. It wants an end to US sanctions. But a comprehensive Israel-Syria peace deal is unlikely. The minority Alawite tribe that rules Syria bases its entire legitimacy and justifies its emergency rule (in place these many decades) by its conflict with Israel. One incentive for Syria to do a peace deal is to take back the Golan Heights, but these are of little significance in themselves to Syria and their possession by Israel gives Damascus all the benefits of a permanent complaint. But look at the negatives. Israel will not give back the Golan Heights just for a peace agreement with Syria.

There would need to be a strategic realignment. Damascus would have to stop supporting Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza, and would need to break with Iran. But Syria exerts regional influence only through its terror proxies and alliance with Tehran. Giving these levers of influence away is unlikely to look like a bargain to Damascus.

But engaging in a lengthy flirtation, a courtship destined never to be consummated, which allows all manner of minor functional co-operation, with reciprocal benefits, to take place -- that is a game Damascus understands.

Why do I say Obama has cast himself as psychotherapist to the Arab world? A key point of psychotherapy is for the therapist to enter with empathy into the world of the patient, even if that world is delusional.

You may remember the classic Cary Grant comedy, *Arsenic and Old Lace*. Cousin Teddy thought he was Teddy Roosevelt. Asking him to leave the room because he was embarrassing the guests never worked. Telling him he was needed in the White House in his bedroom upstairs produced instant results. To get him to co-operate, Grant had to enter his fantasy. This has been Obama's approach to the Arab world. Sadly, there are no Arab democracies (with the partial exception of Lebanon). The region's political culture is steeped in paranoia, conspiracy theories and a licence to blame Israel for everything.

In the soothing, therapeutic overtures Obama has made to the Arab world he has ambiguously embraced a good portion of the culture's irrationality. In his Cairo speech (which contained many good things) he repeatedly cited the inability, yes, inability, of Muslim women to wear the hijab as a terrible human rights violation and disrespect to Islam. But that is not remotely reality. In Saudi Arabia, in Iran for that matter, it is a serious crime with severe punishments for a woman not to wear the hijab. Hardly anywhere in the world (French public schools? Some Turkish offices?) are Muslim women prevented from wearing the hijab.

Thus, to enter into the Arab fantasy, Obama rebukes an imaginary world of conspiracies.

His whole riff on the Palestinians' situation being intolerable ignores far worse situations for Muslims in Chechnya or Xinjiang, or indeed for religious minorities, such as the Bahais in Muslim Iran. Making the Palestinian issue the central question of geopolitics validates a view of the world that exists only in minds untroubled by reality.

Similarly, Obama set the creation and sustenance of Israel entirely in the context of the European Holocaust. Yet Britain had been committed to a Jewish state in Israel decades before World War II. The Zionist movement had seen hundreds of thousands of Jews settle in Palestine before the war. The Jewish connection to Israel is undeniable. And Israel has a modern identity as the Middle East's only democracy. While Obama always speaks with sympathy and deep emotion about the Holocaust (a practice that endears him to American Jews), by casting

Obama gets serious on Middle East

Israel only within the context of the Holocaust he is again semi-validating a key line of Arab paranoia: that they are paying for the sins of the Europeans in the war.

Finally, Obama's obsession with settlements in the West Bank and even in East Jerusalem, as if the entire Middle East, no, the entire Muslim world, hinged on this minor matter, is in the deepest sense irrational.

All of this presumably served Obama's purpose of establishing a therapeutic bond between himself and the Muslim and Arab world. But it is time to move back to rationality. Entering a patient's fantasy life can be a helpful therapeutic tool, but it confuses other people who overhear you.

As he moves to a compromise with Israel on settlements, gets down to business with Syria and ultimately confronts Iran, Obama will sound less and less like a therapist and more and more like a President. Good thing, too.

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End of Document

Islamic terrorists find sanctuary in British campuses; Commentary

The Daily Telegraph (London)

December 28, 2009 Monday

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The Daily Telegraph

Section: NEWS; THE SYRINGE BOMBER; Pg. 6

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Byline: Douglas Murray The Centre for Social Cohesion

Body

FOR years, American counter-terrorism agencies have warned that the next attack on the US homeland would probably come from Britain.

On Christmas Day that prophecy was fulfilled, at least indirectly.

For the attempt to bring down Flight 253 from Amsterdam to Detroit appears to have come from a graduate of a British university.

Umar Farouk Abdul Mutallab studied at University College London for three years. He could hardly have found a place more conducive to his views.

British universities have been a hub of the global Islamic terror threat for more than a decade.

In the Nineties, the London School of Economics enrolled, among other future terrorists, Omar Sheikh. In 2002, he kidnapped and beheaded Daniel Pearl, the Wall Street Journal reporter.

In 2003, two students at Kings College London carried out a suicide mission at Mike's Place, a bar in Tel Aviv. There are many examples of Muslim students who have followed the same path - for whom British universities have provided an ideal environment to foster their violent opinions.

This is because university authorities refuse to admit they have a problem. In doing so, they have abandoned the duty of care they owe their students and the duty they owe the British taxpayers who pay their wages.

Before boarding the flight he hoped to bring down, Mutallab appears to have connected with a bombmaker from

al-Qaeda in Yemen. US authorities are speculating that he may have been linked to the extremist cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, a target of a US-backed air strike against al-Qaeda operatives in Yemen earlier this month.

It would not have been hard for Mutallab to have made the connection. It would have been done for him in London.

Islamic terrorists find sanctuary in British campuses Commentary

Awlaki, who was spiritual mentor to two of the September 11 hijackers and the doctor accused of shooting 13 people at the Fort Hood military base in Texas last month, has spoken several times on British campuses. He was advertised to speak at London University in 2003, the same year he was invited as the "distinguished guest" for the annual dinner of the Federation of Student Islamic Societies.

In 2006 he was advertised to speak at Westminster University.

Just last April he was due to speak at London's City University Islamic society by video link. It was only after the think tank I run contacted university authorities and put public pressure on them that his speech was cancelled.

In November, hijacked by a radical fringe of students, the LSE union voted to twin with the **Hamas**-founded Islamic University of Gaza.

Dr Ahmed Abu Halabiyah, the university's rector of Advanced Studies, says: "The Jews are the Jews. They are all liars. They must be butchered and they must be killed."

UCL, which Mutallab attended, has also become increasingly radical. Only a month ago I wrote to the president of UCL asking him why he had allowed Abu Usama to be invited to speak on campus.

Usama is a preacher who teaches that homosexuals and apostates should be killed and that **women** are mentally deficient. He also advocates violent jihad. Though that event at UCL was eventually cancelled, many others like it have not been. And so the hatred goes on.

As the case of Mutallab shows, jihadism is not the result of poverty or a lack of education.

Far from it. Mutallab's father is a rich banker and he received the best education the British taxpayer can buy.

Islamic extremism is an ideology. Yet at every level of British public life this is either denied or pandered to.

That ideology is not inbuilt. It is taught. That it is taught on our universities, at our expense, reflects a societal madness.

Load-Date: December 28, 2009

Obama gets serious on Middle East

Weekend Australian

August 1, 2009 Saturday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 21

Length: 1323 words

Byline: GREG SHERIDAN, FOREIGN EDITOR

Body

CAN Barack Obama really bring peace to the Middle East? In the past week Obama sent his Defence Secretary Robert Gates, National Security Adviser Jim Jones and Middle East envoys George Mitchell and Dennis Ross to Israel and other points in the Middle East. These visits may mark something of a turning point. They suggest Obama is moving beyond his role of psychotherapist to the Arab world and getting down to business.

I still don't think Obama will bring peace to the Middle East, but a few interesting things are going to happen in the next few months.

The Americans were notionally in Israel to discuss a freeze on Jewish settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories. But they also discussed Iran and Syria. They took a friendly and engaging tone with Israel. They know they are not going to get a complete freeze on the settlements, especially in East Jerusalem. They may get a temporary freeze that starts after existing building work is completed.

But the Americans are coming to realise they have oversold the settlements issue. It's not the roadblock to Israeli-Palestinian peace or the key to the Middle East. At most, it's a symbol. Obama is moving beyond symbols.

Here are three big dynamic-changers we'll get in the Middle East in the next few months.

* Decision time looms regarding Iran's nuclear ambitions. Obama has set a new tough deadline of September for a serious response to dialogue offer. The Iranian regime is weakened by the election it stole, but also enraged, savage, fearful and full of spite. It's not going to see its domestic humiliation replicated by the international humiliation of giving in to the Americans and Israelis on nukes. That means there will be tough sanctions against it or a military strike. Either way, it will mark a tough decision and the end of Obama's attempted universal love-in with all of America's enemies. Or, if the US response is meaningless, it will mark the beginning of a steep decline in Obama's international credibility.

* The international public face of the Israeli government will become friendlier. Controversial Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman will be indicted on corruption charges. He will then leave the government. Whether unfairly or not, he is a visual roadblock to a better look for Israel. With the Iran issue up for decision, Kadima leader Tzipi Livni, or some big faction of her party, may join Benjamin Netanyahu's government. This will make it easier for Obama to love the Israelis.

Obama gets serious on Middle East

* The emphasis will switch from the Israel-Palestinian track to the Israel-Syria track for possible peace talks. In some ways now is a good time to pursue Palestinian peace negotiations because all the Arab nations, except Syria, are scared of Iran and therefore would help the US. But in reality talk of a Palestinian peace is meaningless right now. Nearly half the Palestinian population is controlled by the ultra-rejectionist, terrorist death cult Hamas.

More important, perhaps, all of Israel's neighbours, including the Palestinians, are fed a diet of anti-Semitic propaganda and hate material. A permanent peace with Israel means an end to all territorial claims against Israel and the acceptance of Israel as a Jewish state. For the moment, that's impossible.

But the US has real business to transact with Syria. Above all it wants Syria not to interfere with Iraq. Syria-Israel negotiations could provide cover for the US's business with Damascus. Syria's motivation is that its economy is a basket case. It wants an end to US sanctions. But a comprehensive Israel-Syria peace deal is unlikely. The minority Alawite tribe that rules Syria bases its entire legitimacy and justifies its emergency rule (in place these many decades) by its conflict with Israel. One incentive for Syria to do a peace deal is to take back the Golan Heights, but these are of little significance in themselves to Syria and their possession by Israel gives Damascus all the benefits of a permanent complaint. But look at the negatives. Israel will not give back the Golan Heights just for a peace agreement with Syria.

There would need to be a strategic realignment. Damascus would have to stop supporting Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza, and would need to break with Iran. But Syria exerts regional influence only through its terror proxies and alliance with Tehran. Giving these levers of influence away is unlikely to look like a bargain to Damascus.

But engaging in a lengthy flirtation, a courtship destined never to be consummated, which allows all manner of minor functional co-operation, with reciprocal benefits, to take place -- that is a game Damascus understands.

Why do I say Obama has cast himself as psychotherapist to the Arab world? A key point of psychotherapy is for the therapist to enter with empathy into the world of the patient, even if that world is delusional.

You may remember the classic Cary Grant comedy, *Arsenic and Old Lace*. Cousin Teddy thought he was Teddy Roosevelt. Asking him to leave the room because he was embarrassing the guests never worked. Telling him he was needed in the White House in his bedroom upstairs produced instant results. To get him to co-operate, Grant had to enter his fantasy. This has been Obama's approach to the Arab world. Sadly, there are no Arab democracies (with the partial exception of Lebanon). The region's political culture is steeped in paranoia, conspiracy theories and a licence to blame Israel for everything.

In the soothing, therapeutic overtures Obama has made to the Arab world he has ambiguously embraced a good portion of the culture's irrationality. In his Cairo speech (which contained many good things) he repeatedly cited the inability, yes, inability, of Muslim women to wear the hijab as a terrible human rights violation and disrespect to Islam. But that is not remotely reality. In Saudi Arabia, in Iran for that matter, it is a serious crime with severe punishments for a woman not to wear the hijab. Hardly anywhere in the world (French public schools? Some Turkish offices?) are Muslim women prevented from wearing the hijab.

Thus, to enter into the Arab fantasy, Obama rebukes an imaginary world of conspiracies.

His whole riff on the Palestinians' situation being intolerable ignores far worse situations for Muslims in Chechnya or Xinjiang, or indeed for religious minorities, such as the Bahais in Muslim Iran. Making the Palestinian issue the central question of geopolitics validates a view of the world that exists only in minds untroubled by reality.

Similarly, Obama set the creation and sustenance of Israel entirely in the context of the European Holocaust. Yet Britain had been committed to a Jewish state in Israel decades before World War II. The Zionist movement had seen hundreds of thousands of Jews settle in Palestine before the war. The Jewish connection to Israel is undeniable. And Israel has a modern identity as the Middle East's only democracy. While Obama always speaks with sympathy and deep emotion about the Holocaust (a practice that endears him to American Jews), by casting

Obama gets serious on Middle East

Israel only within the context of the Holocaust he is again semi-validating a key line of Arab paranoia: that they are paying for the sins of the Europeans in the war.

Finally, Obama's obsession with settlements in the West Bank and even in East Jerusalem, as if the entire Middle East, no, the entire Muslim world, hinged on this minor matter, is in the deepest sense irrational.

All of this presumably served Obama's purpose of establishing a therapeutic bond between himself and the Muslim and Arab world. But it is time to move back to rationality. Entering a patient's fantasy life can be a helpful therapeutic tool, but it confuses other people who overhear you.

As he moves to a compromise with Israel on settlements, gets down to business with Syria and ultimately confronts Iran, Obama will sound less and less like a therapist and more and more like a President. Good thing, too.

Load-Date: July 31, 2009

End of Document

Secretary Clinton to the Fore

New York Observer

July 15, 2009

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Length: 1387 words

Body

This afternoon, in her most high-profile remarks yet in her capacity as secretary of state, Hillary Clinton articulated a sweeping view of United States foreign policy, from Iran to the Middle East to Europe. She argued that a greater emphasis on diplomacy, cooperation, and engagement, coupled with traditional power, would strengthen American interests and modernize global institutions in the 21st century.

In an hour-long speech and then a question-and-answer session at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington, Clinton peppered her remarks with personal notes last heard on the campaign trail. But she mostly focused on making the case for what she again called "smart power," a common sense approach to international affairs that stressed common interests even with countries less-than-sympathetic to the United States.

She said the administration did not have the luxury of avoiding "trying to do too much" because so many critical issues and conflicts hung in the balance, and that the United States needed to address the "urgent, important and the long-term all at once."

"We have the right president," she said, significantly, and "now all we have to do is iver."

Clinton made a point of lingering over some of the most tangled international conflicts and greatest obstacles to American security.

On Iran, Clinton said the administration happily watched the "energy" with which Iranians voted in presidential elections, but observed electoral "irregularities," and was then "appalled" by the violent crackdown that followed the demonstrations protesting the accounting of that vote.

As a result, she said, the Obama administration's invitation to greater dialogue between the two nations had been adversely affected.

"Prospects have certainly shifted in the weeks following the election," she said.

But she did not take the possibility of diplomatic engagement off the table, saying the Bush administration had essentially outsourced American foreign policy on Iran and suffered for it.

"I want to be in the middle," she said.

She addressed critics who have argued that the Obama administration's policy of engaging Iran is both naïve and dangerous by saying, "We know very well what we inherited with Iran," and acknowledged that Iran had failed to take positive steps to convince the international community that it was not seeking to build nuclear weapons. (Iran, she said, "doesn't have a right" to nuclear weapons.)

Secretary Clinton to the Fore

But Clinton argued that there was a benefit in purely offering to engage Iran, though she also argued that the time for action is now. The opportunity will not remain open indefinitely.

Later, during a question-and-answer session, she reiterated that point, saying, "This is not a door that stays open no matter what happens," but also refused to discuss, so as not to negotiate in public, what the United States would do if Iran did not positively engage, continued to seek nuclear power outside of the international framework, and generally continued to act in a way threatening to the United States and Israel.

On Israel, Clinton also broached the issue of settlement activity, a contentious subject that has led to sharp disagreements between the Israeli and United States governments, as well as fueling debate at home about Israeli policy.

"We have been working with the Israelis on the issue of settlements," she said, later refusing, again to avoid stepping on negotiations, to comment on whether the United States would now consider supporting settlement growth that had already begun to continue, which would undercut her previously unequivocal comments that all settlement growth had to stop.

The Obama administration has succeeded in convincing traditionally hawkish defenders of Israel here in the United States to cut it some slack in putting demands on Israel on the settlement issue, as long as the United States also required sacrifices and progress from the Palestinians.

Along those lines, Clinton was careful to add that "while we expect action from Israel, we respect that these issues are politically challenging."

