

Date and Time: Saturday, May 4, 2024 2:29:00AM EEST

Job Number: 223498549

Documents (100)

1. [*U.S. and Britain step up evacuations Hostilities displace a half-million people*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

2. [*Castro's Acolyte*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

3. [*Murderers are not martyrs - Terror in London*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

4. [*WRITING WOMEN INTO A CORNER DEMANDING*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

5. [*Political chain reaction shakes up the Arab world*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

6. [*Wily shark resurfaces for another bite at Iran presidency*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

7. [*As bombing goes on, the dead must wait Hospital in Tyre is turned into a morgue*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

8. [*Iran 's Michael Moore, criticized on 2 fronts*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

9. [*Washington blogger seeks Bolton's ouster; Political analyst says ambassador to the U.N. already has done great harm*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

10. [*CAIR Settles A Libel Suit Against Critic*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

11. [Israeli air raid expands conflict](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

12. [Thou shalt have democracy, for God and the US](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

13. [Radical left is being right stupid over terrorism](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

14. [McClooneyism II: The Protocols of Big Oil](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

15. [Iran victor turns his back on US to pursue nuclear aim](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type

Narrowed by

News

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

16. [Divest them of their prejudice](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

17. ['Diplomacy' with Iran self-destructive](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

18. [Mufti mixes motives](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

19. [Jihad: play the game: Western PC games feature US forces destroying Arab enemies. Now Islam is fighting back. Rebecca Armstrong reports](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

20. [Nadia's wedding](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

21. [*The night the children of Qana died*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

22. [*In Scramble to Evade Israeli Bombs, the Living Leave the Dead Behind*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

23. [*Abbas orders Israeli soldier found Kidnappers demand release of prisoners*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

24. [*Can Hamas be transformed?: Hamas, which embraces violence as a political weapon and demands the destruction of Israel , must now choose its path*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

25. [*Israel not in Liverpool's plans*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

26. [A history of violence: Barbara Kay defends Neil French, the ad man who told it like it is](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

27. [Young Iranians Speak Out \(Online\) for Democracy](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

28. [Bombs Kill Montrealers: Seven dead in lebanon . All members of same family; four children among victims](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

29. [Latest anti- US effort is a thrilling ride FILM](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

30. [Never Again](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

31. [Won't end up like Iran : Cheney](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

32. [News in Brief](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

33. [Why the refugee process needs work: It's those who follow the rules who seem to have the hardest time getting to stay](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

34. [Was Bush right?: The U.S. president invaded Iraq for all the wrong reasons, but the action led to Jan. 30 elections in that country - a pivotal event in the history of the Mideast](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

35. [LETTERS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

36. [Hate in the raw as mob rams UN](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

37. [ARTICLE: Death from the sky](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

38. [ARTICLE: Death from the sky](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

39. [ARTICLE: Death from the sky](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

40. [Cartoon furor grows: EU fears violence as more papers print Muslim images](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

41. [Egyptian opposition bides time](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

42. [WORLD IN FOCUS A war we dare not lose](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

43. [Support is certainly not flagging](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

44. [It is hard to deny Iraq is sinking fast](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

45. [Support is certainly not flagging](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

46. [Inside the mind of a suicide bomber](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type

Narrowed by

47. [*Realism and pessimism, Palestinians and Israelis; Globalist*](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**
News**Narrowed by**
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 200648. [*Letters to the Editor Bush should call for cease-fire*](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**
News**Narrowed by**
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 200649. [*Keeping Memory Alive ON THE GO*](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**
News**Narrowed by**
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 200650. [*Denmark faces international boycott over Muslim cartoons*](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**
News**Narrowed by**
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 200651. [*Democracy is more than just voting*](#)**Client/Matter:** -None-**Search Terms:** "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors**Narrowed by:****Content Type**
News**Narrowed by**
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2005 to Jul 31, 2006

52. [*The President may be waiting on a friend -but he'd be a fool to cry*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

53. [*Seattle Muslim shoots 6 at Jewish Centre: See I am a muslim A12*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

54. [*Two thousand and counting*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

55. [*Rasmussen says Danes are bitter over crisis He points to attempts to gain commercial advantage in Mideast*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

56. [*Students Take Active Role In Effort To Save Darfur*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

57. [*Tale of Two Hostages*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

58. ['We don't do God, we do Palestine and Iraq'](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

59. [Two thousand and counting](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

60. [Syrian opposition doubts real reform; The regime is changing just enough to survive under the intense international scrutiny, they contend.](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

61. [House of Saud reigns uneasily over kingdom in transition](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

62. [America's arrest of the British boss of an internet betting site, BetonSports, has stunned the booming \\$10bn gambling industry.](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

63. [*Filmmaker Confronts 'Protocols' Myth in Documentary*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

64. [*Harper to fly evacuees home*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

65. [*20,000 from Canada await rescue by boat: Chartered cruise ships to start evacuation on Wednesday*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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

66. [*Israel Unveils New Shoah Museum To a World Still Bent on Destruction*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

67. [*Democracy not an export item*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

68. [*'Arab Spring' of democracy owes thanks to George Bush*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

69. [*Where the Evil Empire Is Us and the Veil Liberation*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

70. [*Musharraf vows to end load-shedding, price-hike*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

71. [*Mideast Mix: New Promise of Democracy and Threat of Instability*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

72. [*Roger Franklin: Dollars dry up for IRA*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type

Narrowed by

News

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

73. [*Israel attacks Beirut airport*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

74. [*Mideast Parley Takes Ugly Turn At Columbia U.*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

75. [*Killing glorified*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

76. [*Stay in touch*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

77. [*Evacuees: Scots who made it home describe scenes of horror and families torn apart*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

78. [Be grateful to those who sacrificed for freedom in WWII](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

79. [Letters to the Editor](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

80. [NEWS SUMMARY](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

81. [Two Views of Democracy for Iraqi Voters: Bullets and Ballots](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

82. [LETTERS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

83. [Letters - The shame of 'the Chosen People'](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

84. [Keeping world's events in focus](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

85. [Gunmen Kill Dozens at Shiite Market in Iraq](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

86. [Olmert Rejects Ultimatum On Soldier by Palestinians](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

87. [A BATTLE IN BRITAIN ; AFTER THE JULY 7 ATTACKS, BRITISH STOICISM WAS MUCH ADMIRER. DAVID PRYCE-JONES LOOKS, HOWEVER,AT THE COMBUSTIBLE TENSIONS BETWEEN MUSLIMS AND WORKING-CLASS WHITES](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

88. [Double-up in Middle East game](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

89. [Time to bring Iran in from cold: The west should start treating Iran like the superpower that it is - and allow it to possess nuclear weapons](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

90. [Keeping world's events in focus](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

91. [I'M IN THE DESERT!; RETURNING TO THE SYRIA OF HIS CHILDHOOD SUMMERS WAS TO BE A TRIP DOWN](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

92. [Keeping world's events in focus](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

93. [The good, the bag and the beautiful FASHION](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

94. [*Spreading the Word: Who's Who in the Arab Media*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

95. [*Taking notes on terror*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

96. [*What Set Loose the Voice of the People*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

97. [*A family at war*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

98. [*your LETTERS: VIEWPOINT - Laws flouted*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

99. [No Headline In Original](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

100. [ISRAEL MISSILES KILL 10 IN GAZA](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

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

U.S. and Britain step up evacuations; Hostilities displace a half-million people

The International Herald Tribune

July 20, 2006 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 5

Length: 843 words

Byline: Brian Knowlton

Body

Large-scale evacuations of Americans and Europeans from Lebanon began in earnest Wednesday, more than a week after hostilities erupted between Israel and Hezbollah militants.

Citing the "grave humanitarian situation" in Lebanon, President Jacques Chirac of France called for the establishment of safe corridors within the country and across the sea to Cyprus to allow evacuees to leave and to permit aid to reach Lebanese civilians.

The United States and European nations have dispatched more than 20 military and commercial ships to aid in the evacuation, one of the largest in recent times. Most of the thousands of weary and distraught foreigners leaving the country were being taken initially to Cyprus.

Vice Admiral Patrick Walsh, the commander of the U.S. 5th Fleet, suggested that marine helicopters might have to rescue Americans stranded in the interior. "We have the capability to extract people no matter where their location," he told CNN.

Meanwhile, thousands of Lebanese and foreigners, some in a German convoy of dozens of buses, continued to attempt the risky overland journey to Syria, the only other way out of the country at present. The hostilities have displaced an estimated half-million people.

The American evacuation effort, criticized for a slow start, began what officials called "a dramatic ramp-up" Wednesday. A cruise ship chartered by the government, the Orient Queen, left Beirut with 900 passengers aboard, most of them Americans. The ship and its naval escort cast off later than expected, having waited for late-arriving Americans who had registered to depart but had trouble reaching the port.

The State Department said that American evacuees were no longer being asked to promise in writing to repay the costs of their transportation.

A British government spokesman in London also promised that departures would be "stepped up considerably."

By Tuesday, Italy, France and Spain had already evacuated hundreds of their citizens.

At least 2,000 Americans are expected to be evacuated Thursday and 4,000 Friday, aided by what will eventually be a nine-vessel U.S. Navy task force. The Defense Department said it was hiring a second cruise ship with a

U.S. and Britain step up evacuations Hostilities displace a half-million people

capacity of 1,200 to help. Six large CH-53 military helicopters shuttled between Beirut and Cyprus, carrying passengers out at a rate of about 200 a day. Officials estimate that there are about 25,000 Americans in Lebanon, and that more than one-fifth of them are trying to leave.

A British destroyer, the Gloucester, reached the Cypriot port of Limassol on Wednesday with 180 evacuees aboard, most of them women and children, after an overnight journey from Beirut. Two more warships on the way, the aircraft carrier Illustrious and the assault ship Bulwark, were to make a second round of evacuations much larger. In all, the British government has said it expects to take about 5,000 of its citizens out of Lebanon by the end of the week.

The French frigate Jean-de-Vienne arrived off Beirut, while the Mistral, a huge helicopter carrier able to accommodate more than 3,000 civilian passengers, left the French port of Toulon for the four-day trip to the Lebanese coast.

The German government said in Berlin that 3,000 of its citizens, many more than previously reported, had gathered at a Beirut convention center to await evacuation. Fifty to 60 buses were chartered to carry them to Damascus.

Though most Western diplomats have urged their citizens to avoid the Beirut-Damascus highway, which has been struck repeatedly by Israeli bombs and missiles, the road has nonetheless been jammed with cars, vans and buses full of people trying to flee the country.

American and British officials said that they were particularly eager to get their citizens out of southern Lebanon, where travel is riskiest. Both governments urged that any of their citizens who had not registered with their embassies do so immediately and then stay where they were until embassy officials make contact.

About 90 Britons were stranded in the south, the Independent of London reported. A U.S. official, Assistant Secretary of State Maura Harty, spoke of "several hundred" Americans. Australian officials said there were 400 Australian families there.

Bottlenecks began to develop in Cyprus on Wednesday, where evacuees found both hotel rooms and seats on outbound flights were in short supply. American diplomats found space in hotels and schools, and rented a fairground to build a spillover camp.