Clinton, who was a dependable pro-Israel hawk during her tenure as a senator from New York, made clear that it was not up to the United States or Israel alone to bring peace to the region and called on Palestinians to refrain from any action that would make any meaningful negotiation less likely.

And she put the onus on neighboring Arab states to help foster peace in the region.

"The Saudi peace proposal was a positive step but we believe that more is needed," she said. "Sending messages of peace is not enough."

When asked about the administration's approach to Hamas, and whether it would consider bringing them into negotiations, she held fast to the quartet principle that Hamas needed to renounce violence, recognize Israel and hold to previously agreed upon treaties before they would be welcomed as a constructive partner.

More broadly speaking, Clinton said that the Bush administration's failure to live up to the nation's ideals in recent years had hampered its ability to lead, but "it is temporary," she said.

Then she provided what was intended as a blueprint for that new leadership.

She reasserted the centrality of American leadership in the world but emphasized solving problems in concert with other nations. Along with traditional issues in the portfolio of the secretary of state, including energy, nonproliferation, the defense of democracy and standing up for women's rights and human rights, Clinton included economic stabilization as part of her purview.

She said that NATO and other intergovernmental bodies would need to be "transformed and reformed" to meet the challenges of a much more globalized world, and argued that in order for institutions like the World Bank and groups like the G8 to remain relevant, they needed to fulfill to their commitments and perform better. She said that the United States needed to forge new and stronger partnerships with an array of nations, including Russia, Turkey, China and India, to face down economic problems, but also common threats like Al Qaeda, and cited President Obama's speech in Cairo as evidence of the administration's belief that the United States needed to reach out to the international grass roots and make its case directly with people of the world.

Secretary Clinton to the Fore

She spoke about the administration's commitment to "principled engagement" with nations that disagree with its policies, and said that telling "our partners to take it or leave it or insist that they are either with us or against us" amounted to diplomatic "malpractice."

Economic development and the dispatching of American civilians to improve conditions in conflict areas, she said, was critical to American foreign policy, though should not be misinterpreted as a softening commitment to use any means to protect American national security.

Clinton's speech, the first major address of her six months as the nation's leading diplomat, though not the face of its foreign policy-that has gone to Obama-also echoed some of the humanizing notes she developed on the campaign trail. She also showcased her biography more front and center than she has since Obama was inaugurated.

She said that as first lady and then a United States senator representing New York, she had had the opportunity to represent the United States around the globe for 16 years and had seen the "bellies of starving children," but also young girls sold to slavery, women denied property and rights, and men dying of treatable diseases.

But in a passage that may one day be viewed as early evidence that Clinton was using her present position to pave a future run for office, she also sought to tie American foreign policy, and its consequences, back to everyday Americans, "people who inspire me." She talked about parents struggling to pay the mortgage and health care, autoworkers in Detroit and farmers.

"Our foreign policy must produce results for people," she said.

A complete transcript of her remarks is here.

Load-Date: August 10, 2010

**Britain should urge implementation of report's recommendations following
Israel's attack on Gaza**

The Herald (Glasgow)

September 25, 2009 Friday

Final Edition

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The Herald

Section: FEATURES; Pg. 16

Length: 642 words

Body

WE WRITE further to Ruth Wishart's article ("Shooting the messenger won't help Israel", The Herald, September 23). It is more than a week since the eminent Justice Richard Goldstone presented his United Nations-commissioned report into Israel's 22-day attack on Gaza.

The British Government and others urged Israel to co-operate with the inquiry. Although Israel is a UN member state, it refused to do so. Surprisingly, our government has made no meaningful comment on this or on the outcome of the report.

We urge our government through the United Nations to support the Goldstone proposals and ensure that steps are taken to end the siege of Gaza.

The Israeli government has rejected the report, arguing bias. Justice Goldstone is a South African Jewish Zionist who opposed apartheid and was appointed to the country's Constitutional Court when apartheid was abolished. Denial of his and his team's independence is hardly a credible response to the evidence collected.

Justice Goldstone presents a clear case for charges of Israeli war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza, as well as evidence that war crimes were committed by Palestinian **Hamas**-armed groups. We remember, however, that nearly 1400 Palestinians were killed in this conflict, most of them civilians, including hundreds of children and **women**. Israel fatalities were four civilians and nine soldiers, four of whom died from "friendly fire".

Devastated houses, factories, schools, hospitals, police stations and other public buildings in Gaza remain as rubble because of the continuing Israeli-imposed blockade of Gaza. Even aid from the UK and other UN countries is only allowed to trickle in. Israel's acts deprive Gazans of their means of subsistence: employment, housing, food, water and freedom of movement. These, Goldstone reports, would lead a competent court to find the crime of persecution had been committed.

Justice Goldstone's team has recommended that the UN Security Council require Israel and the Palestinian authorities to report to it within the next six months on investigations and prosecutions resulting from the attacks on

Britain should urge implementation of report's recommendations following Israel 's attack on Gaza

Gaza. His team will monitor moves on this front and, should these experts find that independent proceedings in good faith are not taking place, the Security Council should refer the situation to the International Criminal Court.

Believing that strict implementation of international law is in the best interests of all peoples, we urge the British Government to press for full implementation of Goldstone's recommendations.

Dr Michael Marten, Lecturer in Postcolonial Studies, School of Languages, Cultures and Religions, Stirling University; and Douglas Callendar, Margaret Mungavin, Rev Clarence Musgrave, Alison Phillips, Dr Janet Powney, Wael Shawish and Rev Isabel Whyte.

LAST week in Cordoba, I visited the small mosque which is preserved in what was the Jewish quarter of the city before the expulsion of the Jews by Isabella. Our tour guide told us that many of the Jews who were expelled took with them the keys of their houses, hoping one day to be able to return.

I could not help thinking of the Palestinians expelled from Jaffa and towns throughout Palestine who kept the keys of their houses commandeered by Jewish colonists from America and Russia. Their hopes of return are equally chimerical.

The tragedy of Israel is not, as Mr M Green would claim (Letters, September 24), that it is under constant threat from the visceral hatred of Arabs.

It is not that the Israelis have not kept faith with promises about such matters as the expansion of illegal settlement (ultra Orthodox Jews, who are so influential in Israeli politics, hold that it is not binding to keep faith with goyim, or non-Jews) - the tragedy is that they have not kept faith with themselves and the values they claimed to embody.

J W Morrison, 9 Bryce Road, Currie.

Load-Date: September 28, 2009

Gay leader drinks to future with Merkel at Oktoberfest; Germany

The Times (London)

September 25, 2009 Friday

Edition 1, National Edition

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THE TIMES

Section: NEWS; Pg. 45

Length: 602 words

Byline: Roger Boyes

Body

An openly gay politician who can survive the brutish ribaldry of the Munich Oktoberfest should have little trouble sitting down with the likes of **Hamas**, Muammar Gaddafi or other tough negotiating partners.

Perhaps that was what was buzzing through Guido Westerwelle's mind yesterday as he sipped delicately from his litre of frothing beer, clearly wishing it was chilled prosecco.

Mr Westerwelle, leader of the Free Democrats (FDP), is the man tipped to be Angela Merkel's Foreign Minister.

The latest opinion polls suggest that a government coalition between her Christian Democrats and the smaller, liberal FDP could still be on the cards after the election on Sunday.

"It went well," said a spokesman for the party after Mr Westerwelle left the beer tent to address a rally in Munich. "Serious beer drinkers are also serious voters - and they want tax cuts as much as anyone else."

The FDP, currently polling 13 per cent, has centred its campaign around Mr Westerwelle. He has been touring the country with Hans-Dietrich Genscher, a former Foreign Minister of West Germany, to make a point: small parties with strong personalities can change the tone of government.

Sophisticated German voters, of course, already know this. What they have been uncertain about is whether a gay man, who sometimes takes his partner on official overseas trips, can function as a foreign minister. Could there, for instance, be snubs from President Ahmadinejad (who, after the execution of two gay men, told a Western audience: "We don't have homosexuals, as in your country."). Or jokes from Silvio Berlusconi (whose supporters recently used homosexuality claims to get rid of a critical editor)? In 2004, Mr Westerwelle decided that he should release more information about his sexuality, declaring that he was in a long-standing relationship with a sports events manager, Michael "Micky" Mronz. Last year, Mr Westerwelle went so far as to invite the press to photograph him meeting the mother of his partner, who described the politician as her "son-in-law".

Public attitudes to homosexual politicians have evolved over the past five years. Berlin and Paris gained openly gay mayors and Iceland claimed the first openly lesbian prime minister.

Gay leader drinks to future with Merkel at Oktoberfest Germany

"Some countries may have had a problem with Angela Merkel becoming the first **female** Chancellor," said Mr Westerwelle. "And naturally she doesn't wear a veil when she visits certain Arab states." It was up to the outside world to accept German representatives "based on our own political and moral standards," he said.

But the challenge is persuading conservative German voters that family values are not being undermined. Hence the visit to the Oktoberfest.

The three-week festival attracts six million visitors a year and is viewed by many as a celebration of beer-slurping masculinity. Waitresses are groped, children are conceived and fathers take their sons to the festival on the assumption that four or more litres of beer represents a male rite of passage.

The Oktoberfest though, has been moving with the times, with a tent set aside for gays on the first Sunday. A special section is reserved for those conforming to a fetishist dress code including leather (all-body, rather than the traditional Lederhosen), rubber and traffic cop uniforms. There are also gay evenings in which a transvestite singer yodels to an oompah band. This tent - indeed, all the Oktoberfest tents - have been doing roaring business this year, which is seen by many as a sign of returning confidence in the German economy.

Leading article, page 2

Guido Westerwelle is tipped to become the next Foreign Minister

Load-Date: September 25, 2009

Straw, Muslims and the 'safe' seat

Asian Image

October 8, 2009

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Section: COLUMNISTS

Length: 583 words

Byline: Bano Murtuja

Body

Its party conference season - and for once Politicians are everywhere to be seen.

Typical isn't it? Elections come around and politicians rear their ugly heads (not literally of course).

The Labour party conference reared an uglier head than usual this year; Ehud Barak, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence for Israel.

It was Barak who oversaw the merciless bombings of the Gaza strip. This is the man our Prime Minister invited to the party conference, that spoke at the conference, that lunched with our PM.

The same man that is quoted as saying "If we thought that instead of 200 Palestinian fatalities, 2,000 dead would put an end to the fighting at a stroke, we would use much more force...." (Associated Press, 2000).

The same man that approved 500 new illegal Israeli settlements in September 2009 that Mr Brown has apparently called an end for.

This is the same man that families of those killed in Israel's vicious and inhumane bombings earlier this year, sought to have arrested on war crimes.

The precedent for such action was set when Omar al-Bashir, the Sudanese President was arrested last year for war crimes in a similar fashion. But of course al-Bashir wasn't Israeli, and Barak isn't Sudanese (are you feeling as ill as I am yet??).

As morally abhorrent as the double standards applied to Barak, and the rest of the Israeli elite are, we need to look closer to home.

The party conference Barak was invited to is the very same conference set to renew and reinvigorate the sinking ship that is a Labour government.

Earlier this year the residents of Blackburn turned out in force to have our voices heard, to tell the world we would not sit back and let what was happening in Gaza go un-noticed.

The cynical part of me thinks we were motivated by a desire to make ourselves feel good, to show the world we cared; that in reality, we just didn't want it in our back yard...

Straw, Muslims and the 'safe' seat

Early last week Goldstone, a South African judge that is the UN investigator into the events in Gaza accused Israel of war crimes.

The report was opposed by the US and European countries (surprise surprise). Now our government is dining with the devil. Milliband claims Barak is democratically elected, so he is happy to receive him...hmmm...so are members of Hamas (!!).

For years, our town has reinforced and voted in Jack Straw, making Blackburn a so called 'safe seat' for Labour.

No More. Labour have failed, morally, socially, economically. And its time to drive the message home.

Our consistent vote to Jack Straw runs counter to every objection we raise against this government. This is the very same Jack Straw who bought Condoleza Rice to Blackburn at the height of the (illegal?) Iraq war.

The same Jack Straw who said the Muslim face veil prevented integration when two women came to see him at his constituency office to participate in the democratic process (ironic much?).

And not to mention, Jack Straw, whose company may lead you to be considered an extremist, apparently he is not so good for the image anymore ;-). Whatever your personal views on Jack (and I have never met the man, since he didn't actually have the bottle to meet Muslim women when he 'explained' his comments on the veil, meeting only with the men) the fact is, if you vote for him, you vote for Labour. Labour. Whose party conference invitations said it all.

Its time the Blackburn vote stood up and was counted. Its time Blackburnians stood up and were counted. Lets tell them we are not so 'safe' a seat. Lets Know. Lets Comment.

Load-Date: October 24, 2009

Gay leader drinks to future with Merkel at Oktoberfest; Germany

The Times (London)

September 25, 2009 Friday

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THE TIMES

Section: NEWS; Pg. 10

Length: 602 words

Byline: Roger Boyes

Body

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The FDP, currently polling 13 per cent, has centred its campaign around Mr Westerwelle. He has been touring the country with Hans-Dietrich Genscher, a former Foreign Minister of West Germany, to make a point: small parties with strong personalities can change the tone of government.

Sophisticated German voters, of course, already know this. What they have been uncertain about is whether a gay man, who sometimes takes his partner on official overseas trips, can function as a foreign minister. Could there, for instance, be snubs from President Ahmadinejad (who, after the execution of two gay men, told a Western audience: "We don't have homosexuals, as in your country."). Or jokes from Silvio Berlusconi (whose supporters recently used homosexuality claims to get rid of a critical editor)? In 2004, Mr Westerwelle decided that he should release more information about his sexuality, declaring that he was in a long-standing relationship with a sports events manager, Michael "Micky" Mronz. Last year, Mr Westerwelle went so far as to invite the press to photograph him meeting the mother of his partner, who described the politician as her "son-in-law".

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Guido Westerwelle is tipped to become the next Foreign Minister

Load-Date: September 25, 2009

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But the challenge is persuading conservative German voters that family values are not being undermined. Hence the visit to the Oktoberfest.

The three-week festival attracts six million visitors a year and is viewed by many as a celebration of beer-slurping masculinity. Waitresses are groped, children are conceived and fathers take their sons to the festival on the assumption that four or more litres of beer represents a male rite of passage.

The Oktoberfest though, has been moving with the times, with a tent set aside for gays on the first Sunday. A special section is reserved for those conforming to a fetishist dress code including leather (all-body, rather than the traditional Lederhosen), rubber and traffic cop uniforms. There are also gay evenings in which a transvestite singer yodels to an oompah band.

This tent - indeed, all the Oktoberfest tents - have been doing roaring business this year, which is seen by many as a sign of returning confidence in the German economy.

Leading article, page 2

Guido Westerwelle is tipped to become the next Foreign Minister

Load-Date: September 25, 2009

Talks on the Middle East - Correction Appended

The Irish Times

August 31, 2009 Monday

Correction Appended

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 15

Length: 506 words

Body

THERE IS a whiff of talks in the air. Or that's the consensus that emerged last week among observers though not yet the principals from the smoke and mirrors that is the world of Middle East diplomacy. All being well, on the fringes of the UN General Assembly next month, US president Barack Obama will be able to announce that Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas will sit down to talks.

Those seem to be signals emanating from last Wednesday's London meeting between Mr Obama's special Middle East envoy, senator George Mitchell, and Mr Netanyahu. Mr Mitchell is due to go to Jerusalem in a fortnight to finalise an agreement on both an Israeli settlement freeze and the consequent reigniting of direct peace talks.

The Palestinian Authority leadership has been refusing to talk to Mr Netanyahu ahead of a commitment to the suspension of settlement building in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Now Mr Netanyahu seems willing to commit himself to a temporary suspension of the building programme in the West Bank. The US State Department was anxious last week to distance itself from widely reported and credible suggestions that Mr Mitchell has accepted a nod-and-a-wink arrangement with Mr Netanyahu that would leave East Jerusalem out of any settlement freeze, and settle for a nine- to 12-month freeze in the West Bank that would also allow the completion of some 2,500 apartments on which building work has already begun.

The US is stressing that it is not setting preconditions and that it will be up to the parties to determine for themselves whether their own thresholds have been met. Mr Netanyahu is still publicly playing hard to get, not least to keep his hard-line coalition partners on side, but is thought amenable, particularly if he can secure a deal with ***Hamas*** ahead of New York to free imprisoned Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. There have been signs in Cairo talks that this may be possible. The Israeli prime minister is also trying to link any agreement to talks to a possible security council decision to step up sanctions against Iran over its nuclear programme.

The energy and compromises required just to get Mr Netanyahu and Mr Abbas to the table do not bode well for what will happen when the two leaders actually meet, despite the former's recent acknowledgment of the desirability of a two-state solution. At any talks the issue of not just freezing settlements but reversing the so-called facts on the ground will prove hugely difficult, not to mention the hoary old final status issues of borders, Jerusalem and the right of refugees to return.