American officials warmly praised Cypriots for doing their best to accommodate the sudden influx. The State Department spokesman, Sean McCormack, said that though American law calls for it to do so, the government would not seek repayment of transportation costs from evacuees. But officials said this should not be viewed as a precedent.

Brigadier General Michael Barbero, an officer with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, defended the pace of U.S. evacuation efforts, saying military units had come from as far away as the United States. "This is a war zone," he said. "We're not going to rush to failure."

Load-Date: July 30, 2006

Castro's Acolyte

New York Sun (Archive)

September 1, 2005 Thursday

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Section: EDITORIAL & OPINION; Pg. 8

Length: 820 words

Byline: Eli Lake

Body

Every week, the leader of Venezuela goes on state-run television for informal chats with his people. These programs, which can run for hours, often involve Hugo Chavez denigrating his political opponents, who thanks to a media law enacted earlier this year usually cannot respond in kind. In January 2004, Mr. Chavez used his program to call Condoleezza Rice a "true illiterate," and boasted that he could sexually seduce the former Stanford University dean - an insult that has yet to be met with a peep of protest from those having a nervous breakdown over the demarche of the Reverend Pat Robertson.

There is certainly a difference between endorsing a coup and slurring a high official in a foreign government, but then again, there is also a difference between a television minister and a head of state. Unlike Rev. Robertson, Mr. Chavez actually tried some time ago to topple an elected government. In February 1992, actually, he led a group of military officers who tried and failed to unseat the government of President Perez. While Rev. Robertson's recommendation was discarded by the Bush administration, Mr. Chavez has never backed off of his transgressions. Indeed, he's seeking an emergency summit to repair his country's relationship with America.

It's another case of how demagogues need external enemies to distract their people from their policies at home, particularly when, in the case of Mr. Chavez, he's itching to join the axis of evil. In 2000, Mr. Chavez became the first world leader to break formally the United Nations sanctions against Iraq and personally visit Saddam Hussein, expressing solidarity with a man we now know was deliberately importing rotten food and spoiled medicine through the oil-for-food program. Venezuela's president has also signed a strategic agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran and has said publicly that the country has a right to the nuclear fuel it enriched for so many years behind the back of the United Nations' atomic watchdog. Hezbollah, one of the most feared terrorist organizations, is said to have established official offices in Caracas.

All of this foreign policy posturing - combined with Mr. Chavez's praise for Castro - invites the question: If Mr. Chavez really wants to stick it to the gringos, why doesn't he just stop selling his oil to them? The answer is he can't. To stop exporting petroleum here would ruin Venezuela's economy faster than it would ruin ours. And despite the recent trade agreements Caracas has signed with Beijing, it makes no economic sense for him to send barrels of his sweet crude halfway around the world when the American refineries off the Gulf of Mexico have been refining the stuff for decades without problems. This says nothing of the loss the Venezuelans would suffer from having to shutter their Citgo gas stations, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Venezuelan national oil company.

No one seems more aware of these facts than Mr. Chavez, who has pursued an energy policy at odds with his Bolivarian rhetoric. As the Washington Post's Marcela Sanchez noted on August 25, Venezuela recently agreed to cover neighboring Ecuador's oil export commitments to America after a strike nearly shut down the country's wells.

Castro's Acolyte

In 2003, Mr. Chavez awarded Exxon-Mobil, Chevron, and Conoco-Phillips exclusive contracts to develop 27,000 square kilometers of the Deltana gas fields. Mr. Chavez has been so good for American oil companies that one of their lobbyists, Jack Kemp, met in 2003 with the Wall Street Journal editorial board to persuade them to soften their line on the Venezuelan president.

At the time, the editorialists at the Journal rebuked the former GOP vice presidential candidate, as well they should have. While Mr. Chavez is in no position to punish the American people economically, he has waged a steady political war against his opposition. After sacking the board of his state-run oil company, PDVSA, Mr. Chavez closed newspapers and ordered his military to use violence in dispersing demonstrations that arose from a general strike in the fall of 2002.

Since then, he has stacked his country's supreme court with loyalists that have allowed him to ram through a press law that makes it illegal to corrupt his country's youth and slander the president. In November, a Venezuelan judge began hearing charges against Maria Corina Machado, the head of Sumate, one of the civic groups responsible for publicizing a referendum on the Chavez presidency last year that ultimately failed. Ms. Machado is being charged with treason because her organization received \$31,000 from the National Endowment for Democracy.

Sadly, Rev. Robertson's loose talk has distracted the world from this all-too-real story in Venezuela. The best course for the president would be to ignore the empty threats and overtures of the Venezuelan demagogue and never forget brave women like Ms. Machado, who suffer the most under his reign.

Load-Date: September 6, 2005

End of Document

Murderers are not martyrs - Terror in London

Weekend Australian

July 16, 2005 Saturday All-round Country Edition

Copyright 2005 Nationwide News Pty Limited

Section: WORLD; Inquirer; Pg. 29

Length: 853 words

Byline: Abdullah Saeed

Body

Islam needs to get its true message across to those who might be tempted to follow self-described jihadists, writes Abdullah Saeed

THE recent London bombings, and the possibility of them having been perpetrated by militant Muslim suicide bombers, is another reminder of the dangers of religious fanaticism. Many of us are baffled by what appears to be an unstoppable supply of would-be suicide bombers.

These events have raised significant and difficult questions for mainstream Muslims. Why have these young people, who are born and bred in Western countries, turned against their own societies, mercilessly killing, maiming and causing unspeakable horrors? What is the ideology that drives such people towards these violent actions? And is there an Islamic view on suicide bombings?

MATP

There is a long history of suicide being used for military-political purposes, whether it was the Japanese kamikaze pilots or the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka. Among Muslims it emerged in the 1980s when Hezbollah in Lebanon used suicide bombers against its enemies. Gradually it came to be accepted in other struggles, in Palestine, Chechnya, Kashmir and Iraq.

Militants who have adopted this tactic argue that "martyrdom" (they do not use the term "suicide") is perfectly legitimate. The tactic has, frighteningly, been extended from war zones to regions that are not directly involved in any specific conflict, as was the case with 9/11, Bali, Jakarta, Madrid and now London.

In Islamic law and ethics, suicide is considered a grave sin. It is related to the idea that life is a precious gift from God; one does not own one's soul. It is simply loaned on trust from God. Therefore, it is only God who can take away this trust.

On many occasions the Koran states in no uncertain terms that human life is sacred: "Do not take life which God has made sacred except in the course of justice," the Koran says. It also says: "Do not kill yourselves", meaning do not commit suicide. The Prophet Mohammed specifically prohibited suicide in no uncertain terms. He also made the point that anyone who commits suicide will be eternally condemned to hellfire.

Based on this religious guidance, Muslims almost universally have held strongly to the view that suicide in all its forms is a grave sin and should not be accepted under any circumstances. Until recently, there has been virtually no disagreement among Muslims on the issue. The belief that someone who commits suicide would not enter

Murderers are not martyrs - Terror in London

paradise and would be eternally condemned to hell had been so dominant that until recently suicide was considered unthinkable among Muslims.

If killing oneself is viewed with horror, it is even more horrendous to kill civilians as part of the destructive act of suicide bombing. Killing another innocent human being deliberately is murder. The Koran says if one kills another human being unjustly, it is as grave a sin as killing all of humanity.

Even in the case of war, the Prophet Mohammed gave clear instructions to Muslims that noncombatants should not be targeted. He included in this category women, children and people not directly involved in fighting. Today's suicide bombers have conveniently ignored all such instructions.

In the late 20th century, militant Muslims reinterpreted classical Islamic concepts of jihad, martyrdom and the prohibition of suicide. They have relied on a selective reading of some religious texts and the views of certain marginal scholars. They went against the widely held mainstream views on suicide to endorse a violent struggle that targeted innocent civilians.

This militant reinterpretation of the Islamic concept of jihad has been challenged by a wide range of Muslim scholars across the world, particularly in relation to suicide bombings that target civilians.

Muslim scholars and leaders of all persuasions have rallied against this abhorrent trend. For instance, the grand mufti of Saudi Arabia, Sheik Abdul Aziz al-Sheik, is on record as saying that Islam forbids suicide terrorist attacks. This was reinforced by Sheik Mohammed Sayyid Tantawi, the head of Egypt's Al-Azhar University, who declared that Islamic law "rejects all attempts on human life" and that he condemns "all attacks on civilians".

In our region these calls have been no less significant. In December 2003, Indonesia's highest Islamic authority, the Ulama Council, declared terrorism and suicide bombings illegal under Islamic law. Some Muslim scholars have gone so far as to declare that a person who commits suicide is not a Muslim.

Mainstream Muslims in Western countries in particular have consistently raised their voices against suicide bombing. For these Muslims, who also suffer the consequences of the militants' violence, it is vital to reinforce the message that Islam prohibits suicide in any form. Mainstream Muslim thinkers, scholars and community leaders are the most important support in countering extremist interpretations, but they in turn need the moral and practical support of all sectors of society.

Professor Abdullah Saeed is the director of the Centre for the Study of Contemporary Islam at the University of Melbourne.

Load-Date: July 15, 2005

WRITING WOMEN INTO A CORNER DEMANDING

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

March 20, 2005 Sunday

TWO STAR EDITION

Copyright 2005 P.G. Publishing Co.

Section: EDITORIAL,

Length: 772 words

Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

Last week I had planned to write a column about Sinn Fein, the political front organization for the Irish Republican Army, whose leaders have recently been linked to acts of murder and grand larceny. I chose the subject because I wrote often about the IRA while living in Britain in the 1990s, because I've worked as a reporter in Belfast, because it's timely -- it was the week of St. Patrick's Day -- and because there might be lessons in the story for Hamas and Hezbollah, terrorist groups that may or may not be able to make the transition to democratic politics as well.

These thoughts arose, in other words, out of work I've done as a journalist and columnist for nearly 20 years. But last week I discovered that I am not just an ordinary journalist or an ordinary columnist. No. I am a token.

That, at any rate, is what I conclude from the bumper crop of articles, columns and blogs that have pointed to the dearth of women on op-ed pages. Several have pointed out that I am, at the moment, The Washington Post's only regular female columnist. This was not the case when I moved here, just over two years ago. At that time both Mary McGrory, a fixture for several decades, and Marjorie Williams, a witty and accomplished journalist, were writing regularly as well. By tragic coincidence, both died in the past year.

Possibly because I see so many excellent women around me at the newspaper, possibly because so many of the Post's best-known journalists are women, possibly because I've never thought of myself as a "female journalist" in any case, I hadn't felt especially lonely. But now that I know -- according to widely cited statistics, which I cannot verify -- that only 10.4 percent of articles on my newspaper's op-ed page in the first two months of this year were written by women, 16.9 percent of the New York Times' op-ed articles were by women and 19.5 percent of the Los Angeles Times' op-eds were by women, lonely is how I feel. Or perhaps the right phrase is "self-conscious and vaguely embarrassed."

This conversation was sparked, as media junkies will know, by a bizarre attack launched on Michael Kinsley, now the editorial and opinion editor of the Los Angeles Times, by Susan Estrich, a self-styled feminist. In a ranting, raving series of e-mails last month, all of which were leaked, naturally, Estrich accused Kinsley of failing to print enough articles by women, most notably herself, and of resorting instead to the use of articles by men, as well as by women who don't count as women because they don't write with "women's voices."

Here I declare an interest: Michael Kinsley hired me to write an op-ed column when he was the editor of the online magazine Slate. As for Estrich, I don't know much about her at all, except that she's just launched a conversation that is seriously bad for female columnists and writers.

WRITING WOMEN INTO A CORNER DEMANDING

None of the ones I know -- and, yes, I conducted an informal survey -- want to think of themselves as beans to be counted, or as "female journalists" with a special obligation to write about "women's issues." Most of them got where they are by having clear views, knowing their subjects, writing well and learning to ignore the ad hominem attacks that go with the job. But now, thanks to Estrich, every woman who gets her article accepted will have to wonder whether it was her knowledge of Irish politics, her willingness to court controversy or just her gender that won the editor over.

This is a storm in the media teacup, but it has echoes in universities, corporations and beyond.

I am told, for example, that there is pressure at Harvard Law School, and at other law schools, to ensure that at least half the students chosen for the law review are women. Quite frankly, it's hard to think of anything that would do more damage to aspiring female lawyers. Neither they nor their prospective employers will ever know whether they got there as part of a quota or on their own merits. There's nothing wrong with a general conversation about how women can be helped to succeed in law school or taught not to fear having strong opinions. But trust me, in none of these contexts do you want to start calculating percentages.

In the paragraph I have remaining (this, girls, is truly the hardest thing about newspaper columns: making the idea fit the space) I'm not going to discuss the thorny question of whether some affirmative action policies do some good, of whether newspapers matter anymore anyway, or even return to the subject of Sinn Fein. Those are complex, gender-neutral issues, and I've now used up my allotted weekly slot on a "women's issue" instead. Happy, Susan Estrich?

Notes

Anne Applebaum is a Washington Post columnist (applebaumanne@yahoo.com).

Load-Date: March 22, 2005

End of Document

Political chain reaction shakes up the Arab world

The Philadelphia Inquirer

MARCH 6, 2005 Sunday CITY-D EDITION

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

Found on Philly.com

Section: CURRENTS; Pg. C01

Length: 842 words

Byline: Trudy Rubin

Body

Back in January 2003, I wrote about liberal Arab intellectuals who had adopted a "big bang" theory about the coming Iraq war.

They preferred any change at all to the political paralysis that gripped the Middle East. They felt squeezed between the repression of authoritarian rulers and the growing popularity of Islamists. They felt an Iraq war would break up the Mideast's political logjam.

And they were right.

The logjam is broken, the wood hurtling downstream. The Iraq war - and Iraqi elections - precipitated a political chain reaction whose end we can't foresee.

It's much too early to predict an outbreak of democracy. Some Arab governments may become more accountable to their people, some may become more Islamist. But, definitely, the region will change.

What's fascinating to watch is how this chain reaction is progressing in ways that no one - including U.S. officials - could have predicted.

Internal pressure for political change had been building for years within the Arab world, though meaningful elections took place in only a few Arab countries.

"People were fed up with having their lives run by other countries dominating or occupying them," says Rami Khouri, editor-at-large of the Beirut Daily Star. "People want to be more involved in running their own affairs."

Unexpected events contributed to the pressure for change. The sudden death of Yasir Arafat in December opened the door for Palestinian elections, which wound up being held in January just before the Iraqi ballot.

Televised scenes of both Palestinian and Iraqi elections - one held under Israeli, the other under U.S. occupation - set the Arab world buzzing. Could national elections be held in Arab countries only under occupation?

Political chain reaction shakes up the Arab world

In fact, the Palestinians had long sought elections, which the United States and Israel opposed as long as Arafat was still around. And in Iraq, the United States repeatedly postponed a vote until Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani forced a ballot.

Some Persian Gulf states, along with countries such as Jordan and Morocco, have held limited elections. But in no Arab country could voters choose their top leaders, who hold the real power.

So the sight of Palestinians and Iraqis electing their governments jolted the Arab world.

The Palestinian and Iraqi elections alone might not have been enough to inspire a broad "Arab awakening." Many Arabs doubted their legitimacy because they were held under occupation. Others downplayed the Iraq vote because Sunnis largely boycotted the ballot and Shiite parties won it; most Arab countries are predominantly Sunni and fear the ascendancy of Shiites to power in Iraq.

It took the "cedar revolution" in Lebanon to provoke real political excitement in the Arab world. The massive car bomb that killed Lebanon's former Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri sent tens of thousands of Lebanese into the streets waving their flag with its green cedar emblem.

Hariri was killed - and most Lebanese blame Syria - because he urged Damascus to pull its troops out of Lebanon. His death sparked a spontaneous outpouring of civic anger and forced the pro-Syrian Lebanese government to resign.

The Lebanese example has electrified Arab opinion. In Lebanon, there is no U.S. or Israeli occupation; the occupiers are Syrian Arabs. Nor can other Arabs dismiss all of the demonstrators as members of minority groups; Hariri was a Sunni, and the opposition coalition includes many Sunnis, along with Christians and Druze.

And there is a link with Iraq. Some Lebanese opposition leaders say the sight of Iraqis voting was what inspired them to come out on the streets.

The Cedar Revolution thus sets a precedent for more nonviolent Arab political action. Says Khouri: "What is going on in Lebanon might indeed spark more grassroots activism elsewhere."

The chain reaction continues. Egyptian President-for-life Hosni Mubarak has announced that competition will be permitted in the next presidential election, though no one is yet certain whether this is mere window dressing.

What's also uncertain is what the "Arab awakening" will mean for U.S. interests. In Lebanon, free and fair elections will give a big share of power to Hezbollah, a Shiite party that the U.S. government labels as terrorist.

Many Egyptians believe Islamists would win a fair election in their country. Iraq's election will probably result in a moderately Islamist government that wants women's status to be defined by religious law.

Khouri isn't worried. He notes the old argument that you can't push Arab governments to reform because the result might be victories for Islamists. But he says that argument "is weakening." The really big Islamist threat, he says, is Osama bin Laden, so "mainstream Islamists are not seen as such a big threat anymore."

Indeed, President Bush seems to have concluded that our past preference for Arab stability over democracy has backfired. So the Mideast chain reaction will continue - wherever it leads.

Contact columnist Trudy Rubin at 215-854-5823 or trubin@phillynews.com.

Read her recent work at <http://go.philly.com/trudyrubin>.

Notes

Political chain reaction shakes up the Arab world

Worldview

Load-Date: September 8, 2005

End of Document

Wily shark resurfaces for another bite at Iran presidency

The Times (London)

May 11, 2005, Wednesday

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Section: Overseas news; 36

Length: 818 words

Byline: Richard Beeston, Diplomatic Editor

Body

A FOUNDING leader of the Iranian revolution, who promoted militant Islam in the Middle East and led his country through a war, yesterday became the favourite to be elected President.

Hojatoleslam Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, 70, who left the presidency eight years ago, announced last night that he had joined the field for the election on June 17.

"I am proud to be a candidate," he said in a three-page statement. The new President, he added, would need to tackle "unemployment, social security, poverty, corruption, discrimination", and "meet the challenge of a young society", particularly women "more determined to participate in the development of the country".

The decision came as little surprise. Hojatoleslam Rafsanjani is one of the most powerful and ambitious figures in Iran and has rarely strayed far from the centre of power since he helped Ayatollah Khomeini to overthrow the Shah in a revolution 25 years ago.

Although he will be challenged by younger and more hardline candidates loyal to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, he is regarded as the favourite at this early stage of the contest.

Iran's future president will inherit heavy responsibilities from Mohammad Khatami, a reformer whose attempts at modernising Iran and improving relations with the West failed in the face of resistance from religious ideologues.

The new leader will have to fend off a looming showdown with the international community over Iran's nuclear programme. He must also decide whether the country still wants to promote Islamic revolution in the Middle East at a time when the trend is moving from bullets towards ballots.

Hojatoleslam Rafsanjani's features may have grown a little heavier and his hair has turned whiter and thinner, but those who know him insist that his mind is just as sharp as it was when he was last President. In more than 30 years at the heart of the Iranian regime he has proved himself to be ruthless but flexible, a war leader and a peacemaker -and above all a pragmatist prepared to cut deals with anyone when it suits his interests.

His nickname is Kusheh, which in Persian means Shark, a reference to his smooth features and ruthless reputation. A self-made millionaire, with ties to everything from pistachio exports to heavy industry, the shrewd tactician emerged from the chaos of the Iranian revolution as the most powerful figure in the country after Ayatollah Khomeini. It was often Hojatoleslam Rafsanjani, Kalashnikov rifle clutched in his hand, who delivered the famous Friday sermons at Tehran University, where the regime's anti-Western tirades would be greeted by chants of "Death to America".

Wily shark resurfaces for another bite at Iran presidency

During the eight-year war with Iraq, he often took day-to-day responsibility for operations at the front, where hundreds of thousands died in the trenches.

Hojatoleslam Rafsanjani was directly involved in what became known as Irangate - the secret negotiations with the Reagan Administration in 1985 for the trade of Western hostages held in Lebanon in return for arms shipments to Iran. He is also credited with persuading Khomeini to bring the Iran-Iraq war to an end. Under his leadership, diplomatic efforts were also made to restore relations with Britain, formerly the "Little Satan" to America's "Great Satan".

He is thought to favour a Chinese model of reform that would liberalise Iran's economy and grant greater personal freedoms to the public but keep the Islamic regime firmly in control.

His pragmatism is encouraging hopes in the West that he may also resolve the 26-year conflict with America. President Bush included Iran in his infamous "axis of evil" trio, and Washington is expected to renew efforts to isolate Tehran if the Iranians persist with their nuclear programme.

A new Iranian-American clash is not inevitable, however, in a region undergoing profound change. A Shia Muslim government, with close links to Tehran, has just been elected in Iraq with American help.

Hezbollah, the militant Lebanese militia backed by Iran, is now contemplating becoming a purely political party. Militant Palestinian groups supported by Iran are also flirting with peaceful rather than violent means to express themselves.

These contradictory forces could confound the best efforts of even the most able leader. In the eyes of some Iranians, Hojatoleslam Rafsanjani might be too rich, too old or too compromised for the task. But as of yesterday he was also the only candidate with the experience and political muscle for the job.

KHOMEINI HEIR

1934 Born Kerman, Iran

1948 Taught theology by Ayatollah Khomeini

1964-78 Businessman, but keeps Khomeini ties

1979 Revolutionary

1980 Becomes Speaker in parliament and key leader in war against Iraq

1981 Survives bombing

1985 Negotiates arms for hostages deal with US

1988 Concludes peace deal with Iraq

1989 Elected President

1993 Wins second term

1997 Barred from standing for third term

2000 Defeated in parliamentary elections

Load-Date: May 11, 2005

Wily shark resurfaces for another bite at Iran presidency

End of Document

As bombing goes on, the dead must wait; Hospital in Tyre is turned into a morgue

The International Herald Tribune

July 22, 2006 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 6

Length: 834 words

Byline: Hassan M. Fattah

Dateline: TYRE, Lebanon

Body

Carpenters are running out of wood for coffins. Bodies are stacked three or four high in a truck at the hospital morgue. The stench is spreading in the rubble.