The US seems to be committed, however, to the Palestinian insistence that talks immediately tackle those core issues. And it does not accept Mr Netanyahu's precondition on such an agenda that requires that the Palestinians accept not only Israel's right to exist, but its right to exist as a Jewish state.

Though still massively problematic, it is to be hoped that we are seeing a window of opportunity.

Correction

A report on the McCluskey Civil Rights Summer School in yesterday s edition stated that Susan McKay, chairwoman of the National Women s Council, complained there was an effective loss of 35 per cent of the council s resources in real terms . Ms McKay was referring to the Irish Commission on Human Rights and not the National Women s Council.

Correction-Date: September 1, 2009

Load-Date: August 31, 2009

End of Document

B'Tselem: 773 of the Killed in Operation Cast Lead Did Not Take Part in Hostilities

Palestine News & Information Agency (WAFA)

September 9, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 619 words

Body

TEL AVIV, September 9, 2009 (WAFA)- Israeli human rights group B'Tselem said the number of Palestinians and Israelis killed in Operation Cast Lead in the Gaza Strip is 1,387 Palestinians during the course of the three-week operation.

Of these according to , B'Tselem report, 773 did not take part in the hostilities, including 320 minors and 109 women over the age of 18.

Of those killed, 330 took part in the hostilities, and 248 were Palestinian police officers, most of whom were killed in aerial bombings of police stations on the first day of the operation. For 36 people, B'Tselem could not determine whether they participated in the hostilities or not.

Palestinians killed 9 Israelis during the operation: 3 civilians and one member of the security forces by home made rockets fired into southern Israel, and 5 soldiers in the Gaza Strip. Another 4 soldiers were killed by friendly fire, the report said.

B'Tselem's figures, the result of months of meticulous investigation and cross-checks with numerous sources, sharply contradict those published by the Israeli military.

Israel stated that 1,166 Palestinians were killed in the operation and that 60% of them were members of Hamas and other armed groups.

According to the military, a total of 295 Palestinians who were "not involved" in the fighting were killed. As the military refused to provide B'Tselem its list of fatalities, a comparison of names was not possible. However, the blatant discrepancy between the numbers is intolerable.

For example, the military claims that altogether 89 minors under the age of 16 died in the operation. However, B'Tselem visited homes and gathered death certificates, photos, and testimonies relating to all 252 children under 16, and has the details of 111 women over 16 killed.

B'Tselem: 773 of the Killed in Operation Cast Lead Did Not Take Part in Hostilities

Behind the dry statistics lie shocking individual stories. Whole families were killed; parents saw their children shot before their very eyes; relatives watched their loved ones bleed to death; and entire neighborhoods were obliterated.

The extremely heavy civilian casualties and the massive damage to civilian property require serious introspection on the part of Israeli society.

B'Tselem recognizes the complexity of combat in a densely populated area against armed groups that do not hesitate to use illegal means and find refuge within the civilian population.

However, illegal and immoral actions by these organizations cannot legitimize such extensive harm to civilians by a state committed to the rule of law.

The extent of civilian fatalities does not, in itself, prove that Israeli violated the laws of war. However, the figures must be considered within the context of the numerous testimonies given by soldiers and Palestinians during and after the operation, which raise grave concerns that Israel breached fundamental principles of international humanitarian law and caused excessive harm to civilians.

The magnitude of this harm requires Israel to conduct an independent and credible investigation, and not make do with military debriefings.

Shortly after the operation, B'Tselem published guidelines for such an investigation and sent the Judge Advocate General's Office some twenty illustrative cases, in which a total of about 90 Palestinian civilians were killed, demanding that they be investigated.

B'Tselem's list of fatalities in Operation Cast Lead has been sent to the Israeli army Spokesperson's Office for comment.

B'Tselem noted that the organizations that participated in the statement: The Association for Civil Rights in Israel, Bimkom, B'Tselem, Gisha, Physicians for Human Rights, Adalah, Yesh Din, HaMoked, Center for the Defense of the Individual, Public Committee Against Torture in Israel, Rabbis for Human Rights

Load-Date: April 21, 2010

PALESTINIANS LOSING FAITH IN OBAMA'S PEACE DRIVE

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

November 27, 2009 Friday

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Length: 1401 words

Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Nov. 27 -- November 29 marks the international day of solidarity with the Palestinians. As this day nears, hope of an independent Palestinian state emerging during United States President Barack Obama's first term in office is fast diminishing. Even Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has lost faith in the US-mediated peace process.

To mark the international day of solidarity with the Palestinians, Abbas fired out a note to the UN, expressing his disappointment with peace talks. He said: "It is time, after all of these years of negotiations that have not yielded results, for the international community, particularly the Security Council, to shoulder its responsibilities and to take immediate and decisive action that reflects the positions of the countries of the world, which have repeatedly called for the two-State solution and an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967, to bring an end to this conflict."

Abbas remained an optimist though he knew the compromise after compromise he made had not gone down well with the Palestinians.

But now Abbas says he wants to quit as president of the Palestinian Authority as his faith in peace efforts has taken the Palestinians nowhere. He now moots the idea that the Palestinians should declare unilateral independence of their state within the borders that existed in 1967. It has dawned on him now that the US is not the honest broker that it is claiming to be.

He apparently feels, like many Palestinians, that President Obama lacks the power to dictate to Israel.

After the setting up of Israel in 1948, no US President had defied Israel. Some of them willingly cooperated with Israel and the America-Israeli Public Affairs Committee, the powerful Zionist lobby in the US. George W. Bush who visited West Asia with war and destruction was one of them.

There were other US Presidents who were forced to toe the Israeli line though they personally disliked pressure from the Zionist lobby. They included Presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton. President Jimmy Carter realized that Israel had misled him only when he became a peace activist after he lost the election to pro-Israeli Ronald Reagan. Eisenhower had the courage to warn Britain, France and Israel during the Suez War in 1956; Kennedy had harboured a grudge against the Israeli lobby, which told him bluntly that if he wanted funds for his election campaign he should agree to leave foreign-policy making with regard to Israel and the Arab world to the lobby. Two years into his presidency, Kennedy was assassinated. Mystery shrouds his death as to why he was killed and who was behind it. In 1974, Nixon was to announce a major foreign policy shift in favour of the Arab world, but he was forced to resign over the Watergate scandal.

PALESTINIANS LOSING FAITH IN OBAMA'S PEACE DRIVE

Like Kennedy, President Clinton also felt humiliated. During a visit to Israel as a second term president, Clinton did not like the way Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu lectured to him on what he should do.

In remarks to one of his colleagues, an angry Clinton is reported to have said: "Who the f*** does he think he is? Who's the f***ing superpower here?"

BBC correspondent Jeremy Bowen recalled this famous Clinton quote in an article he wrote for the BBC website on Saturday. Some believe that Clinton's Monica Lewinsky saga was a Zionist-neocon conspiracy. Even his wife, Hillary, now the US Secretary of State, said it was a rightwing plan.

Well, where does Obama fit in? Is he a President who willingly submits to Israel?

Obama the human being must be capable of seeing right from wrong. But Obama the US president has no such free will to stand by what is right. For 61 long years the Palestinians have been undergoing the humiliation of living under foreign occupation. Whatever the land that was left with them after the UN partitioned the former Ottoman province of Palestine in 1948 keeps on shrinking - with Israel expanding its illegal settlements taking more and more Palestinian land.

Obama in his Cairo speech to the Muslim world in June declared that the US wanted Israel to freeze all settlement expansions in the occupied Palestinian territories. He did mean it and made it a condition for talks with Israel. But when Netanyahu visited the United States in September, Obama was forced to eat the humble pie. He waived the condition and held extensive talks with the visiting hardline Israeli leader. Obama met Netanyahu early this month also, despite the fact that the Israeli leader had added fresh conditions to resume the peace talks. Netanyahu now insists that the Palestinians should recognize Israel as state for the Jewish people, if they want the peace talks resumed. If Abbas agrees, it would mean that 20 percent or more Arabs living in Israel will face eviction or lose their Israeli citizenship. But such a preposterous condition drew very little condemnation in Obama's United States, Gordon Brown's Britain, Nicolas Sarkozy's France or Angela Merkel's Germany.

Even when Israel began construction work for a 900-unit housing project for Jewish settlers in the occupied Jerusalem last week, only muted or skillfully regulated condemnation came out from Western capitals.

But when Israel this week agreed to halt the settlement expansion work for ten months, the US hailed the announcement as a move forward.

The Obama administration said the 10-month moratorium fell short of the complete freeze but it was an opportunity for Israel and the Palestinians to resume peace talks.

US West Asia envoy George Mitchell said that while the United States shared Arab concerns about the limitations of Israel's gesture, it was more than any Israeli government had ever done.

The tone of the US comments exposes its bias and shows that Obama is also going the way the previous US presidents have gone - pleasing Israel, no matter how serious the crime is. The Goldstone report on Israeli war crimes in Gaza is another case in point that illustrates the Obama administration's diehard commitment to defend Israel. Susan Rice, the United States' UN envoy who was known for her crusade to bring Sudan to justice with regard to war crimes in Darfur, vowed to defeat any move aimed at censuring Israel on war crimes in Gaza.

There was also no condemnation or a call for probe from Obama or his Western allies when it was alleged that Israel robs organs of the Palestinians who die in custody or were killed in riots. There was also no expression of shock when the Palestinians claimed that hundreds of women who inhaled white phosphorous gas during the Gaza attack had given birth to deformed children.

The continued detention of 13,000 Palestinian prisoners without trial in Israeli prisons is another issue that the Obama administration has failed to condemn. A few hundreds of them will be released in the coming days in exchange for Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, who has been in Hamas custody since 2006.

PALESTINIANS LOSING FAITH IN OBAMA'S PEACE DRIVE

Needless to say, the Palestinians are disappointed. They see that whenever US-Israeli talks are held what dominates is Iran's nuclear dispute - not the Palestinian independence. This, they say, is a ruse to prolong the crisis. As the crisis drags on, Israel seizes more Palestinian land and builds more illegal settlements. This has become one of the main obstacles to Palestinians realizing their dream of state. As the Palestinian land shrinks, the West Bank will also become a Bantustan like Gaza, while Obama and his successors will continue to describe Israeli action as a move forward for Palestinian statehood.

As part of its strategy, Israel also has engineered inter-Palestinian disputes between Abbas's Fatah movement and the **Hamas** administration in the Gaza Strip.

Amid this dispute, Abbas has called for presidential and legislative elections on January 24. Talks aimed at restoring Palestinian unity are also due next week in Cairo. But the Palestinian people are not optimistic. They feel that with the Obama administration sucking up to Israel and the Zionist lobby, they are once again at crossroads. They need a new strategy. But what could this strategy be? They were told to give up violence and turn to peace. But peaceful means also have not taken them to their destination. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Load-Date: November 27, 2009

Holocaust survivor begins hunger strike in Cairo, demands Egypt allow activists into Gaza. Galloway leads similar group stuck in Aqaba

The Jerusalem Post

December 29, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 649 words

Byline: E.B. SOLOMONT, Jerusalem Post correspondent

Body

NEW YORK - An 85-year-old Holocaust survivor launched a hunger strike in Cairo on Monday, as she and hundreds of other activists sought entry to Gaza for a solidarity march.

American Hedy Epstein and some 1,400 participants in the Gaza Freedom March planned to travel to Gaza this week, to press Israel to lift its blockade on the anniversary of last year's IDF offensive against Hamas in Gaza. Delegates from 42 countries were stopped in Cairo and denied entry via the Rafah crossing by Egyptian authorities.

"I started this morning, and I've been drinking water," Epstein told The Jerusalem Post at around 4:30 p.m. local time by telephone from Cairo, where participants gathered to await passage to the Rafah crossing and Gaza. Saying she would drink orange juice if she felt weak, Epstein said that so far, she was "feeling fine."

A longtime civil rights activist, she added: "I've come to a point in my life where I think I need to do something else to [draw] attention."

Epstein, who was born in Germany, fled the Nazis on a Kindertransport at age 14 and lived in England during World War II. Her parents died in the Holocaust.

"I am a survivor of the Holocaust," she said. "It's not the same experience as mine, but suffering is suffering," she said of the people living in Gaza. "When people are suffering, it comes upon the rest of us to try to do whatever we can."

Organizers of the march, including American NGO Code Pink: Women for Peace, held a news conference on Monday at the United Nations building in Cairo. Participants, including novelist Alice Walker and Philippine Senator Walden Bello, pledged to press forward into Gaza. "We'll get to Gaza," Bello told the crowd.

Earlier this month, citing tension at the border, Egyptian authorities informed organizers that the Rafah border would be closed into January, according to organizer Medea Benjamin. But in an article published by The Huffington Post Web site, she said the mission would not be dissuaded.

"Because of the incredible humanitarian crisis in Gaza caused by the Israeli attack on Gaza a year ago and by the international siege on Gaza, we feel morally obligated to continue our mission to bring more international attention to the plight of the 1.5 million people imprisoned here," she said.

Holocaust survivor begins hunger strike in Cairo, demands Egypt allow activists into Gaza. Galloway leads similar group stuck in Aqaba

Acknowledging the "setback," Benjamin cited previous delegations that were permitted to pass through after public and political pressure. She said activists would flood embassies, missions and other Egyptian governmental offices with calls, faxes and e-mails.

"We're all slightly disappointed. We thought we'd be crossing into Gaza tomorrow," said Max Ajl, a media coordinator for the march. Ajl said delegates had hoped to be in Gaza by Tuesday, and that there was still a possibility they'd get there eventually, citing support from US lawmakers, including, he said, from Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts. In a December 23 letter not addressed to any one party, the senator expressed "strong support for the humanitarian delegation" traveling from his state.

According to Ajl: "We are delayed, we are stalled, but we think we can get moving again."

In the meantime, citing security concerns, Egyptian authorities have beefed up security along the bank of the Nile river, where hundreds of protesters gathered, and along the road to the Rafah border crossing, according to news reports. Ajl said plainclothes and uniformed security officers surrounded hundreds of activists at the UN building on Monday.

"Measures have been tightened along the road from Cairo to Rafah to prevent activists from the Gaza Freedom March from staging the march," a security official told AFP.

Separately, more than 400 members of a group saying they are carrying humanitarian supplies to Gaza are in Aqaba, after being denied entry into Egypt. Led by British politician George Galloway, members of the Viva Palestina convoy began a hunger strike on Sunday.

Graphic

Photo: AN EGYPTIAN soldier stands behind a Gaza Freedom March activist in Cairo yesterday. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Why it is essential for us to stand up to bigots

The Toronto Star

December 10, 2009 Thursday

Copyright 2009 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: OPINION; Pg. A23

Length: 682 words

Body

Last winter, the Israelis attacked minarets in Gaza. Last month, the Swiss voted to ban non-existent minarets.

The reasons proffered in both cases were patently false.

Bombed Gaza mosques probed by Justice Richard Goldstone were found not to have been hiding **Hamas** arms or militants.

Minarets are definitely not proliferating in Switzerland, there being only four in a nation with 350,000 Muslims - most of them refugees, ironically, from European ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Kosovo.

Minarets - aesthetically as pleasing or irritating as steeples, pagodas or onion domes - are a symbol of Islam. Those targeting them may use different methods but their mission is the same.

Thus the near-universal condemnation of the Swiss vote, including by the Canadian Jewish Congress. And calls for a consumer boycott of Nestle, Credit Suisse, etc., as well as a tourist boycott of Switzerland.

Thus also the rejection of attempts to downplay the vote as a harmless exercise that won't limit the practice of Islam, a mere manifestation of an identity crisis amid Europeanization/globalization.

Equally, there's little traction for the argument by some Muslims that they should be explaining Islam better, as though good PR is the antidote to xenophobia and hate.

There's no sugar-coating what has transpired: Swiss church spires won't come down but minarets won't go up. Churches will continue to dominate the Swiss landscape but mosques must remain hidden.

Such Muslims-only rules, so reminiscent of some Nazi laws against Jews, have been popping up across Europe - and Canada:

German restrictions on mosques; the French ban on the hijab in schools; Canadian bans in soccer and tae kwon do tournaments; Nicolas Sarkozy's proposal to ban the niqab; Ontario's hysteria over letting Muslims use the Arbitration Act or having their religious schools funded; and Stephen Harper's bid to ban niqabi **women** from voting (while ignoring the 70,000 who cast absentee ballots in the last election without showing their faces).

While Europeans and North Americans have learned not to invoke free speech to peddle anti-Semitism, they routinely cite it to rationalize anti-Islamism (the Danish cartoons, and the tirades of Maclean's magazine, the National Post, etc.)