The morbid reality of Israel's bombing campaign of the south is reaching almost every corner of this city. Just a few kilometers from the Rest House hotel, where the United Nations was evacuating civilians Thursday, wild dogs gnawed at the charred remains of a family who were bombed as they were trying to escape the village of Hosh, officials said.

Officials at the Tyre Government Hospital inside a Palestinian refugee camp said they had counted the bodies of 50 children among the 115 in the refrigerated truck in the morgue, although their count could not be independently confirmed.

Abdelmuhsin al-Husseini, Tyre's mayor, announced Thursday that any bodies not claimed within the next two days would be buried temporarily in a mass grave near the morgue until they could receive a proper burial once the fighting ends.

"I am asking the families, if they can come here, to claim the bodies," said Hussein, whose bloodshot eyes hinted at his mad scramble to secure food rations and bring some order to the city. "Otherwise, we have no choice but to bury them in mass graves."

With the roads and bridges to many surrounding villages bombed out, few families have been able to come to the hospital to claim their dead.

Even if they could make the journey, they fear they would be hit by airstrikes along the way, Hussein said. Emergency workers have been unwilling to risk recovering many bodies strewn along the road. Instead, they have been left to rot.

For relatives who do reach the morgue, conducting a proper burial is impossible while the bombing continues. Many have opted to leave the bodies at the morgue until the conflict ends.

The morgue has had to order more than 100 coffins with special handles to make it easier to remove them from the ground to be reburied later.

As bombing goes on, the dead must wait Hospital in Tyre is turned into a morgue

"What? He wants a hundred?" a local carpenter said, half shocked, half perplexed. "Where the hell am I going to get enough wood to build that many coffins?"

At the hospital, members of the medical staff now find themselves dealing with the dead more than saving the living.

"This hospital is working like a morgue more than a hospital," said Hala Hijazi, a volunteer whose mother is an anesthesiologist at the hospital. Lately, Hijazi said, she has begun to recognize some of the faces arriving here as the scope of the Israeli bombings has widened. "A lot of the people are from Tyre, and we know some of them," she said of the bodies.

A pall fell over Tyre on Thursday, as UN peacekeepers loaded more than 600 UN employees, foreigners and Lebanese onto a ferry bound for Cyprus, then promptly packed up their makeshift evacuation center at the Rest House and left for their base in the town of Naqura.

Hundreds descended on the hotel on Wednesday, desperate to board the ferry. Despite fears that many would be left behind, almost all who sought refuge were able to board the ship Thursday.

But as the last UN peacekeepers left town later in the day, those who remained were braced for an even heavier bombardment. There were rumors of an Israeli invasion, and fears of even more casualties.

For Ali and Ahmad al-Ghanam, brothers who have taken shelter in a home just a few blocks from the morgue, the refrigerated truck full of bodies is a vivid reminder of the attack that killed 23 members of their family.

When Israeli loudspeakers warned residents to evacuate the village of Marwaheen on Saturday, the families packed their belongings and headed for safety.

Twenty-four people piled into a pickup truck and drove toward Tyre, with the brothers trailing behind them.

Another group set off for a nearby UN observation post, but were promptly turned away.

As the pickup raced to Tyre, Ali al-Ghanam said, Israeli boats shelled their convoy, hitting the pickup but wounding only the women and children in the back.

Within minutes, however, an Israeli helicopter approached, firing a missile that blew the pickup to pieces as the passengers struggled to jump out, he said. His brother Mohammad, his wife and their six children were killed instantly along with several of their relatives. The only survivor was the brothers' 4-year-old niece, who suffered severe burns to much of her body.

"The dead stayed in the sun for hours until anyone could come and collect them," Ghanam said.

"The Israelis can't understand that we are people, too. Should they wonder why so many of us support the resistance?" he asked, speaking of Hezbollah.

The 23 bodies were still waiting to be buried. Ghanam said that it would be impossible for them to be buried in their village while the bombing continued.

Holding a funeral is impossible, but even digging a grave could attract fire, he said, assuming the remaining family members were able to return to the village.

The brothers walked to the hospital Thursday to sign documents allowing the hospital to bury the bodies in a mass grave.

Load-Date: July 28, 2006

As bombing goes on, the dead must wait Hospital in Tyre is turned into a morgue

End of Document

Iran's Michael Moore, criticized on 2 fronts

The International Herald Tribune

November 30, 2005 Wednesday

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Section: FEATURE; Pg. 11

Length: 828 words

Byline: Nazila Fathi

Dateline: TEHRAN

Body

For years, Massoud Dehnamaki was known widely as the feared enforcer of conservative rules that restricted freedom for women and society.

In recent years, however, he has emerged as Iran's Michael Moore, having directed a documentary on the taboo issue of prostitution and another forthcoming film on soccer as a metaphor of political struggle.

Reformists and conservatives alike harshly criticized Dehnamaki for making the first movie, "Poverty and Prostitution." Conservatives were furious that one of their own had not only highlighted an un-Islamic social pathology but seemed to sympathize with the prostitutes. Reformists believed he exaggerated the problem to make a case against easing Islamic law.

In an interview in his basement office in downtown Tehran, Dehnamaki said both camps had gotten it wrong and denied that his views had undergone a radical transformation.

"I was always concerned about justice in society," he said.

"There was a time that I believed that the people were the problem. But that was a mistake. The real problems are our rulers, who have become used to corruption and cannot fulfill the promises of the early days of the revolution about social justice and equality."

Film critics have pointed to the countless professional shortcomings of the movie, Dehnamaki's first. Not surprisingly, it was never granted a license to be distributed. Instead, bootleg copies have circulated widely and parts of the film were broadcast by opposition television on satellite channels.

In the movie, Dehnamaki interviews more than a dozen prostitutes and many of their customers. All the women tell the same story of poverty and the need to provide for their families.

"We are two sisters working, and we can hardly earn enough to buy food and pay our rent," says a sobbing woman, whose face was covered to hide her identity.

"I sometimes dream of having chicken, or good food, at least once a week," she goes on, wiping away tears. "I have worked at homes where they had so much money that they threw food in the garbage. I always envy people who can eat well."

A woman clad in the traditional head-to-toe chador, who introduces herself as the mother of the two sisters, says she has thought of killing herself and her daughters several times because of the hardship of their lives but she could not find the courage.

Another young woman tells of her sick father who needed surgery. His four daughters had decided to choose lots to see which would go to Dubai, where prostitution pays better, to earn the money to pay for the operation. The job fell to the youngest sister, who returned from Dubai shattered. A woman who loses her virginity before marriage in a traditional family in Iran loses her honor and with it her chances of a good marriage. In the car with Dehnamaki, who is driving her home from the airport, she bursts into tears, saying that she feels betrayed by her sisters.

To convince the women he was not a threat, Dehnamaki changed his conservative appearance, shaving his beard and replacing his baggy, long sleeved shirts with T-shirts. He also began driving a taxi as a way to find his subjects.

Dehnamaki, 36, believes Iran needs to modernize, within the confines of a strict Islam, but not Taliban-style.

"If we are against the Islam that the Taliban introduced, we must be able to offer a good model of the Islam that we believe is the source of compassion and kindness," he said. "But it has to be according to the needs of today so that it would be acceptable to our youth."

Like many in his generation, Dehnamaki fought for three years in the 1980-88 war with Iraq and was scarred by the experience. He was wounded three times and saw many of his comrades die. Trying to do justice to their sacrifice remains his driving force.

After the war ended in 1988, Dehnamaki helped found the extremist Islamic militia Ansar Hezbollah, which is best known for its attacks on pro-democracy demonstrators. But he grew increasingly disenchanted with the course the revolution had taken and quit the group after eight years.

Many formerly stalwart supporters of the 1979 revolution have moderated their views over the years. Most became reformists and joined the movement of President Mohammad Khatami, who favored increasing political and social freedoms. But not Dehnamaki, who remained critical of both the conservative and reformist camps.

There is little question that Dehnamaki has come a very long way from his days as an enforcer. One university professor, Sadigh Sarvestani, called him "a man whose name was once affiliated with the ugliest violence and has now become an artist dealing with the most delicate aspects of art."

It bears mentioning that Sarvestani was speaking at a conference at Tehran University about Dehnamaki's movie and was quoted in Dehnamaki's new magazine. The magazine has published just three issues but already has some high-profile advertisements - a sign, many here say, that he remains well connected.

Load-Date: December 9, 2005

Washington blogger seeks Bolton's ouster; Political analyst says ambassador to the U.N. already has done great harm

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

January 1, 2006 Sunday

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Section: Tristate; Pg. a14

Length: 813 words

Byline: MARY RAE BRAGG

Body

Steve Clemons, a senior fellow at the New America Foundation in Washington, D.C., remains intent on getting John Bolton removed from his position as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

Clemons, when he was in Dubuque in November speaking at the Dubuque Area Committee on Foreign Relations, told the Telegraph Herald with some pride that his blog, The Washington Note, had been credited for stopping the Bolton nomination.

"I could have imagined a long list of credible Republicans who could have been considered," Clemons said during his TH interview, "and Bolton wasn't even at the bottom of the list."

As it was, the Senate refused to confirm Bolton, but President Bush, exercising a rarely used option, appointed Bolton to the office while the Senate was in recess. Recess appointments last only through the next one-year session of Congress, so Bolton will be out or up again for confirmation in January 2007.

On Tuesday, Clemons announced on his blog that he will be launching a "Bolton Watch" early this year.

Clemons, whose political background includes having staffed for Republican lawmakers and organizations, said he hoped the concerns he and others expressed about Bolton's nomination would result in a "less damaging" ambassador than Bolton has turned out to be.

"But it is only after having spent time with some very high-ranking former Republican officials recently - who all share my perspective of Bolton - that I have decided to launch this new "Bolton Watch" division of (The Washington Note)," Clemons wrote.

Clemons contends that Bolton "started off politely, but underneath, he's done a great deal to harm America's foreign policy portfolio, and his crusades in the name of U.N. reform are actually designed to undermine any chance of achieving reasonable and serious reform."

The day before he announced his Bolton Watch, Clemons' reiterated published reports of how Bolton torpedoed a deal Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was brokering with Syria by leaking word of the offer to British newspapers. The deal was meant to improve Syria-Lebanon relations and end Syria's support of militant groups like Hamas and Hezbollah.

Washington blogger seeks Bolton's ouster; Political analyst says ambassador to the U.N. already has done great harm

Clemons has good things to say about Rice's job performance. He maintains she is doing a good job as secretary of state because she doesn't have someone on the National Security Council shooting her down the way she shot down Colin Powell when she was on the security council and Powell was secretary of state.

Clemons contends the other reason for Rice's success is President Bush's weakened political state.

During his TH interview, Clemons said, "She's able to do more at a time when, ironically, Bush is weaker."

"We're doing some deals and the world is probably a safer place," he said. "If Bush were stronger, I don't think any of these successes would be occurring."

Clemons named Rice as one in a small circle of trusted women that is rumored in Republican circles to be Bush's confidants, taking the place of Vice President Dick Cheney and other men who Bush feels have embarrassed and betrayed him.

The other women in the presidential inner circle were said to be his longtime adviser Karen Hughes and the president's mother and one-time first lady Barbara Bush.