Why it is essential for us to stand up to bigots

We are witnessing a strange phenomenon - again, akin to the 1930s - wherein a majority feels threatened by a minority, to the point of becoming blind to the most obvious answer to the oft-asked question of the day: how far to go in "accommodating" Muslims? No farther than for any other group and only as far as the rule of law permits.

The public seems equally oblivious to the fact that the fallout of prejudice has been hurting not just Muslims but mostly others:

It is Christians and Jews who lost out on religious arbitration because of the "sharia" controversy.

Protestant, Jewish, Hindu, Sikh and other separate schools got side-swiped because of public opposition to "madrassas."

Jews, homosexuals and other vulnerable groups may find it harder to use the anti-hate provisions of human rights codes.

I remain agnostic on all three issues - but not about the irrationality they've engendered and the road kill they've produced.

To offer yet another example, Jews in Quebec, a well-integrated minority with an honourable history of contributions to the province, were dragged into the tide of anti-Muslim hostility during the "reasonable accommodation" crisis.

It follows that it's not Muslims who need defending - they can't possibly be demonized any more than they've been post-9/11 - but rather our secular democracies.

That was the lesson of the Taylor-Bouchard Commission, which called the bigots' bluff by asserting that there was no crisis, that minorities were not making unreasonable demands and that the media-fed hysteria was unbecoming of a mature democracy.

So the relevant Canadian lesson of the Swiss vote on minarets is this:

When liberals fail - as have Canada's Liberals and New Democrats - to stand up to demagogues, they commit the cardinal sin of silently watching the erosion of some of our most cherished collective values.

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Load-Date: December 10, 2009

The Johnny Procedure

Daily Times

July 21, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 1379 words

Dateline: Pakistan

Body

Pakistan, July 21 -- Only one conclusion can be drawn from this: from now on, any Israeli decision to start a war in a built-up area is a war crime, and the soldiers who rise up against this crime should be honoured. May they be blessed

LIKE THE ghost of Hamlet's father, the evil spirit of the Gaza War refuses to leave us in peace. This week it came back to disturb the tranquility of the chiefs of the state and the army. "Breaking the Silence", a group of courageous former combat soldiers, published a report comprising the testimonies of 30 Gaza War fighters. A hard-hitting report about actions that may be considered war crimes. The generals went automatically into denial mode. Why don't the soldiers disclose their identity, they asked innocently. Why do they obscure their faces in the video testimonies? Why do they hide their names and units? How can we be sure that they are not actors reading a text prepared for them by the enemies of Israel? How do we know that this organisation is not manipulated by foreigners, who finance their actions? And anyhow, how do we know that they are not lying out of spite? One can answer with a Hebrew adage: "It has the feel of Truth". The testimonies about the use of phosphorus, about massive bombardment of buildings, about "the neighbour procedure" (using civilians as human shields), about killing "everything that moves", about the use of all methods to avoid casualties on our side - all these corroborate earlier testimonies about the Gaza War, there can be no reasonable doubt about their authenticity. I learned from the report that the "neighbour procedure" is now called "Johnny procedure". The height of hypocrisy is reached by the generals with their demand that the soldiers come forward and lodge their complaints with their commanders, so that the army can investigate them through the proper channels. First of all, we have already seen the farce of the army investigating itself. Second, and this is the main point: only a person intent on becoming a martyr would do so. A soldier in a combat unit is a part of a tightly knit group whose highest principle is loyalty to comrades and whose commandment is "Thou shalt not squeal!" If he discloses questionable acts he has witnessed, he will be considered a traitor and ostracised. His life will become hell. He knows that all his superiors, from squad leader right up to division commander, will persecute him. But before accusing the soldiers who committed the acts described in the testimonies, one has to ask whether the decision to start the war did not itself lead inevitably to the crimes. Professor Assa Kasher, the father of the army "Code of Ethics" and one of the most ardent supporters of the Gaza War, asserted in an essay on this subject that a state has the right to go to war only in self defence, and only if the war constitutes "a last resort". "All alternative courses" to attain the rightful aim "must have been exhausted". The official cause of the war was the launching from the Gaza Strip of rockets against Southern Israeli towns and villages. It goes without saying that it is the duty of the state to defend its citizens against missiles. But had all the means to achieve this aim without war really been exhausted? Kasher answers with a resounding "yes". His key argument is that "there is no justification for demanding that Israel negotiate directly with a terrorist organisation that does not recognise it and denies its very right to exist." This does not pass the test of logic. The aim of the negotiations was not supposed to be the recognition by Hamas of the State of Israel and its right to exist (who

The Johnny Procedure

needs this anyway?) but getting them to stop launching missiles at Israeli citizens. In such negotiations, the other side would understandably have demanded the lifting of the blockade against the population of the Gaza Strip and the opening of the supply passages. It is reasonable to assume that it was possible to reach - with Egyptian help - an agreement that would also have included the exchange of prisoners. Not only was this course not exhausted - it was not even tried. The Israeli government has consistently refused to negotiate with a "terrorist organisation" and even with the Palestinian Unity Government that was in existence for some time and in which Hamas was represented. Therefore, the decision to start the War on Gaza, with a civilian population of a million and a half, was unjustified even according to the criteria of Kasher himself. "All the alternative courses" had not been exhausted, or even attempted. Was it at all possible to conduct this war without committing war crimes? When a government decides to hurl its regular armed forces at a guerrilla organisation, which by its very nature fights from within the civilian population, it is perfectly clear that terrible suffering will be caused to that population. The argument that the harm caused to the population, and the killing of over a thousand men, women and children was inevitable should, by itself, have led to the conclusion that the decision to start this was a terrible act right from the beginning. In a war between a mighty army, equipped with the most sophisticated weaponry in the world, and a guerrilla organisation, some basic ethical questions arise. How should the soldiers behave when faced with a structure in which there are not only enemy fighters, which they are "allowed" to hit, but also unarmed civilians, which they are "forbidden" to hit? Kasher cites several such situations. For example: a building in which there are both "terrorists" and non-fighters. Should it be hit by aircraft or artillery fire that will kill everybody, or should soldiers be sent in who will risk their lives and kill only the fighters? His answer: there is no justification for the risking of the lives of our soldiers in order to save the lives of enemy civilians. An aerial or artillery attack must be preferred. That does not answer the question about the use of the air force to destroy hundreds of houses far enough from our soldiers that there was no danger emanating from them, nor about the killing of scores of recruits of the Palestinian civilian police on parade, nor about the killing of UN personnel in food supply convoys. Nor about the illegal use of white phosphorus against civilians, as described in the soldiers' testimonies gathered by Breaking the Silence, and the use of depleted uranium and other carcinogenic substances. We shall not evade the hardest moral question of all: is it permissible to risk the lives of our soldiers in order to save the old people, women and children of the "enemy"? The answer of Assa Kasher, the ideologue of the "Most Moral Army in the World", is unequivocal: it is absolutely forbidden to risk the lives of the soldiers. The most telling sentence in his entire essay is: "Therefore...the state must give preference to the lives of its soldiers above the lives of the (unarmed) neighbours of a terrorist." These words should be read twice and three times, in order to grasp their full implications. What is actually being said here is: if necessary to avoid casualties among our soldiers, it is better to kill enemy civilians without any limit. This is the principle that guided the Israeli army in the Gaza War, and, as far as I know, this is a new doctrine: in order to avoid the loss of one single soldier of ours, it is permissible to kill 10, 100 and even 1000 enemy civilians. War without casualties on our side. If we strip this doctrine of all ornaments, what remains is a simple principle: the state must protect the lives of its soldiers at any price, without any limit or law. A war of zero casualties. That leads necessarily to a tactic of killing every person and destroying every building that could represent a danger to the soldiers, creating an empty space in front of the advancing troops. Only one conclusion can be drawn from this: from now on, any Israeli decision to start a war in a built-up area is a war crime, and the soldiers who rise up against this crime should be honoured. May they be blessed. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Times. For more information on news feed please contact Surit Das at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Load-Date: July 21, 2009

'No More' must to reject 'Do More' demand: JI chief

The Nation (AsiaNet)

December 13, 2009 Sunday

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Section: Vol. XXIII; No. 311

Length: 697 words

Byline: NISAR MEHDI

Body

Floating the idea of a change in Pakistani society, Jamaat-e-Islami's top leadership at a congregation of the JI's workers unanimously blamed the United States and Indian agencies and Blackwater for terrorism, chaos and anarchy in Pakistan.

"The US wanted international control on the Pakistani nukes. Terrorism is being perpetrated to justify that action to be taken about nukes," said JI's Chief Munawar Hassan at one-day training congregation of the Jamaat-e-Islami Karachi at Nishtar Park.

Elderly persons, women with minor children also largely attended the congregation. They lifted JI's flags and raised slogans in support of the JI's manifesto. They condemned the US, India and anti-Islam forces.

JI Naib Ameer Prof Ghafoor Ahmed, JI Sindh Chief Maulana Asadullah Bhutto, Dr Merajul Huda Siddiqui and other office-bearers of JI were present on the occasion.

He said that the US also wanted to impose its decision about Kashmir on Pakistan. He said the US and its allies wanted to declare Pakistan as an unsafe state. "No Muslim is involved in the suicidal attacks in Pakistan. The US private contractor Blackwater (Xe), US and Indian agents are involved in these incidents," he said.

Munawar Hassan also expressed dissatisfaction over lack of further action by the government against India. He urged the foreign Minister and interior minister concrete measures must be taken against India for its dirty role in Pakistan.

"No more must be a constant answer to reject the "do more" demand of United States," he urged.

He said that officials of the US agencies and Blackwater were being held on daily basis and they are being released on the directives of the interior minister but they regularly denied Blackwater's presence in Pakistan. He said the interior minister should defend Pakistan instead of the US interests.

He demanded the government to immediately stop the operation and opt for negotiations. He said more than 5 million people were displaced in the wake of operation. He said that India has imposed the water aggression on Pakistan and wanted to turn the country into desert, saying that the JI would stage countrywide 3-days protest on December 14, 15 and 16.

Munawar Hassan said that the war against terrorism is the war against Islam, saying that Hindu, Catholic and Jewish were not declared terrorists and only Muslims were declared terrorists.

'No More' must to reject 'Do More' demand: JI chief

JI Deputy Chief Sirajul Haq and Foreign Affairs head Abdul Ghaffar Aziz in their address lashed out at the US-led West for Islamophobia. "The US-led West is scared of the true soft-power of Islam. Its influence across the world and in the West in particular, has alarmed the Imperialistic, colonial and arrogant powers," said Aziz.

He said that Palestinian **Hamas**, Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and Islamists in Tunis and Turkey were heading to their goals patiently but successfully. He condemned the victimisation of the Islamists in these states.

JI Karachi Chief Mohammad Hussain Mehanti, Merajul Huda and Dr Shahid Hashmi also spoke. Nasarullah Shajji was the in-charge of the congregation.

The JI demanded end to vulgarity and obscenity. It also called for an end to economic inequality and unemployment by concrete practical measures.

The past memories of big peaceful political gatherings in Karachi were revived here on Sunday when a large number of Karachiites thronged the historical Nishter Park to attend the annual general moot of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Karachi.

The moot began at 10:00am in morning and thousands of people were present in the park ground in morning to attend the moot. A large number of police and rangers were present there to control the law and order.

Special walkthrough gates were installed and hundreds of disciplined volunteers were there to assist in security checking and guiding the moot participants. Special arrangements were taken to facilitate a large number of **women** and children, for whom separate space was earmarked at the venue. Stalls of books, CDs and eatables were made there.

The participants offered Zuhr prayers at the venue, which was led by JI Sindh chapter Ameer Asadullah Bhutto. Lunch was also served to the thousands of participants in a very disciplined manner.

Load-Date: November 23, 2011

Cairo human rights group attacks Arab states

Guardian.com

December 8, 2009 Tuesday

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theguardian

Length: 775 words

Byline: Ian Black, guardian.co.uk

Body

ABSTRACT

Respected body's annual report condemns Arab League for remaining silent on grave human rights violations

FULL TEXT

Human rights in the Arab world have deteriorated over the last year as governments flaunt progress on women's issues while evading and actively blocking broader reforms that guarantee dignity for all, says a report.

Beyond issues facing individual countries, the [Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies](#) blames Arab governments and member states of the [Organisation of the Islamic Conference](#) for working in concert within UN institutions to undermine international mechanisms and standards for the protection of human rights.

The CIRHS is an independent body whose work is respected by western-based human rights groups such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

Its report, entitled [Bastion of Impunity, Mirage of Reform](#), attacks the Arab League for supporting the Sudanese regime, which is criticised for "blatant contempt for justice, impunity and a lack of accountability, and President Omar al-Bashir, who refuses to appear before the international criminal court in connection with war crimes in Darfur.

It further accuses the 21-member league of using the principle of national sovereignty as a pretext to remain silent about or collaborate on grave human rights violations in several Arab states.

It says that while only limited progress has been made in gender equality, Arab governments use this "to burnish their image before the international community while simultaneously evading democratic and human rights reform measures required ... for all of their citizens".

The report highlights "grave and ongoing" Israeli violations of Palestinian rights, especially in the Gaza Strip, in a year which witnessed the continuing blockade of the territory and an Israeli offensive which led to 1,400 deaths, 83% of them civilians.

Cairo human rights group attacks Arab states

Strikingly, it also accuses rival Palestinian factions Fatah and **Hamas** of "grave abuses" against their opponents, including arbitrary detention, lethal torture, and extrajudicial killings.

Elsewhere in the region, it expresses concern about the possible collapse of the Yemeni state in the context of war in the northern province of Saa'da, a bloody crackdown in the south and social and political unrest throughout the poorest country in the Arab world.

Iraq has witnessed "a relative improvement" in some areas, though these gains remain "fragile", the report says.

The Cairo-based organisation has harsh words for Egypt's record in 2009: emergency laws in force for nearly 30 years were applied to repress freedom of expression, including detaining or abducting bloggers.

Egypt's "police state is increasingly acquiring ... theocratic features which have reduced some religious freedoms and have led to an unprecedented expansion of sectarian violence".

In Tunisia, "the authoritarian police state continued ... unrestrained attacks on political activists, journalists, human rights defenders, trade unionists, and others involved in social protest." Constitutional amendments disqualified any serious contenders from blocking a fifth term for President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in October's presidential election.

Morocco's "relatively improved status" was undermined by intolerance of freedom of expression, particularly concerning the king or the royal family, or institutional corruption. Protests against the status of the Moroccan-administered Western Sahara were repressed and Sahrawi activists were referred to a military tribunal for the first time in 14 years.

Syria continued to "destroy all manner of political opposition, even the most limited manifestations of independent expression," said the CIRHS. The Kurdish minority was kept in check by institutionalised discrimination, and human rights defenders were repeatedly targeted. Syrian prisons hold dozens of prisoners of conscience and democracy advocates.

In Saudi Arabia, the report notes that calls by King Abdullah for religious tolerance and interfaith dialogue have not been heeded inside the kingdom, where the religious police restrict personal freedoms. Repression of religious freedoms is endemic and the Shia minority faces systematic discrimination.

"Counterterrorism policies were used to justify long-term arbitrary detention and political activists advocating reform were tortured. These policies also undermined judicial standards, as witnessed by the prosecution of hundreds of people in semi-secret trials over the last year."

The report also accuses Arab governments of supporting attempts to legalise international restrictions on freedom of expression through the pretext of prohibiting "defamation of religions".

Load-Date: December 8, 2009

Suicide rates in Palestine highest ever

AlArabiya.net

October 19, 2009 Monday

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Length: 665 words

Body

Suicide rates have reached unprecedented levels in Palestine as economic conditions keep deteriorating and political solutions seem more distant than ever.

According to a report issued by the Ramallah police Planning and Research Department, there have been 250 suicide attempts since the beginning of 2009 with eight deaths. In the Gaza Strip, there were 95 attempts and seven deaths. Political reasons

Suicide attempts mostly prevail amongst the young, especially amongst those under 21 years old, said Saber Khalifa, spokesman for the Hamas police in the Gaza strip.

"The deplorable conditions in which Palestinians live are the main reason," he told Al Arabiya. "What they have been through since the war on Gaza can not to be downplayed."

Khalifa added that the police and human rights organizations played a major role in interfering in most of those attempts, saving people.

Authorities in Ramallah however, are reluctant to link suicide attempts to the political condition in the occupied territories.

The rise of suicide rates in the West Bank, with an average of three attempts per day, is due to lack of religious principles as well as family problems, said a source in the Palestinian police media bureau from Ramallah.

Social and economic reasons

"The reason is not political, but mainly social and economic," he told Al Arabiya. "Poverty, domestic violence, and unemployment are the main reasons."