While there is some talk of Rice as a presidential candidate to succeed Bush, Clemons offered an interesting idea on his blog, to wit, "... Rice may not be readying herself for president as much as getting ready to be (Arizona Senator) John McCain's vice presidential running mate.'

"That ticket - if the Republicans were smart enough to put it together - would be tough for any Democrat, Hillary (Clinton) included, to beat," Clemons wrote.

In his Dubuque interview, Clemons predicted "a civil war" within the GOP as the party begins vetting candidates for the 2008 race, with McCain as a major contender, along with Sen. Chuck Hagel, of Nebraska.

"The more the far-right will savage them, the better," Clemons said. "It will become a mark of legitimacy."

*

According to oddsmakers at the online bookie BetUS.com, Republicans are favored with 3-4 odds to win the White House again in 2008.

The leading Republican is former New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani with 1-2 odds, and John McCain is a close second at 2-1.

New York Sen. Hillary Clinton is the Democrats' front-runner by 1-2 odds.

Former vice presidential candidate John Edwards comes in second, ahead of Sen. Evan Bayh, of Indiana, and a host of others, including Sen. Barack Obama, of Illinois, who is posted at 8-1.

*

Clayton County (Iowa) Republicans will conduct a mock caucus at their potluck dinner meeting at 6:30 p.m. Thursday. The meeting takes place at the Central State Drive-Up Bank's community room, in Elkader.

All county precinct leaders and temporary caucus chairs are asked to be on hand, but all Republicans are welcome to attend. Caucus materials will be available for temporary caucus leaders to pick up.

Load-Date: January 1, 2006

CAIR Settles A Libel Suit Against Critic - Correction Appended

New York Sun (Archive)

March 24, 2006 Friday

Correction Appended

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Section: FRONT PAGE; Pg. 1

Length: 813 words

Byline: By JOSH GERSTEIN, Staff Reporter of the Sun

Body

An Islamic group has settled a \$1.35 million libel suit against one of its critics, who operates a Web site charging that the organization, the Council on American-Islamic Relations, has links to terrorism.

The terms of the settlement between the Muslim group and Andrew Whitehead of Virginia Beach, Va., are confidential, but the Web site, www.anti-cair-net.org, still includes the statements Cair contended were libelous.

"Nothing has changed in that regard. It's as if this lawsuit had never existed," said Mr. Whitehead, 48, a former Navy sailor.

An attorney for Mr. Whitehead, Reed Rubenstein, described the outcome as a victory for his client. "This is the first time somebody has stood up and stopped these folks," the lawyer said.

A spokesman for Cair, Ibrahim Hooper, confirmed that the libel case was dismissed earlier this month on the request of both parties. "It was settled out of court for an undisclosed amount," he said.

Asked if he was suggesting that Mr. Whitehead paid the organization to drop the case, Mr. Hooper said, "We filed the suit." Asked again, the spokesman simply repeated the statement.

An attorney for Cair, Jeremiah Denton III, declined to comment.

The group's lawsuit, filed in a Virginia state court in March 2004, accused Mr. Whitehead of libeling Cair by calling it "a terrorist supporting front organization that is partially funded by terrorists." The suit also charged that Mr. Whitehead falsely claimed Cair was founded by supporters of a Palestinian Arab terrorist group, Hamas, and that the organization favored the "overthrow of the United States Constitution" and the imposition of Islamic law, known as Shariah.

In June, Cair amended its suit against Mr. Whitehead, dropping its challenge to several of the statements, including the claim that the group was started by Hamas members and has received funds from terrorists.

Mr. Hooper said that despite the withdrawal of the suit, his organization, which describes itself as "a grassroots civil rights and advocacy group," still contends that Mr. Whitehead's assertions are false. "We've always denied them. We continue to deny them," the spokesman said.

CAIR Settles A Libel Suit Against Critic

Mr. Rubenstein said Cair's interest in settling the suit intensified late last year just as a judge was considering whether the group should be forced to disclose additional details about its inner workings, including its financing and its alleged ties to Hamas and other terrorist groups.

"It would have opened up Cair's finances and their relationships and their principles, their ideological motivations in a way they did not want to be made public," said Mr. Rubenstein, who represented Mr. Whitehead without charge.

Mr. Rubenstein charged that the lawsuit was one of a series of suits filed by Cair and other Muslim organizations as part of a concerted effort to intimidate their critics. "It's part of a larger pattern groups like this have followed. If you say something some of those Muslim groups don't like, they sue you even though the cases have no merit," the attorney said. "You change people's behavior simply by bringing the lawsuit."

"It looks like all they're really trying to do is stifle free speech," Mr. Whitehead said.

Mr. Rubenstein pointed to libel suits brought against several news outlets and journalists recently by the Islamic Society of Boston. The Islamic Society, which is seeking to build a new mosque on public land, alleged that the journalists and pro-Israel activists unfairly linked the religious group to terrorism.

Cair is pressing to revive a \$2 million lawsuit it filed in 2003 against a former North Carolina congressman, Thomas Cass Ballenger, who asserted in a newspaper interview that the group was "the fund-raising arm of Hezbollah." He also said his wife was distressed by the presence of a Cair office near their home and by scenes of "hooded" women, wearing Islamic head coverings, going in and out of the office.

Last year, a federal judge in Washington, Richard Leon, ruled that Mr. Ballenger's comments fell within the scope of his employment as a congressman. The ruling made the federal government the defendant in the case and led to its dismissal.

Last week, Mr. Denton appeared before a federal appeals court panel to argue that the case should be reinstated.

Mr. Rubenstein said that after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, Cair posted links on its Website leading visitors to make donations to two Islamic non-profit groups, the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development and the Global Relief Foundation. Both groups have had their assets frozen and seized by federal authorities over alleged ties to terrorism.

A man who was a co-founder of the Holy Land Foundation and of Cair's Texas chapter, Ghassan Elashi, was convicted in 2004 on six counts of illegal trade with Syria. The FBI has charged that he also has links to Hamas.

"These are bad guys," Mr. Rubenstein said.

Correction

Reed Rubinstein is the correct spelling of the name of an attorney for Andrew Whitehead. The name was spelled incorrectly in an article on page 1 of the March 24–26 Sun.

Correction-Date: March 27, 2006

Load-Date: March 27, 2006

Israeli air raid expands conflict

Wales on Sunday
July 16, 2006, Sunday
North Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 7

Length: 185 words

Byline: Wales on Sunday

Body

An Israeli air raid killed at least 13 Lebanese civilians who were fleeing southern border areas yesterday.

As the Middle East crisis escalated last night, women and children were among the dead when the convoy was hit.

A number of families were fleeing their village of Marwahin on the Israeli border when their convoy was struck by missiles, a UN spokesman told the BBC.

'Bodies litter the road,' an eyewitness said.

Israel has expanded its campaign launched after Hezbollah militants seized two Israeli soldiers. More than 70 Lebanese have been killed.

Hezbollah has responded with rockets. Several have hit the town of Tiberias in the deepest such attack in Israel.

Three Israeli sailors are missing after their ship was hit by a Hezbollah missile on Friday. The body of a fourth was found, according to Israeli media.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has said the offensive will continue until Hezbollah releases the soldiers and stops firing rockets at Israel.

In other attacks, Israeli planes struck the northern port city of Tripoli, and carried out raids in north and north-eastern Lebanon for the first time.

Load-Date: July 17, 2006

Thou shalt have democracy, for God and the US

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

March 5, 2005 Saturday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; News Review; Pg. 28

Length: 855 words

Byline: Michael Gawenda

Body

To George Bush, the events in Lebanon add justification to a holy 'mission', writes Michael Gawenda.

WHILE the US Supreme Court this week was considering arguments about whether displays of the Ten Commandments in public buildings and spaces was unconstitutional, George Bush was warning Syria to get out of Lebanon immediately, adding that freedom was given to human beings by a "higher authority".

Given that the US is basically a secular democracy, it is curious how often God is invoked in support of policies - even the privatisation of social security, which Bush says will add to the sum of human freedom, has God's support.

When Antonin Scalia, likely to be the next chief justice of the Supreme Court, says all US institutions derive their legitimacy from God, you understand one reason why there is such tension and conflict between America and an increasingly godless Europe.

In the Bush view of the world, God is not a pragmatist or a foreign policy realist. The US has a God-given mission to spread freedom and liberty and if there have been times when America lost sight of its mission, Bush is determined to ensure that his presidency won't be such a time.

In the past few months, 8 million Iraqis voted in elections where they were threatened with death if they turned up at polling booths. There have been free elections in the West Bank and in Gaza, which saw the moderate Mahmoud Abbas elected president of the Palestinian Authority.

In Egypt, under pressure from the US and from an increasingly emboldened opposition, President Hosni Mubarak announced there would be electoral reform to allow multiple candidates in the presidential election.

Even Saudi Arabia, perhaps the most authoritarian regime in the Middle East, has had limited municipal elections, though women were barred from voting.

And then there's Lebanon where, since the assassination of the former prime minister Rafik Hariri, street protests involving tens of thousands of people and a newly unified opposition demanded the immediate withdrawal of Syrian troops from the country and free elections next month.

No one could have predicted all this and no one could have predicted that the Syrian-backed government, in the face of the continuing protests, would resign in ignominy, bowing to overwhelming people power.

Thou shalt have democracy, for God and the US

Nor could anyone have predicted that Walid Jumblatt, the most senior Lebanese opposition leader who a few months ago said he was happy when US soldiers were killed in Iraq - calling the killing "legitimate and obligatory"- would tell The Washington Post that the war in Iraq and last month's elections had been the trigger for democratic change in the Middle East.

In Washington, the Jumblatt quote has been used repeatedly by Administration officials as proof that Bush was right all along, that democracy would come to the Middle East as a result of the removal of Saddam Hussein.

In the conservative think tanks, where many of the senior fellows are either former Bush Administration officials or close to the Administration, there is triumphalism: Bush and God have been vindicated.

"Our most lethal weapon against the tyrants is freedom and it is now spreading on the wings of democratic revolution", says Michael Ledeen, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. "Faster please. The self-proclaimed experts have been wrong for generations. This is a revolutionary moment. Go for it."

While Bush and the Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, have, at least in public, been less effusive in taking the credit for the changes under way in the Middle East, Administration officials have made it clear both are more determined than ever to push for democratic change in the region and in Russia and China. Both, officials say, are more convinced than ever that the movement towards democracy in the Middle East, which was not the original justification for the war in Iraq, could not have happened without the removal of Saddam.

While most Democrats welcome the changes in the Middle East, many fear the administration is underestimating the challenges ahead, the things that could go wrong and the possibility that in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq, democracy will bring to power Islamic regimes hostile to US interests.

Writing in The New York Times this week, Flynt Leverett, a senior fellow of the Brookings Institution, argued that Administration hawks such as the Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, and the Vice-President, Dick Cheney, believe democratic change in the Middle East will mean the establishment of moderate, pro-Western governments that would accommodate Israel and help to project American influence.

Leverett warns this is the least likely outcome of what's happening and that the US should move cautiously with Syria and with Lebanon, lest it triggers a collapse of the Assad regime which, after a period of chaos, would most likely be replaced by an Islamist one. "In Lebanon, any effort to engineer a pro-Western Lebanese government would be resisted by Hezbollah ... in the face of such resistance, efforts to establish a pro-Western government would fail, creating more instability in the region."