The source added that 14 out of the 250 attempts were also for ethical reasons.

According to police statistics, the percentage of women trying to commit suicide is higher than that of men. Out of the total 250 cases, 60.6 percent were women, usually between 16 and 45 years old.

Common attempts to commit suicide in Palestine include drinking chemical substances, drug overdoses, wrist-slitting and jumping from high altitudes.

Suicide rates in Palestine highest ever

Dr. Fadel Abu Hein, professor of psychology at al-Aqsa University and director of the Community Training Center for Crisis Management (CTCM) in Gaza, said that people want to end their lives when they lose hope and become unable to adapt to the reality around them.

"For many Palestinians, death is better than life," he told Al Arabiya. "They have reached a degree of depression that makes them lose interest in life."

Israel's blockade

Abu Hein sees the siege imposed on the Gaza Strip as the main reason behind the rising rate of suicide attempts.

"Every aspect of their lives is affected by the blockade. They became enclosed upon themselves and unable to communicate with the outside world. They cannot travel, marry, get an education, or buy basic goods from outside the strip."

The massive destruction that followed the latest Israeli aggression in December 2008-January 2007 is another reason that makes Palestinians in Gaza want to end their lives, Abu Hein added.

"They look around them and see the damage caused by the war and they feel so helpless and unable to do anything, so they become desperate and want to end their lives."

Abu Hein added that even personal problems that cause Palestinians to commit suicide are mostly related to the political situation. He cited the example of a girl he was treating who wanted to end her life because of problems with her husband.

"This is because of the blockade. Before that her husband used to work and he used to have a good income. Now, he is unemployed and unable to provide for his family."

As a result, Hein added, the husband started losing his temper and mistreating his wife and children. The wife, unable to handle the pressure, decided to commit suicide.

Although the West Bank is not besieged like the Gaza Strip, Abu Hein argues that Israel's blockades are still the main reason behind suicide attempts.

"There are hundreds of barriers and checkpoints, Palestinians in the West Bank are isolated from their compatriots in Gaza, and social life and economic conditions are affected by the pressure Israel is exercising on Palestinians," he concluded.

(Translated from Arabic by Sonia Farid).

Load-Date: October 28, 2009

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AlArabiya.net

October 19, 2009 Monday

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(Translated from Arabic by Sonia Farid).

Load-Date: October 28, 2009

Egyptians wait on Mubarak

The Australian

November 5, 2009 Thursday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 8

Length: 692 words

Byline: James Hider

Body

President yet to say whether he will run again, writes James Hider

HIS picture is plastered all over Egypt, looking strong and healthy and ready to lead the country for years to come. But Hosni Mubarak, who has ruled the Arab world's most populous country for almost three decades, has yet to say whether he will run again for president in 2011.

Mubarak, 81, who is rarely seen in public these days, came to power after his predecessor, Anwar Sadat, was gunned down by Islamic extremists. He himself has survived two assassination attempts.

He has used a repressive police force against his foes, creating a de facto one-party state where his rule is unquestioned.

But fears about his health -- he collapsed in parliament in 2003 and a newspaper editor was jailed for even suggesting the President might be ill -- have persisted in recent years and his failure to announce his candidature has raised questions about Egypt's political future.

In the view of many Egyptian political analysts, the choice is likely to be narrow, between Mubarak's 45-year-old son Gamal, who already heads the policy secretariat of the ruling National Democratic Party, and Omar Suleiman, an ageing general who heads the intelligence services.

Mubarak, like all officials in the government, has stayed silent about any possible succession but some analysts believe the best way for him to secure his son's tenure would be to name him as his successor and step down. Otherwise, analysts say, the politically untested Gamal, a former investment banker with no military experience, could be brushed aside by the army, who would favour one of their own at the helm.

Last weekend, the younger Mubarak made a speech in which he tried to cast himself as a defender of the poor, orphans, widows and women, a statement that some interpreted as an opening shot for an election bid. He declined to say whether he would run, but Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif confirmed that he was a potential candidate for the party.

Gamal is a powerful force within the centralised NDP and is seen widely as a reformist. His father has said in the past that he would die in office, and he may run again in 2011 to give his son more time to forge stronger ties with the military.

Egyptians wait on Mubarak

Since Gamal Abdel Nasser overthrew the British-backed monarchy in 1952, every Egyptian leader has come from the ranks of the army. Suleiman, director of the General Intelligence Service, has been the President's right-hand man in combating radical Islamists who launched bloody attacks on tourists in the 1990s, as well as handling delicate negotiations between rival Palestinian factions in Gaza and the West Bank.

He would be likely to maintain Egypt's less-than-warm friendship with Israel and its relationship with the US, a major financial and political backer. However, the general is 73 and while well-known to Egyptians, he keeps a low profile.

It is unlikely that any of the opposition parties will have a chance to make a serious run for office. Ayman Nour, the leader of the main opposition party Ghad, trailed far behind Mubarak in the last round of elections and was afterwards jailed on charges of forgery -- charges he said were trumped up. In any case, the authorities carefully vet which parties are allowed to run, all but ensuring the NDP victory.

Other potential candidates may include such respected politicians as Amr Moussa, a former foreign minister who heads the Arab League and has refused to rule out running for office.

The Muslim Brotherhood, which believes in an Islamist state but says it supports the principles of democracy, is the most powerful opposition party and is often used as an excuse by the regime to repress more open voting. The government argues that if the Brotherhood, which has spawned similar Islamic movements across the region, including **Hamas**, won a single victory, it would prevent future elections.

Officially banned and with many of its members jailed, it has fielded candidates in the past as independents, although senior members such as Mohammed Habib say the group is concentrating on building up civic support through educational and charitable projects rather than on politics.

Load-Date: November 4, 2009

NEWS Briefs

Charleston Gazette (West Virginia)

October 3, 2009, Saturday

Copyright 2009 Charleston Newspapers

Section: NEWS; Pg. P8C

Length: 685 words

Body

Obama hails health-care bill work as a milestone

WASHINGTON - Eight months in office, Barack Obama has now pushed closer than any other president in generations to creating a basic health-care safety net for working Americans. Yet the fate of legislation delivering on his goal is far from certain: Republicans are nearly unified in opposition, Democrats hardly united in support.

Indeed, few if any of the major arguments about the scope and costs of the historic undertaking are settled as congressional leaders prepare to take legislation to the floor in the next two weeks.

Democrats on the Senate Finance Committee came together early Friday - after 2 a.m. - to finish the heavy lifting on a bill designed to appeal to moderates. Obama hailed it as a milestone and noted, for history, that overhauling health care has eluded presidents from Harry S. Truman to Richard Nixon to Bill Clinton.

"We are now closer than ever before to finally passing reform that will offer security to those who have coverage and affordable insurance to those who don't," Obama said.

Obama meets with top general in Afghanistan

WASHINGTON - At a pivotal point in the administration's Afghanistan strategy, President Obama and his top Afghan war commander met privately aboard Air Force One Friday for a talk the White House described as productive.

The 25-minute meeting with Army Gen. Stanley McChrystal, aboard Air Force One as it waited to carry the president home from Denmark, gave Obama a chance to step outside the circle of advisers he has convened to study the problem of Afghanistan. His war council has been sharing differing opinions on whether the U.S. should send thousands more troops to tamp down the Taliban, or shift to a narrower focus on al-Qaida in neighboring Pakistan.

The Copenhagen meeting was an extension of those war council sessions "as we reassess and re-evaluate moving forward in Afghanistan," White House press secretary Robert Gibbs told reporters afterward.

He said Obama and McChrystal "both agree that this is a helpful process." No decisions were made at their meeting, Gibbs said.

Israel frees prisoners in exchange for video

NEWS Briefs

JERUSALEM - In the first video images since he was captured by Palestinian militants in 2006, Israeli Sgt. Gilad Shalit - looking thin but healthy, his hair freshly trimmed - sent love to his family, appealed for his freedom and held up a newspaper to prove the footage was recent.

Israel freed 19 Palestinian women from prison on Friday in exchange for the video, raising hopes for the young soldier's release and taking a step toward defusing a key flashpoint in Israeli-Palestinian hostilities.

In the West Bank, jubilant Palestinians cheered and waved flags as the freed women returned home, some with prison-born babies in tow. And in Gaza, ruled by the Hamas militants holding Shalit, the prime minister called the swap a victory for Palestinians.

Looking fresh-faced and at times nervous in the video, Shalit talked of his love for his parents and siblings and recalled a family prayer on a roadside with a view of snow-capped mountains.

Most businesses not close to hiring again

WASHINGTON - Job hunters will face long odds well into next year. As the unemployment rate inches closer to 10 percent, most businesses are nowhere close to hiring again.

Uncertain about prospects for recovery - the economy's and their own - employers cut 263,000 jobs in September, the government said Friday. Unemployment crept up to 9.8 percent.

As the economy slowly turns around, sales are slowly growing and many companies are starting to make money again. But they're doing it by cutting costs, squeezing more work out of fewer employees and relying on part-timers and cheap overseas labor.

Until companies are confident the recovery is here to stay, they will probably keep laying off workers. The economy lost 62,000 more jobs in September than in August, and the unemployment rate notched up from 9.7 percent to a new 26-year high.

Most economists say the recession is probably over. But the recovery isn't robust enough to embolden businesses to hire again.

- compiled from wire reports

Load-Date: October 5, 2009

Gov't expected to approve Schalit swap by wide margin, 'Post' finds

The Jerusalem Post

October 5, 2009 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 664 words

Byline: GIL HOFFMAN

Body

The center-left government of former prime minister Ehud Olmert decided against releasing hundreds of **Hamas** prisoners to bring home kidnapped soldier Gilad Schalit, but a similar deal is expected to pass easily in the more right-wing government of Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu.

A survey of the ministers in Netanyahu's cabinet found that while most are still careful not to express an opinion before they know who would be included in an exchange, many right-wing ministers have unexpectedly hinted that they had already decided to vote in favor.

"We must do everything possible to ensure that Gilad Schalit returns home healthy and in good shape," Shas's chairman, Interior Minister Eli Yishai, said on Sunday during a visit of President Shimon Peres to the succa of Shas mentor Rabbi Ovadia Yosef.

Israel Beiteinu's leader, Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, similarly hinted that he and his party's ministers would vote in favor of the deal that is in the works, in statements he made at Thursday's cabinet meeting and in an interview with Channel 1 on Friday night.

Diaspora Affairs and Public Diplomacy Minister Yuli Edelstein, who is considered the most right-wing Likud minister, also hinted that he could vote in favor of a deal on Sunday, despite many reservations about it.

"We have to finish this story, and in practical terms, I don't see a way out except for a deal," Edelstein said. "If the deal is something that myself and others can live with, I'll support it. But it's difficult. I won't be opening champagne."

Edelstein noted that unlike the last two prisoner exchanges, it is clear that Schalit is alive. He also said that removing him from the Gaza Strip would make it easier for the IDF to attack targets there.

The inclusion of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine's Ahmad Sa'adat, who ordered the murder of tourism minister Rehavam Ze'evi in 2001, would make it harder for Edelstein to support the deal, but he declined to say whether it would constitute a red line for him.

Habayit Hayehudi's leader, Science Minister Daniel Herschkowitz, said he was "torn" over how to vote. He denied appraisals that his right-wing constituency was overwhelmingly against an exchange and noted that there were also differing opinions among top religious Zionist rabbis, past and present.

Gov't expected to approve Schalit swap by wide margin, 'Post' finds

"It's a very difficult question, and an awful dilemma," Herschkowitz said. "I first want to see the deal, and I will struggle to make a decision. I will consult with rabbis and many other people first and then make a decision that would take Jewish law into account, but would not be based solely on Jewish law."

The seven ministers of the inner security cabinet are also expected to vote in favor, even though none except Yishai and Lieberman currently hints so publicly. The seven ministers have taken part in key decisions in drafting the deal, so they would have a harder time explaining a vote against it.

Individual ministers who might vote against the swap include Vice Premier Silvan Shalom and Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz, both from the Likud, who expressed reservations about last week's exchange of 20 **female** security prisoners for a video of Schalit. National Infrastructures Minister Uzi Landau might also oppose a deal even if the rest of Israel Beiteinu's ministers follow Lieberman's lead and vote in favor.

The Mattot Arim organization has begun an effort to lobby ministers and coalition MKs against the release of hundreds of murderers from jail in return for Schalit.

Sources close to Netanyahu said the deal for the tape passed by a wide margin in the security cabinet and they expect a deal for Schalit to be no different. They said that negotiator Hagai Hadas would brief ministers individually ahead of the vote to explain the proposal, which they believe will bring it further support.

"The prime minister is strong politically right now," a Netanyahu associate said. "He will make the right decision, and right decisions tend to obtain a wide majority."

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

Israeli police mass in Jerusalem after clashes

AlArabiya.net

October 4, 2009 Sunday

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Length: 731 words

Body

Police massed in Jerusalem's Old City on Monday following clashes with Palestinians near al-Aqsa mosque compound and as tens of thousands of Jews were expected to attend a religious ceremony.

Authorities restricted access to the compound to Muslim men aged 50 and over, with no restrictions for women, after Sunday's clashes in which seven Palestinian protesters were injured and three arrested.

Thousands of security officers deployed in and around the Old City, particularly in the vicinity of the compound which is holy to both Muslims and Jews, and the Western Wall, the main Jewish pilgrimage site also known as the Wailing Wall.

Israeli police and Palestinian protesters on Sunday clashed near the mosque compound, a flashpoint site sacred to Muslims and Jews that saw similar unrest a week ago. The altercation occurred after Israeli authorities closed the holy site in and 150 to 200 people gathered to pray outside the Lion's Gate, which leads into the compound, police and witnesses said.

The clashes erupted shortly afterwards, with worshippers throwing stones and security forces hurling stun grenades and firing a water cannon, according to witnesses.

Medics said seven people were wounded and police said three were arrested.

Jordan 's reaction

Jordan meanwhile on Sunday summoned Israel's ambassador in Amman to demand a halt to "repeated violations" by the Jewish state at al-Aqsa mosque compound, the foreign ministry said.

"Such actions are illegal and illegitimate and violate Israel's commitments as an occupying force and threaten the peace process," it said in a statement.

The Old City remained calm but tense hours after the clashes, with dozens of Israeli law enforcement personnel deployed throughout the narrow streets of the city, holy to the world's three main monotheistic faiths.

Police said they had closed access to al-Aqsa compound, known to Muslims as al-Haram al-Sharif (the Noble Sanctuary) and to Jews as the Temple Mount, after mosque loudspeakers in the Old City urged people to gather there.

Israeli police mass in Jerusalem after clashes

"We closed the access to the Temple Mount following incitation to violence over (mosque) loudspeakers," police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld told AFP.

Adnan al-Husseini, the Palestinian-appointed governor of Jerusalem, said Israeli police had denied entry to the compound where the al-Aqsa mosque and Dome of the Rock shrine are located, though some worshippers had been there overnight.

An Israeli police spokesman, Micky Rosenfeld, said the compound had been "shut to visitors" as a precaution to avoid violence. Israel eased these restrictions later on when the situation calmed down, Rosenfeld said.

Israel also detained Hatem Abdel Qader, a member of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah party in Jerusalem, on suspicion he was trying to incite protests at the site.

Qader was released hours later following a court hearing. Israeli police said the court ordered him to stay away from Jerusalem's Old City for 15 days.

Jewish festival of Sukkot

Witnesses said the call followed rumors that Israeli authorities were going to allow Jewish settlers to enter the compound during the current Jewish festival of Sukkot.

"They want to keep us away so they can impose their will and allow settlers to enter al-Aqsa," Yusuf Mukheimar, one of the organizers of Sunday's prayer, told AFP.

Overnight, a group of several dozen Palestinians entered the mosque compound to confront any such visits by Jewish extremists, witnesses said.

The Islamist **Hamas** movement ruling the Gaza Strip meanwhile lashed out at Israel over the clashes, saying "the leaders of the occupation will bear the dangerous consequences of any escalation."

"The continuation of these Zionist plots against al-Aqsa mosque and Jerusalem is a fuse that could ignite the entire region," the group's parliamentary bloc said in a statement.

The Palestinian Authority issued a statement urging the international community to "immediately intervene and bring the question of al-Aqsa mosque before the United Nations Security Council."

One week ago several people were wounded in unrest that erupted after a group of tourists entered the mosque compound. Police said the group was made up of French tourists, but the Palestinians insisted they were Israeli extremists.

The site of the mosque compound is the holiest in Judaism and third-holiest in Islam, and has often been the flashpoint of Israeli-Palestinian violence.

Load-Date: November 17, 2009

World journal

The Telegraph-Journal (New Brunswick)

October 8, 2009 Thursday

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Section: NEWS;NEWS; Pg. A6

Length: 659 words

Body

Nature

Powerful 7.8 quake strikes off Vanuatu

WELLINGTON, New Zealand - A powerful magnitude 7.8 earthquake rocked the South Pacific near the Vanuatu archipelago Thursday morning, the U.S. Geological Survey reported, triggering a regional tsunami alert. The quake struck 294 kilometres northwest of the Vanuatu island of Santo, and 596 kms northwest of the capital of Port Vila, at a depth of 35 kms. Just 15 minutes later a second quake with a magnitude 7.3 hit at the same depth but 35 kms farther north of Santo and Port Vila. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center immediately issued a regional tsunami warning. There were no immediate reports of injury or damage. The latest warning comes just two weeks after a quake of magnitude 8.3 rocked the South Pacific near Samoa that killed at least 178 people and devastated coastal villages in Samoa, American Samoa and in northern Tonga.

Geology

Strong temblor hits near Philippines

WASHINGTON - A strong earthquake struck south of the Philippines on Wednesday, the U.S. Geological Survey reported. The quake had a preliminary magnitude of 6.7 and was located in the Celebes Sea, 300 kms southeast of Jolo, Sulu Archipelago, and 1,150 kms south of Manila. The quake hit at 6:41 p.m. ADT. USGS did not report any damages or injuries.

Religion

Muslim group urges burka ban in public

TORONTO - A prominent Canadian Muslim lobby group is calling on the federal government to ban women from wearing the burka in public. The Muslim Canadian Congress describes the burka, a head-to-toe gown that covers the wearer's face, as a symbol of Islamic extremism as well as a security risk. The congress, which is also calling for a ban on the traditional headscarf known as the niqab, says there's nothing in the Qur'an that requires women to cover their faces. In fact, the congress says, women are actually forbidden to wear burkas at one of Islam's holiest sites, the grand mosque in Mecca. The group calls covering female faces a "medieval, misogynist practice" that can lead to heightened security risks, citing bank robberies in Canada and overseas.

Gaza

UN to discuss war crimes report

The UN Security Council will discuss a report next week that claims war crimes were committed by both sides during last winter's Israel-Hamas conflict in Gaza. The council met behind closed doors Wednesday to discuss Libya's request for an emergency meeting on the report, written by legal experts chaired by eminent South African jurist Richard Goldstone. The council agreed to advance its monthly meeting on the Middle East to Oct 14 and focus on the war crimes report. Riyad Mansour, the Palestinian UN observer, said the Palestinians, Arab nations, and the 118-nation Nonaligned Movement of mainly developing countries strongly support the Libyan initiative.

Deficit

Ignatieff to talk tax hikes, cost-cutting

OTTAWA - Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff is gearing up to talk about tax hikes and cost-cutting to slay the country's ballooning deficit. Senior party sources say it's part of a politically risky "adult conversation" he wants to have with Canadians about the painful measures necessary to deal with the debt. Voters typically balk at the notion of paying more taxes, even for a good cause. And the Conservatives are masters at framing the tax debate in its most simplistic terms: Taxes are bad; big-spending Liberals want to make you pay more.

Accident

Pirates attack French navy

PARIS - Somali pirates in two skiffs fired on a French navy vessel early Wednesday after apparently mistaking it for a commercial boat, the French military said. The French ship gave chase and captured five suspected pirates. No one was wounded by the volleys from the Kalashnikov rifles directed at La Somme, a 3,800-ton refuelling ship, French military spokesman Rear Adm. Christophe Prazuck said. La Somme "was probably taken for a commercial ship by the two small skiffs" about 250 nautical miles (290 statute miles) off Somalia's coast, Prazuck said.

Load-Date: October 8, 2009

Suicide rates in Palestine highest ever

AlArabiya.net

October 19, 2009 Monday

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Length: 665 words

Body

Suicide rates have reached unprecedented levels in Palestine as economic conditions keep deteriorating and political solutions seem more distant than ever.

According to a report issued by the Ramallah police Planning and Research Department, there have been 250 suicide attempts since the beginning of 2009 with eight deaths. In the Gaza Strip, there were 95 attempts and seven deaths. Political reasons

Suicide attempts mostly prevail amongst the young, especially amongst those under 21 years old, said Saber Khalifa, spokesman for the Hamas police in the Gaza strip.

"The deplorable conditions in which Palestinians live are the main reason," he told Al Arabiya. "What they have been through since the war on Gaza can not to be downplayed."

Khalifa added that the police and human rights organizations played a major role in interfering in most of those attempts, saving people.

Authorities in Ramallah however, are reluctant to link suicide attempts to the political condition in the occupied territories.

The rise of suicide rates in the West Bank, with an average of three attempts per day, is due to lack of religious principles as well as family problems, said a source in the Palestinian police media bureau from Ramallah.

Social and economic reasons

"The reason is not political, but mainly social and economic," he told Al Arabiya. "Poverty, domestic violence, and unemployment are the main reasons."

The source added that 14 out of the 250 attempts were also for ethical reasons.

According to police statistics, the percentage of women trying to commit suicide is higher than that of men. Out of the total 250 cases, 60.6 percent were women, usually between 16 and 45 years old.

Common attempts to commit suicide in Palestine include drinking chemical substances, drug overdoses, wrist-slitting and jumping from high altitudes.

Suicide rates in Palestine highest ever

Dr. Fadel Abu Hein, professor of psychology at al-Aqsa University and director of the Community Training Center for Crisis Management (CTCM) in Gaza, said that people want to end their lives when they lose hope and become unable to adapt to the reality around them.

"For many Palestinians, death is better than life," he told Al Arabiya. "They have reached a degree of depression that makes them lose interest in life."

Israel's blockade

Abu Hein sees the siege imposed on the Gaza Strip as the main reason behind the rising rate of suicide attempts.

"Every aspect of their lives is affected by the blockade. They became enclosed upon themselves and unable to communicate with the outside world. They cannot travel, marry, get an education, or buy basic goods from outside the strip."

The massive destruction that followed the latest Israeli aggression in December 2008-January 2007 is another reason that makes Palestinians in Gaza want to end their lives, Abu Hein added.

"They look around them and see the damage caused by the war and they feel so helpless and unable to do anything, so they become desperate and want to end their lives."

Abu Hein added that even personal problems that cause Palestinians to commit suicide are mostly related to the political situation. He cited the example of a girl he was treating who wanted to end her life because of problems with her husband.

"This is because of the blockade. Before that her husband used to work and he used to have a good income. Now, he is unemployed and unable to provide for his family."

As a result, Hein added, the husband started losing his temper and mistreating his wife and children. The wife, unable to handle the pressure, decided to commit suicide.

Although the West Bank is not besieged like the Gaza Strip, Abu Hein argues that Israel's blockades are still the main reason behind suicide attempts.

"There are hundreds of barriers and checkpoints, Palestinians in the West Bank are isolated from their compatriots in Gaza, and social life and economic conditions are affected by the pressure Israel is exercising on Palestinians," he concluded.

(Translated from Arabic by Sonia Farid).

Load-Date: October 29, 2009

Call for unity among Ummah to face challenges

The Nation (AsiaNet)

September 18, 2009 Friday

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Length: 691 words

Byline: NISAR MEHDI

Body

Al-Quds Day was observed with full fervour and enthusiasm on Friday in

order to express solidarity with the oppressed of the Palestine who are striving for their liberation from cruel clutches of Israel, the Zionist state. One the eve, a big rally was held here in the metropolis in which a number of people belong to all walks of life participated.

The call for observing Jummatul Wida (last Friday of fasting month of Ramadan) as Al-Quds Day was by the late Imam Khomeini in 1979 to condemn and foil the conspiracies hatched by the US imperialism and Israel against the Muslim Ummah particularly the innocent people of Palestine.

The procession was taken out from Numaish Chowrangi and culminated at Regal Chowk and addressed by President of the Imamia Students Organization Syed Hassan Zaidi, Allama Aftab Haider Jafari, Allama Qazi Ahmed Noorani Siddiqui, Maulana Baqar Zaidi, and Maulana Mirza Yusuf Hussain.

Thousands of the Participants including men, women, and children raised slogans against the United States and Israel for their unscrupulous tactic against poor people of Palestine.

US and Israeli flags as well as effigies of US President Barrak Obama and Israeli Prime Minister BinYamin Netanyahu were also set on fire.

Demonstrators were carrying the flags of Pakistan, Hizbullah, Hammas, Jihad-e-Islami and ISO and also holding the portraits of Hizbullah leader Syed Hassan Nasrullah, Imam Khomeini and Ayatullah Khamenei. Speaking at the rally, ISO Central President Hassan Zaidi hailed the resistance put up by Hezbollah, Hammas, Jihad-e-Islami and Palestinian forces against the Zionist state and said the Israel was bound to face defeat at the hands of brave and courageous liberation forces.

"The recent evacuation of Israeli forces from Gaza is the victory of Palestinian Muslims," he said, adding that the Jihad against the very existence of Israel would not let the dream of the Zionist state come true. He announced that they were ready to sacrifice their life for the supremacy of Islam and freedom of the land of messengers.

Allama Aftab Haider Jafari said that the so-called rulers of certain Islamic states were finding a settlement of the Palestine issue through various means but the only way to resolve it was the one declared by Imam Khomeini who called for Jihad. Waging Jihad against Zionist occupation forces is obligatory on Ummah in defence of Muslim countries, he added.

Call for unity among Ummah to face challenges

He declared Israel as the biggest terrorists of the world and stressed the need to launch a war against the coloniser state. "If we really want to end terrorism, the elimination of Israel is essential," he said. He said that it was shameful that the second Qibla of Muslims, the Bait-ul-Muqdas, was under the occupation of Jews saying that Zionists were hatching the conspiracy to destroy the Al-Quds and had planned to make the Hekal-e-Suleman at the same place.

Maulana Baqar Hussain Zaidi said that Ummah would continue to observe Jummatul Wida as Al-Quds Day until the liberation of the Al-Quds saying that Al-Quds Day is the day of Islam and Holy Prophet Mohammad (PBUH).

"Muslim rulers are busy serving the Americans and our disunity is benefiting the enemies of Islam," he said. He condemned Israel who had forcibly uprooted Palestinians from their lands and are living a life of refugees in different parts of the world, adding that US invasions of the third world countries has resulted in the killing thousands of innocent people.

Noted scholar Allama Qazi Ahmed Noorani Siddiqui has said that the issue of Al-Quds could only be resolved through war. He paid rich tribute to the noted Islamic leader Imam Khomeini, who issued the decree against the Zionist regime and asked the Muslims of the world to raise their voice for the Palestinian people.

The rally also adopted a resolution in favour of the Hizbullah and Hamas. The resolution condemned the American and NATO interference in Pakistan. They also condemned the presence of Black water terrorist organisation in the country and development of the largest US embassy in Pakistan and termed that this was considered as the attack on the national sovereignty.

Load-Date: November 23, 2011

End of Document

A new year, an old dream; Israelis hold little hope for peace in Mideast

The Star (South Africa)

September 19, 2009 Saturday

E1 Edition

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Section: Pg. 6

Length: 676 words

Byline: Sapa-AP Jerusalem

Body

Israelis welcoming the Jewish New Year yesterday were grateful for the recent calm spell in the region but sceptical that the coming year would see the achievement of ever-elusive peace.

The Jewish New Year, or Rosh Hashana, coincides this year with Eid al-Fitr, a Muslim feast marking the end of the fasting month of Ramadan.

Capping a year that saw Israel battle **Hamas** militants in a bloody three-week long war in Gaza, followed by elections that brought a more hawkish government to power, Israelis remained doubtful that an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was in sight.

"We hope that this year will be better, that it will be quiet, that there will be peace, but I don't believe it will happen," said Yosef Cohen, a 40-year-old merchant at Jerusalem's Mahane Yehuda open-air market.

"How many years have we been talking about it?"

However, Israel's 86-year-old president remained optimistic.

"The international community is keen to support endeavours to move the peace process forward," Shimon Peres said in a holiday greeting, "and I am confident that, with concerted efforts, the vision of a comprehensive peace can be realised."

Defence Minister Ehud Barak took a middle course.

"I am in favour of sober optimism," he said.

Rosh Hashana, which began at sundown, starts 10 days of Jewish soul-searching - known as the "Days of Awe" - capped by Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. The New Year holiday itself is a time for festive meals, which traditionally include fish, wine and an apple dipped in honey to symbolise a sweet new year.

The high holiday season, which includes the week-long Sukkot, or Feast of the Tabernacles, at the beginning of October, provides a timeout from Israel's pressing problems. People generally take off work and spend more time with family during this period.

A new year, an old dream Israelis hold little hope for peace in Mideast

Israel's military closed off the West Bank yesterday until midnight tomorrow, barring Palestinians from entering Israel - a routine measure during Jewish holidays to deter possible attacks by Palestinian militants.

Authorities said an exception would be made for men over the age of 50 and women over 45 seeking to enter Jerusalem to pray at the Al Aqsa Mosque - Islam's third holiest shrine - on the fourth and final Friday of Ramadaan.

However, witnesses at the Qalandia crossing between the West Bank and Jerusalem said hundreds of Palestinians seeking entry to the city were turned away by Israeli troops.

Elsewhere along the Israel-West bank divide, Israeli and Palestinian security forces have been co-operating for the first time in years, often seen conversing and easing the passage of Palestinians from one side to the other.

Muslims in the West Bank and Gaza Strip will tomorrow begin Eid al-Fitr, a three-day holiday marking the end of Ramadaan and commemorating the revelation of the first verses of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad.

In Gaza City, the old market was packed with street merchants hawking their wares and families shopping for jeans, shoes, scarves, sweets and salted fish, traditionally eaten at this time.

The holiday atmosphere was strained in Gaza, which has been under an Israeli-Egyptian blockade for two years and is still reeling from January's bloodshed.

"People are psychologically worn out since the war," said Midhad Ihmeid, 45. "Does someone who lost a family member or had his house wrecked want to go and buy new shoes?"

Salam Haddad, a 34-year-old vendor, said Gaza's economic decline was affecting holiday preparations, and only the network of smuggling tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border was keeping commerce alive.

Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics released its annual population figures to mark the New Year. It said 7 465 000 people live in Israel, with 75.5 percent of the population Jewish and 20.2 percent Arab. The rest were mostly non-Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union.

The annual population growth rate held steady at 1.8 percent. Unlike in previous years, the report indicated that the number of children per Jewish mother increased, while the number of children per Muslim mother decreased. - Sapa-AP

Load-Date: September 30, 2009

Muted New Year in Israel; Prospect of more conflict with Palestinians dampens mood

Cape Argus (South Africa)

September 19, 2009 Saturday

E1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 12

Length: 657 words

Body

JERUSALEM: Israelis were welcoming the Jewish New Year yesterday, grateful for the recent calm spell in the region but sceptical that the coming year would see the achievement of elusive peace.

The Jewish New Year, or Rosh Hashana, coincides this year with Eid al-Fitr, a Muslim feast marking the end of the fasting month of Ramadaan.

Capping a year that saw Israel battle **Hamas** militants in a bloody three-week-long war in Gaza, followed by elections that brought a more hawkish government to power, Israelis remained doubtful that an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was in sight.

"We hope that this year will be better, that it will be quiet, that there will be peace, but I don't believe it will happen," said Yosef Cohen, a 40-year-old merchant at Jerusalem's Mahane Yehuda open-air market. "How many years have we been talking about it?"

An editorial in Haaretz newspaper was equally gloomy.

"Israel enters the holiday season without many reasons for levity or celebration," it said. "More isolated than ever on the international scene ... despairing of a solution to the conflict."

However, Israel's 86-year-old president, Shimon Peres, remained optimistic. "I am confident that with concerted efforts, the vision of a comprehensive peace can be realised. This will create stability, tranquility, security and prosperity for our children and their children after them," he said in a holiday greeting.

Defence Minister Ehud Barak took a middle course. "I am in favour of sober optimism," he told the Yediot Ahronot daily.

Rosh Hashana, which began at sundown, begins 10 days of Jewish soul-searching - known as the "Days of Awe" - capped by Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. The New Year holiday itself is a time for festive meals, which traditionally include fish, wine and an apple dipped in honey to symbolise a sweet new year.

Israelis flocked to markets on the eve of the holiday to stock up on goods, greeting one another with blessings.

Muted New Year in Israel Prospect of more conflict with Palestinians dampens mood

The high holiday season, which includes the week-long Sukkoth, or Feast of the Tabernacles, at the beginning of October, provides a time-out from Israel's pressing problems. People generally take off work and spend more time with family during this period.

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However, witnesses at the Qalandia crossing between the West Bank and Jerusalem said hundreds of Palestinians seeking entry to the city were turned away by Israeli troops.