Load-Date: July 17, 2007

Radical left is being right stupid over terrorism

Australian Financial Review

July 18, 2005 Monday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Opinion; Pg. 55

Length: 825 words

Byline: Ted Lapkin - Ted Lapkin is director of policy analysis at the Australia/Israel and Jewish Affairs Council, a Melbourne think tank.

Body

Appeasement is no way to win a war against Islamic extremists, says Ted Lapkin.

The aftermath of the London terrorist bombings has demonstrated that the anti-war left is severely afflicted by the political equivalent of battered wife syndrome.

Many scarred and bruised victims of spousal abuse have a history of excusing and rationalising the actions of their tormenters. A stubborn unwillingness to accept the proposition that their partners are scoundrels plunges these woeful women into a morass of self-deception that only spawns further violence.

The radical left has shown itself to be similarly blind about the fundamental nature of Islamic extremism. After each al-Qaeda outrage, Western anti-war ideologues are quick to castigate their own countrymen for a catalogue of sins. With a perverse combination of self-loathing and adoration of the enemy, the far-leftist mantra preaches that if only we were nicer, the jihadists could not fail to love us. It's our own fault if Osama bin Laden doesn't realise what good people we are.

All the while, these militant academics, pundits and politicians engage in ridiculous intellectual contortions designed to mitigate the guilt of the terrorist perpetrators. When push comes to shove, some left-wing intellectuals believe Islamic extremism is simply an understandable reaction to the sins of the West.

The streets of Britain's capital city were still damp with innocent blood when this obscene dance of political self-flagellation began. Within hours of the bombings, British author Tariq Ali was blaming these attacks on George Bush and Tony Blair. The architects of the London bombings were exercising their just entitlement to vengeance for the "violence being inflicted on the people of the Muslim world", wrote Ali.

Here, anti-war columnist Phillip Adams sang from the same song sheet on the opinion page of The Australian. "Let's be clear about it," thundered Adams, "the people who died in the subway tunnels and on the bus were victims of the Iraq War." It was Britain's participation in the "murderous folly of an invasion" that killed London commuters, not the bombs planted by Islamic extremists (The Australian, July 12).

Deakin University's Scott Burchill chimed in to decry the hidebound unwillingness of the "imperialist West" to consider the "legitimate grievances" of militant Islam. Until we "stop asserting the superiority of our values", warned Burchill, "we are unlikely to bring these attacks to an end". (AFR Review, July 15).

Radical left is being right stupid over terrorism

But the Spanish experience demonstrates rather conclusively that conciliatory overtures towards al-Qaeda sow the seeds of, not peace, but more terrorism.

After a bloody attack last year on Madrid's rail system, Spain's socialist government submitted to Islamic radical demands and withdrew its troop contingent from Iraq. But PM Jose Zapatero's craven act of capitulation did not necessarily purchase immunity to terrorism for Spain. In mid-June 2005, CNN reported that 16 members of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's network were arrested in Madrid while planning additional bombings against that city.

On September 11, 2001, Americans became aware that they were facing a war against an enemy of a kind they had never before encountered. Through bombings, decapitations and assassinations, it has dawned upon other democratic nations that, like it or not, they too are part of this same conflict.

Our enemies go by such names as al-Qaeda, Jamaah Islamiyah, Hamas and **Hezbollah**. They belong to a global jihadist movement that considers it a religious duty to wage holy Islamic war against the infidels of the West.

This is a war we did not start but that we dare not leave unfinished. We dare not leave it unfinished because our antagonists see the destruction of our civilisation as a necessary precursor to the expansion of their own culture.

Our jihadist enemies are fighting to create a society that looks a lot like Afghanistan under the Taliban. This is a vision that is repugnant to the foundation ideals of free people everywhere. **Women** barefoot, burka-clad, illiterate and unemployed. Christians and Jews barely tolerated as second-class dhimmi citizens. No art, no science. A society dominated by poverty, oppression, backwardness and ignorance.

In the world according to radical Islam, it's the jihadist way or the highway, and these seventh-century dogmas represent the only acceptable outcome to al-Qaeda.

But the far left views the world through a political prism that distorts this essential reality. Fixated by a knee-jerk hostility towards all things American, Ali, Burchill et al refuse to recognise the existence of this conflict, much less the stakes that are involved. Thus, primal hard-leftist instinct is to appease bin Laden rather than oppose him.

Winston Churchill defined an appeaser as "someone who feeds the crocodile in the hopes of being eaten last". The sooner we accept the fact this is a war, the sooner we can go about the task of winning it.

Graphic

PHOTO: A CCTV image shows the London bombers arriving at Luton railway station. Photo: AP

Load-Date: April 5, 2012

McClooneyism II: The Protocols of Big Oil

National Post's Financial Post & FP Investing (Canada)

December 2, 2005 Friday

National Edition

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Section: FINANCIAL POST: COMMENT; Pg. FP23; Peter Foster

Length: 837 words

Byline: Peter Foster, Financial Post

Body

'Everything is connected' runs the tag line for the movie *Syriana*, another venture from proud and committed liberal "Gorgeous" George Clooney. The question is how. The movie's thesis is reminiscent of that old joke about the woman who is given a Rorschach ink blot test. She finds a pornographic theme in each picture. "You have a sexual problem," concludes the psychiatrist. "You can talk," says the woman, "you're the one who's showing all the dirty pictures!" Similarly, ask any good modern liberal to connect the geopolitical dots and you will wind up with a picture of corporate conspiracy centred in Washington.

Last week in this space I suggested that Clooney's other new movie, *Good Night, and Good Luck*, twisted facts at least as much as its target, Senator Joseph McCarthy, ever did. *Good Night's* theme is the unshakeable belief that corporate "power" is a perpetual threat to press freedom. *Syriana* steps up to a level of paranoid propaganda of which the junior senator from Wisconsin never dreamed.

The film portrays free markets as a fraud, capitalism as pillaging the Earth, the U.S. oil business and legal system as incurably corrupt, Washington as a cesspool and the CIA as an institution without a trace of morality. The good guys are suicide bombers and *Hezbollah*.

The film has had generally rave reviews, even though many reviewers admitted having trouble with the convoluted plot.

Clooney plays a CIA dirty-tricks specialist who "loses" a missile in the process of bumping off a couple of Iranian intelligence operatives. His superiors don't share his concern for the lost missile (big mistake), but offer him a final big assassination that could lead to a cushy desk job. He is to arrange the offing of an Arab prince, one of the possible heirs to a petroleum-rich Middle Eastern state. The prince is in fact an Oxford-educated "reformer" whose real "crime" is to have done a deal on concessions with the Chinese instead of the Americans. He must die! The prince acquires an advisor in the shape of a Geneva-based derivatives trader played by Matt Damon, who is gung-ho for the prince's plans to develop democracy and promote women's rights. Meanwhile, the big bad oil company that lost out to the Chinese is involved in a takeover of a smaller company with concessions in Kazakhstan, which it acquired with bribes. The U.S. government, as the political arm of the oil industry, wants the takeover to go through, but requires the "perception" of due diligence and some sacrificial lambs, who are willingly offered up from within the ranks of the merging companies and their legal advisors. Loyalty is for suckers. Finally a cute and innocent young Pakistani who loses his job in the oil fields winds up in a madrassa and is convinced that if he really has faith, he should go to paradise with a big bang. A really big bang. Clooney not only fails to take out the prince, he is

McClooneyism II: The Protocols of Big Oil

kidnapped and tortured by the assassin that he hired, who then blabs about what Clooney wanted him to do. Clooney's superiors' and colleagues' first thought is to hang him out to dry. Things go badly for everybody except Big Oil and its legal and political accomplices.

Edward R. Murrow attacked Joe McCarthy's tendency to "convict people by hearsay, rumour or innuendo." That pretty much sums up *Syriana*'s technique. The truly astonishing aspect of the movie's reviews is that many have treated it as if it was a documentary!

Like *Good Night*, *Syriana* comes from a relatively new production company, Participant, which is backed by Canadian-born Jeff Skoll, one of the founders of eBay. Mr. Skoll wants to make films that "make a difference" and *Syriana* is linked to a Web site that bemoans America's "oil addiction." and is full of Sierra Club hand-wringing about peak oil and climate change. Breaking the addiction, according to the site, "begins with the choices we make as individuals."

Stephen Gaghan, the movie's writer and director, apparently hasn't been to the Web site. He drives a 6.5-litre GTO that gets five miles to the gallon. Still, all that personal choice stuff is really for the little people. Messrs. Gaghan and Clooney have bigger fish to fry.

Two scenes in particular stand out. In one, the Damon character has a television on in his office which, for no obvious reason, is playing old newsreel footage of John D. Rockefeller, the founder of Standard Oil. John D. is leading a hymn (the old hypocrite!). "John D. Rockefeller founded the University of Chicago," says one of Damon's colleagues. Get it? The founder of the world's most evil oil company also founded the university most connected with free-market economics. 'Nuff said. Later, an oleaginous oilman gives a speech in favour of corruption, declaring that the only real corruption is government interference in business. "Milton Friedman said that," declares the oilman, and "he won a goddamn Nobel Prize!" Get it? The most famous teacher from the Chicago school is cited to support business corruption.

How can you not get it? Everything is connected.

Graphic

Black & White

Photo: Michael Albans, New York Daily News, KRT; GEORGE CLOONEY: How can you not get it?

Load-Date: December 2, 2005

Iran victor turns his back on US to pursue nuclear aim

The Times (London)

June 27, 2005, Monday

Copyright 2005 Times Newspapers Limited

Section: Overseas news; 26

Length: 869 words

Byline: Ramita Navai

Body

From Ramita Navai in Tehran.

IRAN'S new ultra-conservative President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, defended yesterday his country's right to pursue its nuclear programme regardless of European and American pressure.

He said that he would continue discussions with Europe but insisted that his country had no need for ties with the United States.

In the first press conference since his shock election victory on Friday, his replies about the nuclear issue were the only time that his monotone voice became emotive and defiant.

"It is Iran's right and it is what every single Iranian wants. With preserving national interests and by emphasising the right of the Iranian nation for using peaceful nuclear technology, we will continue the talks (with Europe)," he said.

The EU has reacted nervously to Mr Ahmadinejad's victory. He is surrounded by ideological hardliners who are loath to make concessions to the West over Iran's nuclear programme.

Analysts have predicted that his win will mark a downturn in Iran's relations with the West. His supporters are from Iran's main conservative parties who have often stridently criticised Western countries and accused them of exploitation and imperialism.

However, he may not have much power in setting foreign policy. That right is bestowed on the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, and the Supreme National Security Council, of which the President is a member, but not the deciding influence. Mr Ahmadinejad will also find it hard to criticise the nuclear policy, as it has been set by the Leader and any criticism would appear as directly challenging his opinions.

What is clear is that it will be much harder to reach agreements with Britain, Germany and France, who have continued the negotiations.

It appears that it will be harder still to reach any rapprochement with America.

"Our nation is continuing the path of progress and on this path has no significant need for (relations with) the United States," he said.