Elsewhere along the Israel-West bank divide, Israeli and Palestinian security forces have been co-operating for the first time in years, often seen conversing and easing the passage of Palestinians.

On Sunday, Muslims in the West Bank and Gaza Strip will begin Eid al-Fitr, a three-day holiday marking the end of Ramadaan and commemorating the revelation of the first verses of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad.

In Gaza City ahead of the festival, the old market was packed with street merchants hawking their wares and families shopping for jeans, shoes, scarves, sweets and salted fish, traditionally eaten at this time.

The holiday atmosphere was strained in Gaza, which has been under an Israeli-Egyptian blockade for two years and is still reeling from January's bloodshed.

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Salam Haddad, a 34-year-old vendor, said Gaza's economic decline was affecting holiday preparations. Only the network of smuggling tunnels under the Egyptian border was keeping commerce alive. - Sapa-AP

Load-Date: September 30, 2009

WHAT'S ON TODAY

The New York Times

August 13, 2009 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 8

Length: 659 words

Byline: By KATHRYN SHATTUCK

Body

9 P.M. (CNN) GENERATION ISLAM Christiane Amanpour, above, travels to Afghanistan, Pakistan and Gaza to report on the battle for the hearts and minds of Muslim youth, who are especially vulnerable to recruitment by extremist groups. Her subjects include 12-year-old Nassim, who was cast out of his home after his father took a new wife, and his 15-year-old brother, Alahdad, who was taken in by a fundamentalist madrasa in Taliban country; Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish, a Palestinian obstetrician in Gaza and Nobel Peace Prize nominee whose three daughters were killed by Israeli shells during the war this year between Israel and Hamas; and 35 children at a Gaza preschool, many of whom lost their homes or a parent in that same battle -- and one-third of whom say they want to become martyrs.

7 A.M. (NBC) TODAY Khloe and Kourtney Kardashian are the guests; also ambush makeovers and affordable cruises.

7 A.M. (ABC) GOOD MORNING AMERICA Topics include college essentials and affordable beauty secrets.

9 A.M. (ABC) LIVE WITH REGIS AND KELLY Jon Hamm talks about the new season of "Mad Men." Kate Gosselin discusses her relationship with her soon-to-be ex, Jon.

10 A.M. (Fox); 10 P.M. (MyNetwork TV); 11 P.M. (BET) THE WENDY WILLIAMS SHOW Kim Zolciak of "The Real Housewives of Atlanta" and Antonio Sabato Jr. are the guests. Ingrid Hoffmann of the Food Network joins Ms. Williams in the kitchen.

7:30 P.M. (21) OPERATIC HEAT The choreographer David Parsons is live in the studio for "Remember Me," a collaboration, taped in January at the Joyce Theater, between Parsons Dance and the East Village Opera Company. The composer and electric violinist Mark Wood will also be on hand for "The Mark Wood Experience" at 9, in which he performs works like "Vivaldi Rocks," "World Vision" and "Hands Across the Ocean" with the singer Laura Kaye.

8 P.M. (VH1) LORDS OF THE REVOLUTION The highs and lows of Timothy Leary, the psychologist, Harvard lecturer and proponent of LSD.

8 P.M. (Animal Planet) INTO THE PRIDE Dave Salmoni, a zoologist and expert in large predators, abandons Toronto for the 170,000-acre Erindi Private Game Reserve in Namibia, where he will live alone among a rogue pride of lions marked for elimination. In this series premiere, Mr. Salmoni learns to readjust to life in the African

WHAT'S ON TODAY

bush and meets the family: Brutus, the alpha male; Rough and Tumble, the youngest cubs; and the dominant **female**, Cleo, above right, who's a lot more hostile than he had expected. At 9, Brutus exerts his status as king of the territory.

9 P.M. (BBC America) **SKINS** Cook (Jack O'Connell) celebrates his 17th birthday by crashing the engagement party of the daughter of a local gangster and then incites the thug's fury by serenading his other daughter with a Barry Manilow song. Time to run.

10 P.M. (Military) **SPECIAL OPS MISSION** Wil Willis puts his 14 years of Army Ranger and Air Force Pararescue experience to use as he tries to complete a series of missions while an opposition force using the latest weaponry and military tactics tries to stop him. First up: Operation Urban Terror, in which Mr. Willis must infiltrate a large building where insurgents are holding hostages, interrupt the flow of money and weapons, and rescue the victims.

10 P.M. (Sundance) **LET'S GET LOST** (1988) The Sundance Channel continues its tribute to the films of Bruce Weber with this portrait of Chet Baker, left, the drug-addled trumpeter and vocalist who rose to prominence in the 1950s as part of the cool jazz scene in California. Filmed during the last year of Baker's life, the documentary includes scenes of some of his final recording sessions, rare performance footage and excerpts from Italian B movies in which he appeared, as well as interviews with Baker and several of his friends, family members and lovers. The film was nominated for an Oscar for best documentary and won the Cinecritica Award at the Venice Film Festival. KATHRYN SHATTUCK

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

PHOTOS

Load-Date: August 13, 2009

End of Document

Feature - As we revert from denial to harsh reality; The bold campaign against injustice may yet be won, observes Jeremy Corbyn

Morning Star

July 30, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 649 words

Byline: Jeremy Corbyn

Body

Harry Patch, the oldest survivor of WWI, died at the weekend.

Predictably, the great and good of Britain trotted out the usual platitudes about how he'd served his country, fought for freedom and was a role model for all of us.

Prince Charles couldn't wait to get in on the act and Gordon Brown sounded more like a first world war politician than ever in praising the late Mr Patch.

What they conveniently ignored was that Patch's experiences in the filth, stench and death of WWI trenches prevented him from talking about it for nearly 80 years.

When he did finally give tongue, it wasn't to praise war but to mourn the loss of so many brilliant young men and express his view that wars didn't solve anything. He wanted to see an end to such conflicts.

Perhaps our schools should be teaching children about the life of working-class young men like Patch who were sent off by self-aggrandising and ignorant politicians to die for what they claim was a noble cause.

Wars are different now, with Western technology meaning fewer deaths for its soldiers but greater devastation for the civilian populations that it's launched against.

In Iraq, the combination of aerial bombardments, cluster bombs and depleted uranium, on top of years of sanctions, has cost the lives of well over 500,000 Iraqis. In contrast, 4,000 US soldiers and 167 British ones have died.

In Afghanistan, war has cost an unknown number of civilian lives and a rapidly increasing death toll among British and US soldiers.

Many others have suffered from horrific injuries and public opinion is rapidly turning against the Afghan conflict.

Governments on both sides of the Atlantic have been in denial about two crucial facts for a while now.

Firstly, the war in Afghanistan is unwinnable. Secondly, the public are now overwhelmingly aware of this and completely unclear about what the war is actually for.

Miliband's speech last Monday in Brussels was a mixture of self-delusion and practical politics.

Feature - As we revert from denial to harsh reality The bold campaign against injustice may yet be won,
observes Jeremy Corbyn

He knows the truth about the war and the need for a brand new strategy, given that there is no sign of the success that Blair and Bush told us was just around the corner eight years ago.

The West has clearly stopped propping up Afghan President Hamid Karzai and recognises that it must open some sort of dialogue with the Taliban.

A very brave Afghan MP Malalai Joya is visiting Britain at the moment. She doesn't fit the stereotype of visiting Afghan politicians who trip over themselves in praising the war and the Western effort.

She strongly believes in women's rights and equality but does not support the occupation of her country. She is getting a very significant hearing because she is so different and so bold.

Those who have spent their recent lives opposing the Bush strategy on terror must recognise that all the protests have had an effect.

British troops are now out of Iraq and the US presence is significantly depleted.

The turning point is rapidly approaching in Afghanistan, when months of denial will revert to reality as the troops are brought home.

The conflict in Palestine and the pressure that the US is now putting on Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu over settlements recognises both the dishonesty of the Israeli position and the injustice that has been meted out to the Palestinians.

But it also highlights the enormous influence that successive Israeli governments have had over the US.

As in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is clear once again that the policy of isolating those perceived to be the "extremists" does not work.

The foreign affairs committee has rightly recognised that conflicts in the Middle East cannot be resolved without involving Hezbollah and Hamas in talks.

The huge US diplomatic effort may well make some difference.

The Palestinian people have suffered like no other - 60 years of occupation, settlements, imprisonment and bombardment.

corbynj@parliament.uk

- Jeremy Corbyn is Labour MP for Islington North.

Load-Date: July 30, 2009

Obama now at his peak

The Star (South Africa)

August 05, 2009 Wednesday

e3 Edition

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Section: Pg. 4

Length: 691 words

Body

ST JOHN'S, Antigua: The highest peak on the island of Antigua has a new name: Mount Obama. Yesterday, Antiguan Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer presided over a ceremony re-christening the 395m peak on the US president's birthday. He said the first black American president was a source of pride for the whole Caribbean. There was some criticism, but Spencer had the final say.

SAN JOSÉ, Costa Rica: A high-ranking diplomatic mission will travel to Honduras in a new effort to pressure coup-installed leaders to restore ousted President Manuel Zelaya, the chief mediator in the crisis, Costa Rican President Oscar Arias said, yesterday. They would try to persuade the interim government to accept all 12 points of a proposed compromise, including the return of Zelaya.

LONDON: Britain's police watchdog has handed prosecutors a file of evidence on the death of a man at a protest against the G20 summit in London in April. Lawyers at the Crown Prosecution Service will now decide whether a police officer should be charged over the death of Ian Tomlinson. The vendor, 47, collapsed and died minutes after he was hit with a baton and pushed to the ground.

BAGHDAD: The deputy commander of a radical Islamic group linked to al-Qaeda and that authorities say was behind the 2004 Madrid terror bombing has been arrested in northern Iraq. The group, Ansar al-Islam, is believed to be behind attacks on US and Iraqi troops in Mosul, considered the last urban stronghold of al-Qaeda in Iraq, and elsewhere in the country.

MILAN: The cover of the Italian edition of Vanity Fair showing Barbara Berlusconi and her son Edoardo. Italian Premier Silvio Berlusconi, engulfed in a sex scandal over alleged encounters with young women, has been taken to task by his daughter, who is quoted as saying public officials should enhance moral values. Barbara Berlusconi also said public officials could not afford to differentiate between their public and private spheres.

PARIS: France said yesterday it regretted Morocco's decision to block sales of the French newspaper Le Monde after it published an opinion poll on King Mohammed VI's first 10 years in power. Moroccan authorities on Monday blocked the sale of Le Monde after it published the poll, which ironically showed Moroccans had an overwhelmingly positive view of their 45-year-old monarch.

CONAKRY: France will step up financial aid to Guinea if the west African country's military junta holds a presidential election by the end of the year. The Junior Minister for Co-operation, Alain Joyandet, who visited Conakry, the capital, on Monday, said France had pledged e2,2 million (R24,75m) in aid for elections and could add another e800 000.

Obama now at his peak

KANO: State governors in northern Nigeria have set up a committee to regulate the activities of religious preachers in a bid to avoid further unrest in the mainly-Muslim region. The Northern Governors' Forum, comprising 19 leaders, resolved on Monday to constitute a preaching board that would screen and approve competent Muslim and Christian clergy for evangelical activities.

BETHLEHEM: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas yesterday launched his Fatah movement's first conference in two decades with a call for his people to limit their resistance to Israel to marches and protests and not to abandon peace talks, despite years of setbacks. About 400 Gaza delegates were unable to attend because of an acrimonious stand-off between Abbas and **Hamas**.

Islamabad: Separatist rebels yesterday shot dead four policemen and threatened to execute 21 hostages unless Pakistan withdraws paramilitary troops and releases detainees in the south-west. The bullet-riddled bodies of four policemen were found dumped in the Naseerabad area. Insurgents last week took hostage a group of policemen and labourers.

WASHINGTON: The White House says Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is the elected leader of the Islamic republic. Spokesman Robert Gibbs was asked yesterday if the White House recognised Ahmadinejad as the president. Iranian opponents of Ahmadinejad's re-election claim he stole the vote, and massive street demonstrations have shaken the religious leadership of the country.

Load-Date: August 5, 2009

End of Document

Green shoots in the Mideast

The Telegraph-Journal (New Brunswick)

August 10, 2009 Monday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. A7

Length: 651 words

Byline: Thomas L. Friedman

Body

In 2002, the U.N. Development Program released its first-ever Arab Human Development Report, which bluntly detailed the deficits of freedom, women's empowerment and knowledge-creation holding back the Arab world. It was buttressed with sobering statistics: Greece alone translated five times more books every year from English to Greek than the entire Arab world translated from English to Arabic; the GDP of Spain was greater than that of all 22 Arab states combined; 65 million Arab adults were illiterate. It was a disturbing picture, bravely produced by Arab academics.

Coming out so soon after 9/11, the report felt like a diagnosis of all the misgovernance bedeviling the Arab world, creating the pools of angry, unemployed youth, who become easy prey for extremists. Well, the good news is that the UN Development Program and a new group of Arab scholars last week came out with a new Arab Human Development report. The bad news: Things have gotten worse - and many Arab governments don't want to hear about it.

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

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

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

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

Fayyad, a former finance minister who became prime minister after Hamas seized power in Gaza in June 2007, is unlike any Arab leader today. He is an ardent Palestinian nationalist, but his whole strategy is to say: the more we build our state with quality institutions - finance, police, social services - the sooner we will secure our right to independence. I see this as a challenge to "Arafatism," which focused on Palestinian rights first, state institutions

Green shoots in the Mideast

later, if ever, and produced neither. Things are truly getting better in the West Bank, thanks to a combination of Fayyadism, improved Palestinian security and a lifting of checkpoints by Israel. In all of 2008, about 1,200 new companies registered for licenses here. In the first six months of this year, almost 900 have registered. According to the IMF, the West Bank economy should grow by 7 per cent this year.

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

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

Thomas L. Friedman is a syndicated columnist for the New York Times. His column is distributed by the New York Times News Service.

Load-Date: August 10, 2009

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Pakistan slams Indian sub

Pretoria News (South Africa)

July 29, 2009 Wednesday

e1 Edition

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Section: Pg. 10

Length: 675 words

Body

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Load-Date: July 28, 2009

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Brunei:Palestine under siege: Yet another year of massacres

Right Vision News

December 29, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 1632 words

Dateline: Pakistan

Body

Pakistan, Dec. 29 -- DECEMBER 27, 2008. Over 1.5 million human beings are in a cage, under an atrocious iron siege for the second consecutive year. No food, no water, no medicines. No fuel, no jobs. No hopes. Suddenly, death arises everywhere from everywhere. Horrid killing machines cloud the sky, close the horizon.

Monstrous tanks raze homes, schools, hospitals, and mosques. Newborns, children, elderly people, women, unarmed civilians are being annihilated by airborne assaults. It is Operation Cast Lead. Over 22 endless days, the U.S. and Western funded, equipped and trained Israeli thundering military forces pour white phosphor bombs; indiscriminately smashing everything. No government moves a finger to stop the televised massacre. The Western-backed Palestinian Authority, chaired by Mahmoud Abbas, issues timid reactions, but feels intimate satisfaction -- Operation Cast Lead will finish Hamas, they hope. Democracies, dictatorships - all happy Arab regimes do the only thing they know - phone calls, words of concern, private jets to organise meetings, failure to hold an Arab collective summit (to do what?), circumstance statements to save faces, words, words and more words. The just-elected US President Barack Obama is kept informed. But he does not say one word, except for spelling out an elegant excuse - there can be only one president. And this was then the previous White House occupant. The great, vociferous champions of human rights - Washington, London, Paris and all Western capitals, are rubbing their hands. The spectacle of killing civilians and collective punishment is welcomed - the final defeat of Hamas will pave the way, at last, to impose their own pax in the Middle East, they joy. Insensitive to the aired massive death of Palestinian civilians, they say over and over again that Operation Cast Lead is a normal self-defence reaction to terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians. And the so-called donors organise meetings and summits to discuss about the only things they know - money. Money to reconstruct Gaza. The year after A full year has now elapsed. No money has ever arrived. No reconstruction has ever started. No Israeli lifting of its iron siege, but just the contrary. The Egyptian regime decides to further contribute to the operation Strangulate Gaza, by erecting a 10- kilometre long, 30 metre-deep steel wall on Gazan borders. The underground tunnels that Gazans had excavated to smuggle food, water, medicines, fuel, and construction materials, are being definitely destroyed. US - Western-Israeli powerful warships are standing as death ghosts on Gaza's shores, closing the sea. The argument is to prevent Gazans from being armed. The 5,000 injured Palestinians are too far away from receiving indispensable medical care. The 1,500 dead, most of them civilians, children, elderly people and women, are mourned in their first anniversary. A whole population has now less food and medicines than ever. The homeless fight against the heat and the cold in improvised tents. Children do not go to school. Pregnant women cannot deliver in hospitals. Still, no government is moving a finger, be them Western democracies or Arab dictatorships. Activists, experts - stop the siege. Richard Falk, UN Special Rapporteur for the Occupied Palestinian Territories, has last Wednesday urged Israel's European and North American allies to use the threat of economic sanctions to pressure the country into ending the blockade and calling for the swift implementation of the findings of the so-called Goldstone Report. The ordeal of the 1.5 million residents of Gaza affected by the Israeli blockade, over half of whom are children has been allowed to continue

Brunei : Palestine under siege: Yet another year of massacres

without any formal objection by governments and at the UN, added Falk in a statement. The unlawful blockade imposed by Israel continues, and is in its third year, he said, noting that insufficient food and medicine is reaching Gazans, producing a further deterioration of the mental and physical health of the entire civilian population since Israel launched Operation Cast Lead against the territory on 27 December 2008, and maintained its military attack for 22 days. Falk also noted that building materials necessary to repair the damage resulting from the heavy bombardment and artillery assaults could not enter Gaza. And he blamed the blockade for continued breakdowns of electricity and sanitation systems due to the Israeli refusal to let spare parts needed for repair get through the crossings.