Iran victor turns his back on US to pursue nuclear aim

Donald Rumsfeld, the US Defence Secretary, said yesterday that Mr Ahmadinejad was no friend of democracy. "He is very much supportive of the current ayatollahs, who are telling the people of (Iran) how to live their lives, and my guess is over time the young people and women will find him as well as his masters unacceptable."

Mr Ahmadinejad began his press conference by reciting a passage from the Koran in Arabic. Dwarfed by his aides -if he is Iran's first non-cleric President in 24 years he is also its shortest -he smiled broadly for photographers and even gave a regal wave to journalists in the gallery.

He deftly deflected thorny questions -when asked about Iran's human rights record he questioned Europe's. His rhetoric was peppered with revolutionary talk of brotherhood and love for the nation and he continued his campaign themes of eradication of poverty and corruption. But speaking in general terms, he gave no hard guarantees on issues that are concerning some Iranians, such as social freedoms and women's rights.

Mr Ahmadinejad has a reputation as a religious hardliner who has opposed measures to relax some restrictions on life in Tehran. His win marks a resurgence of the conservatives and highlights the stark class divides in Iran. His campaign agenda targeted the working classes, with his promises to solve the housing crisis, poverty and unemployment -which is unofficially 30 per cent -and transformed him into an Islamic Robin Hood.

But his critics say that Mr Ahmadinejad's mix of strict Islamic values and politics will drag Iran back into the dark days after the revolution when women were flogged for wearing too much make-up.

However, the biggest fear, his critics say, is that his victory gives the conservatives control of Iran's two highest elected offices -the presidency and parliament -taking conservatives a step nearer to absolute power. Such a concentration of strength at the top could ultimately bring Iran closer to dictatorship.

Leading article, page 17.

THE VERDICTS

* "With the conclusion of the elections in Iran, we have seen nothing that dissuades us from our view that Iran is out of step with the rest of the region". US State Department

* "This election was an internal affair and we respect its outcome". Saeb Erakat, Palestinian Negotiations Minister

* "I hope that under Mr Ahmadinejad's presidency, Iran will take early steps to address international concerns about its nuclear programme". Jack Straw, Foreign Secretary

* "We must stand by our demand that Iran respect fundamental human rights, as we did with outgoing President (Mohammad) Khatami". Franco Frattini, EU Justice Commissioner

* "The result proved once again that Iran is adding more radicalism and extremism rather than serious reforms and reconciliation". Silvan Shalom, Israeli Foreign Minister

* "Economic co-operation also rests on how successfully Iran can secure international trust and further open itself". Joschka Fischer, German Foreign Minister

* "The Iranian people has once again shown that it possesses an extraordinary vitality in the face of challenges and that it is determined to impose its choice in the presidential election and in the affairs of state". Sheikh Naim Qassem, Hezbollah assistant secretary-general

Load-Date: June 27, 2005

Divest them of their prejudice

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

June 3, 2005 Friday

National Edition

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Section: ISSUES & IDEAS; Pg. A21

Length: 905 words

Byline: Abraham Cooper and Harold Brackman, National Post

Body

The British Association of University Teachers has been forced to abandon its boycott of Israel's Haifa and Bar Ilan Universities. But we derive little comfort from this victory -- for it is merely the latest skirmish in an ongoing war to delegitimize the Jewish state. In the United States, this campaign now extends to the pews of mainstream Protestant Churches, some of which are mulling proposals to divest from U.S. firms doing business with Jerusalem.

A recent pronouncement by Reverend John H. Thomas, General Minister and president of the United Church of Christ (UCC) -- the Congregationalist denomination whose forbearers included the Puritan founding fathers and mothers of New England -- offers insight into a dangerous mindset.

Rev. Thomas has framed a divestment proposal that will be discussed at this summer's General Synod in a way that prejudges the result. After reminiscing about the anti-Vietnam War movement and Mississippi's "Freedom Summer," he recently suggested that the moral case against Israel is similarly compelling. The Jewish state's sin, he says, is forcing Palestinians "mourning [for] a lost state" to live as "aliens and strangers."

Rev. Thomas loves to analogize from U.S. history. When arguing that Israel should dismantle its controversial but effective anti-terrorist barrier abutting the Palestinian territories, for example, he urges Ariel Sharon to follow the example of the Massachusetts Congregationalists 350 years ago. That was when Bay Colony churches lowered barriers in order to admit young outsiders who'd not yet undergone the conversion experience necessary to become full-fledged Puritans.

One wonders whether Thomas's forbearers would have been as enthusiastic about such exercises in "youth outreach" if the incoming adolescents were brainwashed teenage killers like Abdel-Aziz al-Rantissi, an 18-year-old Palestinian homicide bomber who recently dressed as an Orthodox Jew, boarded a Jerusalem bus at rush hour, and killed 18 people. (In fact, we know how the Puritans dealt with boisterous young Quakers who "invaded" Boston's churches: They hanged four of them.)

The Protestant zeal to punish Israel comes at the very moment that Israel is about to unilaterally dismantle all its Gaza settlements, and is releasing 400 Palestinian prisoners linked to terrorist activities. Sharon has acted in the face of strong domestic opposition from critics who -- not without reason -- fear a new Palestinian state may degenerate into a terrorist "Hamastan." Even European diplomats, who typically have little good to say about Israel, have commended his political courage.

Divest them of their prejudice

Yet mainline Protestant zealots -- egged on by the World Council of Churches, a Geneva-based umbrella group -- continue to demonize Israel, still the only fully democratic state in the Middle East, as the equivalent of apartheid-era South Africa. Never mind that a million Israeli Arabs vote in Israel's elections, while Muslim women still aren't allowed to drive cars in Saudi Arabia. These "peace activists" see the Mideast through the distorting lens of their own prejudices.

Just look at the Web sites of the Presbyterian, Lutheran, Methodist and Episcopal denominations. Frozen in time, they ignore current developments and instead show details from dated "fact-finding missions" to Gaza and Jenin by church dignitaries. Typically, these officials find no time to visit grieving parents and orphans of Israelis blown up on the way to school, work or prayer. Other church dignitaries have hobnobbed with Lebanon's Iran-funded Hezbollah terrorists, who boast of the thousands of missiles they have ready to unleash on Northern Israel.

A recent study by the Institute for Religion and Democracy examined the human-rights-related pronouncements issued by these four mainline Protestant denominations. It showed that during the period 2000-2003, 37% of their criticism was directed against tiny Israel, and an additional 32% against the U.S. conduct of its war on terror. That leaves just 31% for the combined barbarity of all the world's authoritarian regimes.

It is difficult to fathom why this perverse anti-Israel mindset persists. Next time, instead of taking choreographed tours of refugee camps, mainline Protestant leaders should spend a week in Israel, a modern nation that in fewer than 60 years has absorbed millions of multicultural Jews -- from Morocco and Ethiopia to Iran and Russia -- as well 1.5 million gentiles. The Jewish state has forged an inclusive, democratic society despite recurrent wars and incessant terrorist attacks -- and has kept Jerusalem and other Christian holy cities open as sites for gathering and prayer by people of all faiths. Why on earth would this nation -- not Sudan, not North Korea, not Cuba -- should be a special target of Protestant wrath?

During the Second World War, as historian David S. Wyman documented in his book, *The Abandonment of the Jews*, mainline Protestant Churches "were almost inert in the face of the Holocaust." Since then, interfaith relations have come a long way. But the rhetoric from today's mainline Protestants threatens to reverse that progress. Let us hope Rev. Thomas will join in heeding Moses's double admonition of Tzedek, Tzedek Tirdof: "Justice, Justice Thou shall pursue." The Palestinian people shall have their state, but only when their hearts, minds and actions -- and those of the world community -- are divested of hatred of Israel.

Load-Date: June 3, 2005

'Diplomacy' with Iran self-destructive

Guelph Mercury (Ontario, Canada)

May 6, 2005 Friday Final Edition

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Section: OPINIONS; Pg. A11; OPINION

Length: 906 words

Byline: ELAN JOURNO

Body

Despite another round of talks with European diplomats, Iran has reaffirmed its determination to continue pursuing nuclear technology. That outcome is hardly unexpected.

The diplomatic effort led by Britain, France and Germany is touted as a reasonable way to settle the dispute over Iran's suspected nuclear weapons program without any losers. By enticing Iran to the negotiating table, we are told, the West can avoid a military confrontation, while Iran gains "economic incentives" that can help build its economy. But this deal -- backed also by the United States -- can only strengthen Iran and turn it into a greater menace.

The European deal -- said to include the sale of civilian aircraft and membership for Iran in the World Trade Organization -- rests on the notion that no one would put abstract goals or principles ahead of gaining a steady flow of economic loot. And so, if only we could negotiate a deal that gives Iran a sufficiently juicy carrot, it would forgo its ambitions.

But to believe that Iran really hungers for nuclear energy -- as it claims -- is sheer fantasy. Possessing abundant oil and gas reserves, Iran is the second-largest oil producer in OPEC. To believe that it values prosperity at all is equally fantastic; Iran is a theocracy that systematically violates its citizens' right to political and economic liberty.

What Iran desires is a nuclear weapon -- the better to threaten and annihilate the impious in the West and in Iran's neighbourhood. Iran declares its anti-Western ambitions stridently. At an official parade in 2003, Iran flaunted a Shihab-3 missile draped with a banner announcing "Israel must be wiped out." A missile paraded last year declared another of Iran's targets: "We will crush America under our feet."

A committed enemy of the West, Iran is the ideological wellspring of Islamic terrorism, and the "world's most active sponsor of terrorism," according to the U.S. government. A totalitarian regime that viciously punishes "un-Islamic" behaviour among its own citizens, Iran actively exports its contempt for freedom and human life throughout the infidel world.

For years it has been fomenting and underwriting savage attacks on Western and American interests, using such proxies as **Hezbollah**. Like several of the 9/11 hijackers before them, many senior al-Qaida leaders, fugitives of the Afghanistan war, have found refuge in Iran. And lately, Iran has funneled millions of dollars, arms and ammunition to insurgents in Iraq.

It's absurd to think that by offering Iran rewards to halt its aggression, we will deflect it from its goal.

'Diplomacy' with Iran self-destructive

The only consequence of engaging such a vociferously hostile regime in negotiations is the whitewashing of its crimes and the granting of undeserved legitimacy. The attempt to conciliate Iran with "incentives" further inflames the boldness of Iran's mullahs. What it teaches them is that the West lacks the intellectual self-confidence to name its enemies and deal with them accordingly. It vindicates the mullahs' view that their religious worldview can bring a scientific, technologically advanced West to its knees.

Far from converting Iran into a non-threat, the "incentives" would sustain its economy, prop up its dictatorial government and perpetuate its terrorist war against the West. Whether Iran accepts the European deal or merely prolongs "negotiations" indefinitely, so long as the "diplomatic" approach continues Iran gains time enough to engage in covert nuclear-weapons research. Iran's flouting of a previous agreement to stop enriching uranium, which prompted the current talks, and its documented attempts to acquire nuclear-bomb technology erase any doubts about how it will behave under any future deal.

This approach of diplomacy-with-anyone-at-any-cost necessarily results in nourishing one's enemy and sharpening its fangs. That is what happened under a 1994 deal with communist North Korea. In return for boatloads of aid and oil from the United States, Japan and other nations, North Korea promised not to develop nuclear weapons. Despite United Nations inspections, North Korea flouted the agreement repeatedly. When caught cheating, it promised anew to end its nuclear program in return for more "incentives." In February 2005 North Korea declared -- plausibly -- that it had succeeded in building nuclear weapons.