War crimes An independent fact-finding mission concluded that Israeli forces were guilty of serious human rights violations during the conflict. The probe, led by Justice Richard Goldstone, a former prosecutor at UN war crimes tribunals, was set up at the request of the Geneva-based UN Human Rights. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon also called on Israel to end the blockade of Gaza, cease evictions and demolitions of Palestinian homes, and ensure that the rights of children are respected. In particular, the Government of Israel should allow unimpeded access to Gaza for humanitarian aid and the non-humanitarian goods needed for the reconstruction of properties and infrastructure, Ban Ki-moon said in a report to the General Assembly on the human rights.

Gaza freedom march On the eve of the first anniversary of Gaza massacre, civil society organisations have been particularly active. More than 1,300 people from around the world will try to join 50,000 Palestinians in a march on December 31 to mark the one-year anniversary of Israel's military incursion into the Gaza, and appeal for the lifting of its blockade, which prevented food, medicine and reconstruction supplies from reaching those in desperate need, according to the organisers. In a press conference at the UN headquarters, sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Nicaragua, Medea Benjamin, co-founder of Codepink, the lead organiser, informed that participants in the "Gaza Freedom March" planned to convene in Cairo, cross into the Gaza Strip and march alongside Palestinians to the Erez border crossing in a non-violent demonstration. Benjamin said participants include Pulitzer Prize-winning author Alice Walker, former European Parliament vice president Luisa Morgantini and 85-year-old Holocaust survivor Hedy Epstein. Others participants, many of Jewish descent, include two judges from South Africa; members of parliament from France, the Philippines and Indonesia; several groups of doctors and lawyers; and 100 students from various nations. The spirit of Luther King, Gandhi, Mandela

We are doing this in the spirit of Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela - of non-violent resistance worldwide, Benjamin said, adding that all participants had signed a code of conduct and were committed to non-violence. Organising the march from inside Gaza was a coalition of students, university professors, business people, members of refugee communities, women's organisations and journalists. Nothing done to hold Israel accountable They feel like the world has turned its back on Gaza, she said, noting nothing had been done to hold Israel accountable. Michael Ratner, president of the Centre for Constitutional Rights, said that since Israel's incursion, there had been a shift in world understanding and opinion of what was happening in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly among United States-based Jews. There was now recognition that Israel could no longer consider itself to be above international law, continue to impose collective punishment on Gazans or attack civilians, he said. Israel has violated the most basic tenets of international law; a fact verified by the report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, also known as the Goldstone Report after its lead investigator, South African Justice Richard Goldstone. Abdeen Jabara, an attorney active in human rights issues, described the assault on Gaza as a defining moment, similar to the British Army's 1919 massacre of demonstrators at Amritsar, India; the 1960 Sharpeville massacre of anti-pass law protestors by South African police; or the 1890 massacre at Wounded Knee, South Dakota. In December 2008, Gaza was Amritsar, Sharpeville and Wounded Knee writ large, he added. He said it had taken a year for the events in Gaza to reach the consciousness of humankind, but they had, thanks to the Goldstone Report. Israel's siege was in violation of international law and must end, he continued, emphasising that all parties to the conflict, including the United States, must respect international law. This is enough, is it? The US was also funding efforts to close off tunnel building between Egypt and Gaza, he said, adding that the Gaza Freedom March was an international cry to say: This is enough. Of the 1,350 applications, 400 are from US. The next largest numbers has been reached in Europe (France, Italy, Belgium and the UK) and Canada. Activists from South Africa, Greece, Turkey and Indonesia will also participate. Significant numbers of applicants in the US and Europe were of Arab descent, but the Government of Egypt had prohibited Egyptians or people with Palestinian Authority passports from taking part. The Gaza Freedom March Organisers are also awaiting word from the Egyptian Government as to whether it would reject applicants submitted by the organisers. Meanwhile, after 61 years of Israeli military occupation of their lands, homes and lives, Palestinians in general and Gazans in particular continue hearing words and more words. But they already know that these cannot fill stomachs, satiate throats, cure disease, nor give shelter. Let alone hope.

Brunei : Palestine under siege: Yet another year of massacres

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Pakistan slams Indian sub

The Star (South Africa)

July 29, 2009 Wednesday

e3 Edition

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Section: Pg. 4

Length: 675 words

Body

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Load-Date: July 29, 2009

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Stunted development

The Jerusalem Post
July 28, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 13

Length: 723 words

Highlight: Editorial

Body

As American officials from Middle East envoy George Mitchell to Defense Secretary Robert Gates and from National Security Adviser James Jones to Dennis Ross, who's responsible for Mideast policy at the National Security Council, visit our region this week, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has just published its fifth report on conditions in the Arab world.

The UNDP tells us that many Arabs are shockingly poor; millions survive on less than \$2 a day. Though 60 percent of the world's proven oil reserves are in the Middle East, the report's authors reveal that "Arab countries are actually less industrialized today than was the case four decades ago..."

We know from other sources that national identity is weak. It's been decades since the last colonial power quit the region, yet most Arabs still primarily identify themselves not as citizens of the country in which they live but as Arabs or Muslims. The Palestinian Arabs may be in a different category since their identity has been shaped by their confrontation with the Zionist enterprise.

Although the Arab fertility rate is declining (as more women obtain an education), young people with little hope of upward mobility today comprise a huge chunk of the Middle East population. Half of all Egyptians, for instance, are under 24. This helps explain why many turn to religious fundamentalism for solace.

In its coverage of the report, London's The Economist notes that most Arabs live under basically authoritarian regimes. The magazine, which is not known for its Zionist sympathies, points out that about the only genuinely free elections in the Arab world have been held under "occupation" - in the Palestinian Authority and Iraq. Still, insists The Economist, just as other parts of the Muslim world have transitioned to democracy so too can the Arabs. Perhaps. The magazine is right to say that democracy is more than just holding free elections; it also requires the inculcation of values such as tolerance and a respect for minority rights.

THE UNDP report was largely ignored by the state- controlled Arab media despite containing de rigueur criticism of Israel. The Arabs, and many Arabists in the West, have long embraced the neo-Marxist line that Middle East development has been stymied by outsiders - the oil companies, Western imperialists, Cold War warriors and, unsurprisingly, by the existence of a Jewish state in the region.

The Economist buys into some of this: "The job of the Arab moderates was made all the harder by Israel's recent wars in Gaza and Lebanon. Shocking television footage transformed both of these local fights into moments of pan-Arab and even pan-Muslim rage." The implication being that if only Israel had swallowed two separate cross border attacks in which Israeli soldiers were killed or taken hostage, the world would be a more peaceful place.

Stunted development

Still, with refreshing diversity, The Economist cites Mona Eltahawy, a New York-based Egyptian pundit, who explains that Israel is "the opium of the Arabs." "Resistance" to Israel's existence, she implies, provides Arabs with a convenient excuse for putting off political and economic development.

To the opiate analogy one might add that "settlements" have become like crack cocaine - a habitual pretext used by Mahmoud Abbas and others for not negotiating an end to the conflict. In truth, the settlement issue would become moot once negotiators agreed on final borders.

IT IS to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands that we owe a debt of gratitude for bankrolling the website, Menassat. It's ostensibly intended to promote press freedom and development among the Arabs and recently offered insight into Arab elite thinking on the UNDP report.

Writing from Beirut, Saseen Kawzally quoted approvingly Columbia University's Joseph Massad in damming the report for adopting "the rhetoric and terminology used by the US and Israel." Massad further criticized the English-language version of the report for, supposedly, casting a modicum of blame for the Gaza fighting on **Hamas**.

But it is Kawzally's indignation at the UNDP report for relegating the "occupation" to eighth place in a list of factors inhibiting Arab development that we find especially instructive. Thank you, taxpayers of The Netherlands. Your money is being used to perpetuate Israel as the opium of the Arabs.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

UN Ambassador calls Palestinian Solidarity Day 'one- sided narrative'

The Jerusalem Post

December 2, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 790 words

Byline: E.B. SOLOMONT, Jerusalem Post correspondent

Body

NEW YORK - Israel's top official at the United Nations charged the General Assembly on Tuesday with undermining efforts toward a two-state solution by embracing a one- sided condemnation of Israel during the UN's "Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People."

In response to bruising speeches against Israel at the United Nations during the two-day event on Monday and Tuesday, Israeli Ambassador to the UN Gabriela Shalev recalled the 1947 vote that paved the way for the creation of two states.

"Thirty-three for. Thirteen against. Ten abstentions. The resolution was approved," she said.

While the Jewish population in the region accepted the resolution, the Arab side rejected UN Resolution 181, launching a war against Israel and setting the stage for the current conflict.

"Today, the Arabs' historic mistake of rejecting Resolution 181 is also measured in lives lost in war, parents who bury their children and pain that has touched us all - Israelis and Arabs alike," Shalev said.

Reiterating Israel's desire for peace, she lambasted the UN's harsh criticism of Israel.

"How can it be, then, that the debate in these halls embraces a one-sided narrative that promotes and maintains an obsessive and condemnatory focus on Israel?" she asked. "Today's debate undermines the endorsement of the two-state solution. It reflects the reality of an automatic majority that ensures that any debate on the situation in the Middle East shall be unfruitful, destructive, cynical and hateful."

The two-day solidarity event, held annually since 1977, generated several resolutions sharply critical of Israel. In speeches before the Assembly, many member states condemned Israel and its treatment of Palestinian civilians, citing both alleged war crimes during Operation Cast Lead 11 months ago, as well as Israel's policy on settlements.

Shalev cited Israel's recent announcement of a policy of settlement restraint as an indicator of Israel's desire to resume peace talks, its commitment to peace and its willingness to take "painful and effective" steps toward that end.

"Israel wants to reach a historic peace agreement and will discuss peace at any time, anywhere and without preconditions," she said. "We want to hear the Palestinian Authority say that it, too, will discuss peace any time, anywhere, without preconditions."

UN Ambassador calls Palestinian Solidarity Day 'one- sided narrative'

She concluded by reminding the Assembly about the Iranian threat.

"Iran funds, trains and supports global terrorism, including Hamas and Hizbullah's relentless attacks on Israeli men, women and children," she said. "Iran must be stopped."

A day earlier, the Palestinian representative to the UN, Riyad Mansour, delivered a harsh attack on Israel in a speech accusing Israel of humanitarian violations and collective punishment against Palestinian civilians. He also called on the Security Council to take immediate action against Israel.

"Israel's daily actions on the ground prove that it does not want to take one step towards a comprehensive agreement, and is realizing its settlement scheme in the West Bank and Jerusalem in blatant violation of international law," Mansour said.

He alleged severe humanitarian violations by Israel, emphasizing the plight of Palestinian civilians during Israel's military operation in Gaza last winter.

Mansour said Israel's policies, particularly on settlements, were hindering peace negotiations. "Israel, the occupying power, continues to deny the rights of the Palestinian people and to breach international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law," he said. "At the same time, it continues its illegal colonial settlements through the construction and expansion of settlements.

"There will be no peace and security in the Middle East as long as the question of Palestine remains unsolved," he said. "It cannot be achieved as long as Israel defies the law."

He concluded by noting that Palestinians were committed to peace, and calling on UN bodies and the Security Council to take immediate action against Israel.

"The international community's failure to hold Israel accountable has reinforced Israel's impunity and lawlessness against defenseless Palestinian people," he said.

In a series of harsh speeches against Israel on Monday and Tuesday, other envoys of UN member states criticized Israel and its settlement policy.

"The fact that after all these years the question of Palestine awaits peaceful settlement weighs heavily on the United Nations," said GA President Ali Treki of Libya on Monday. "This day should also remind us that the human cost of the Middle East conflict is borne by the Palestinian people, [and] the suffering will continue until the question of Palestine is resolved and the right of the Palestinian people to their land is realized."

Graphic

Photo: Gabriela Shalev

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

The week in blood

The Jerusalem Post

October 30, 2009 Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 13

Length: 738 words

Highlight: Editorial

Body

It's been another dreadful week in the war of civilizations. On Sunday, 153 people were killed and more than 500 wounded in back-to-back car bombings in Baghdad. On Tuesday in Kabul, five UN staffers and three Afghans were killed in an attack on a UN guesthouse. And on Wednesday in Pakistan, 100 people - mostly women and children - were killed and 160 wounded in a shopping district bombing in Peshawar. The week also saw 24 American service personnel killed in Afghanistan, making 58 fatalities for the month - the deadliest since 9/11.

This is a war of civilizations in the sense that Muslim extremists with imperial ambitions are engaged in a zero-sum struggle against the values associated with modernity - liberty, enlightenment and tolerance.

For now, the battle is being played out mostly in Muslim-majority lands, though New York, London, Madrid and Israel's cities have also been killing fields. Western elites have tended to deny, downplay or reject outright the systemic nature of the Islamist menace. Under these circumstances, there has been no real will to mobilize Western publics for the sacrifices ahead.

IN THIS context, a policy review by the Obama administration is now under way, aimed at developing a strategy for Afghanistan. The mission is to keep the country from again becoming a staging area for attacks against Western targets.

Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, who commands the 100,000 US and NATO forces on the ground, is asking for an additional 44,000 troops in order to create a string of Taliban-free zones. But regardless of how many more troops are inserted and how they are deployed, no one suggests the Taliban can be defeated militarily or politically.

This week also saw Washington stunned by news of the poignant resignation of Matthew Hoh, a 36-year-old State Department Foreign Service officer and former Marine captain, out of exasperation over the Afghan war.

"I have lost understanding of and confidence in the strategic purposes of the United States' presence in Afghanistan," he wrote to his superiors. "I have doubts and reservations about our current strategy and planned future strategy, but my resignation is based not upon how we are pursuing this war, but why and to what end."

Hoh continued: "If honest, our stated strategy of securing Afghanistan to prevent al-Qaida resurgence or regrouping would require us to additionally invade and occupy western Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan, YemenÉ"

Hoh's well-founded fear is that a troop presence in xenophobic landscapes fuels indigenous support for the Islamists.

The week in blood

While each front in this global war has its own set of historical, ethnic and religious circumstances, any approach that requires permanently holding territory, combined with an open-ended commitment to nation-building, will prove so costly as to sap what little resolve the American and other Western publics have for the fighting.

Arguably Osama bin Laden launched the 9/11 attacks to draw the US into an Afghan quagmire that had chastened the British Empire in the late 1800s and contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Empire in the late 1900s. Then-president George W. Bush wisely avoided falling into that trap, but tragically fell into another: Iraq.

AN ALTERNATIVE approach, workable in many theaters, is to employ advanced technologies, preemptive strikes and overwhelming firepower to make it hard for the enemy to organize attacks against Western targets. Of course, this would mean disregarding the whinging of the UN Human Rights Council's Philip Alston, who this week took the Obama administration to task for its policy of targeted assassinations of terrorist chieftains.

Israelis have demonstrated that it is possible to defend their country with precisely the means Alston finds so distasteful against an enemy that is driven by an unfortunate - some would say perverted - reading of Islam. Like other Islamist groups, both **Hamas** and Hizbullah have no compunction about launching attacks from behind their civilian populations. Yet contrary to the mendacious assertions of the Goldstone Report, our army has protected us without losing its soul.

IT IS too early to say whether the attack on two members of a California synagogue early Thursday was the work of a Muslim extremist. But Thursday's shootout between FBI agents and the imam of a jihadi sect in Detroit can legitimately be tallied together with the week's litany of mayhem - in a war some deny is taking place.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

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