Another, older attempt to buy peace by giving "incentives" to an enemy was a cataclysmic failure. In 1938 the Europeans pretended that Hitler's intentions were not really hostile, and insisted that "peace in our time" could be attained by allowing him to walk into Czechoslovakia. Instead, he was emboldened to launch the Second World War.

Ignoring the lessons of history, the Europeans are advocating a deal with Iran that likewise purchases the reckless pretence of peace today, at the cost of unleashing catastrophic dangers tomorrow.

To protect American and European lives, we must learn the life-or-death importance of passing objective moral judgment. We must recognize the character of Iran and act accordingly. By any rational standard, Iran should be condemned and its nuclear ambition thwarted -- now. The brazenly amoral European gambit can only aid its quest-- and necessitate a future confrontation with a bolder, stronger Iran.

Elan Journo is a junior fellow at the Ayn Rand Institute. The Institute promotes the ideas of Ayn Rand -- best-selling author and originator of the philosophy of Objectivism.

Graphic

Photo: ASSOCIATED PRESS; ***Female*** reporters take notes while standing behind a model of Iran's Boushehr nuclear power plant at an information centre in Boushehr, Iran in 2003.

Load-Date: May 6, 2005

Mufti mixes motives

Herald Sun (Melbourne, Australia)

May 11, 2005 Wednesday

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Section: OPEDIT; Pg. 19

Length: 823 words

Byline: Andrew Bolt

Body

It's great Sheik El-Hilaly wants to free Douglas Wood. It's not so great that he uses his mission to spout his old messages of hate.

WE should be grateful Australia's most senior Islamic cleric has trekked to Baghdad to save the life of Australian hostage Douglas Wood.

But the Mufti of Australia, Sheik Taj El-Din El-Hilaly, has at the same time shown -- again -- that not all the Muslim extremists who threaten us are in Iraq.

Surely now even his closest supporters see that this man of hate should no longer represent our Muslims.

Hilaly on the weekend filmed an appeal in Arabic for Wood's kidnappers to spare the life of the 63-year-old engineer, who had been bashed, shaved bald, and threatened with execution if coalition forces were not pulled out of Iraq.

Hilaly is a Sunni extremist, like the men believed to hold Wood, and in his appeal, broadcast in Iraq, he told them: "We value your jihad and your efforts."

But, he added: "We call upon you to do something for the sake of our community and all Australian society, which does not support (Prime Minister John) Howard's pro-American policies. You know the Australian forces in Iraq are protected by American forces and don't do anything -- it's all politics."

I can think of only one plausible way to read this -- our senior Islamic cleric values the terrorists who kill and kidnap countless victims, most of them Iraqis. And he wants Wood freed because killing him won't help Muslims here, most Australians already think Howard is a toady, and the real enemy is America.

Of course, excuses were immediately made for the Mufti, as they always are when he is discovered vilifying Jews or Americans, or praising suicide bombers and terrorists.

Labor's immigration spokesman, Laurie Ferguson, for instance, said the "jihad" Hilaly backed was "not necessarily violent".

Besides, he added, "you've got to look at (his comments) in the context of his efforts to save someone's life", because "he has to negotiate with those people and to try and persuade them of his bona fides".

Mufti mixes motives

THERE they go again. Labor has a shameful history of defending Hilaly, ever since 1988, when the Egyptian-born radical called Jews "the underlying cause of all wars", using "sex and abominable acts of buggery, espionage, treason and economic hoarding to control the world".

Hilaly was about to be deported for rabble rousing, but the Hawke Government overturned the decision of its own Immigration Minister, Chris Hurford, so it could win Muslim votes in Sydney's western suburbs.

The Australian Federation of Islamic Councils has been just as quick to defend Hilaly, but hasn't bothered pretending, as did the dupe Ferguson, that this jihad he backed wasn't violent.

"The jihad is the war that you fight in self defence, and (the kidnappers) are trying to free the country from foreign occupation," its president, Amir Ali, said.

Yes, those patriotic freedom fighters, whose victims, paradoxically, are overwhelmingly Iraqi Kurds and Shiites, many of them women and children blown apart by car bombs.

But the federation, too, has long defended Hilaly's extremism. It first made him Mufti in 1988 to "help him stay in Australia", as one of its members told me, and last year denied Hilaly had endorsed jihad and suicide attacks on Israel, even when he'd been taped in Lebanon saying just that.

And it said nothing at all when SBS filmed the Mufti just before the September 11 attacks calling suicide bombers "heroes".

Of course, Hilaly may simply have said what Wood's kidnappers want to hear, to give himself a better chance of saving the poor man.

But his record -- which includes endorsing the Hezbollah terrorist group and hailing the September 11 attacks as "God's work against oppressors" -- is against him. I'm sure he said what he truly believes.

Even his former translator and spokesman, Keysar Trad of the Australian Lebanese Muslim Association, finally ran out of spin this week, admitting Hilaly had "used language that's not consistent with our expectations as Australians".

More consistent with our expectations has been the language of Australia's most senior Shiite cleric, Ayatollah Sheik Mohammed Hussein al-Ansari, who described the kidnappers as criminals who defiled Islam.

"Those people, they have no religion or denomination," he said.

"They are a bunch of criminals and terrorists. They are using the name of Islam but they are not generally a Muslim people."

S UCH hot talk will not save Wood. But it may save Australia's Muslims from some of the unjust suspicion they attract by being represented by a Mufti who so often lauds Islamist terrorists and kidnappers.

Most Muslims are not enemies of freedom and the West, but leaders like Hilaly make them seem so.

The sooner he is replaced by a man of moderation, perhaps Melbourne's Sheik Fehmi Naji El Imam, the better for all Australians, Muslims and infidels alike.

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Load-Date: May 10, 2005

*Jihad: play the game:
Western PC games feature US forces destroying Arab enemies. Now Islam
is fighting back. Rebecca Armstrong reports*

Belfast Telegraph

August 17, 2005

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Length: 1453 words

Body

In 'Special Force', players can practise their sniping skills on Israeli political and military figures including Ariel Sharon

Grenades - check. Sniper rifle - check. Prayer mat- check. Gamers may be used to saving the day by taking on alien forces from another universe but a new wave of computer games are more concerned with saving the world from non-believers. With titles like Special Force and Under Siege, these games sound similar to military titles like Medal of Honour that regularly top the UK games chart for best-selling titles. Once people start playing though, it's obvious Special Force and Under Siege are very different both in quality and in content to their mainstream rivals.

Hizbollah, a radical Islamic group, spent two years developing Special Force, a PC game designed to compete with games showing Arabs as enemies and Americans as triumphant heroes. Emblazoned across the cover is the invitation to: "Be a partner in the victory. Fight, resist and destroy your enemy in the name of force and victory."

Inspired by actual Hizbollah missions, Special Force takes place during operations on Israeli soldiers. Players have to deal with the same conditions as real Hizbollah fighters, including weather conditions, mines and the number of enemy - Israeli - troops. During training, players can practise their sniping skills on Israeli

Jihad: play the game: Western PC games feature US forces destroying Arab enemies. Now Islam is fighting back. Rebecca Armstrong reports

political and military figures including the Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. Mahmoud

Rayya, an official from the Hizbollah bureau, explained at the game's launch

that "this game is resisting the Israeli occupation through the media".

The game sold thousands of copies in Lebanon in the first two weeks after its

release and has gone on to sell at least 10,000 more since.

Under Siege is another pro-Palestinian first person shooter (FPS) and is the

sequel to Under Ashes, a game launched in 2001. Under Siege and Under Ashes

were developed by Afkar Media, a Damascus-based software company that claims

it creates games to educate as well as eliminate. "We believe we had to

share responsibility in telling the story behind this conflict and targeting

youngsters who depend on video games and movies - which always tell the counter

side - to build their world knowledge." Under Ashes went on to sell more

than 10,000 copies in the Middle East, as well as being downloaded more than

500,000 times from the company's website. The game itself is a basic FPS that

is billed as suitable for children aged over 13 despite the vast armoury available

to players. Radwan Kasmiya, Afkar Media's executive manager, insists the game

promotes non-violent methods. "This is not a game about killing. We are

attempting to provide a new sort of digital dignity." Despite the warfare,

the game does have a self-perception seldom found in mainstream military titles.

At the end of one level, there is a tagline that reads: "A real life story

or a political propaganda? You have the right to decide."

While these titles aim to redress the balance to a genre dominated by victorious

US soldiers defeating Arab enemies, there are other games available that reflect

a wider unease with Western thinking. The Ummah Defence titles are fairly innocuous,

with robots as enemies and an Islamic universe under threat. In The Maze of

Destiny, players battle with an evil wizard named Dar-lack the Deceiver who

has ruined a Muslim utopia where everyone worships Allah by stealing the Book

of Allah and imprisoning anyone who knows Allah's teachings. Armed only with

their wits and their faith, players must rescue the wise ones from Darlack's

dungeons. Challenges include setting bombs to open secret passageways and exploring

Jihad: play the game: Western PC games feature US forces destroying Arab enemies. Now Islam is fighting back. Rebecca Armstrong reports

endless labyrinths. Stylistically, the game is like an early Nintendo title but at its heart is the secular Darlack who plies people with alcohol, drugs, prostitutes and gambling. All three titles are created by Islamgames, a US-based company that makes titles featuring battles between the defenders of Islam and their opponents. The company explains its stance by stating that: "Video games are a great learning tool, but many games available teach things contrary to the teachings of Islam. By providing an alternative to the mainstream, we can help our children in a subtle way learn to identify with Islamic values and teachings."

Islam Fun is a collection of PC mini-games aimed at encouraging children to learn more about Islam. In among Two Bunny Race and Building Blocks- Build a Mosque is the more alarming The Resistance. Gamers play a farmer in South Lebanon who has joined the Islamic Resistance to defend their land and family from invading Zionists. As the game is aimed at five-to seven-year-olds, it seems this particular mini-game is slightly advanced. In defence of their subject matter, Innovative Minds, the company behind Islam Fun, made this statement. "The questions in the game educate children not to fall for the Zionist lie that Zionism, Jewishness and Judaism are synonymous but to understand that Zion-ism, a racist ideology, has nothing to do with Judaism." There's little danger that these titles are going to become best-sellers in the UK, despite their efforts to represent a different ideology. The Video Standards Council, which decides the age and content rating system for UK computer games, does not permit the sale of any game containing material featuring discrimination or incitement to hatred against any ethnic group. Any title that contains material like this is also highly likely to contravene criminal law in the UK and most European countries. But, online boundaries are blurred, as one downloadable game from America, Ethnic Cleansing, proves.

Johnny Minkley, the editor of MC CV, the trade magazine for the games industry, isn't convinced that religion games are ever going to compete with mainstream titles. "Video games are barely coming a more acceptable mass-market

Jihad: play the game: Western PC games feature US forces destroying Arab enemies. Now Islam is fighting back. Rebecca Armstrong reports

media and a means of expression for more groups. It's natural evolution. Religious games are just one small facet of the games industry."

John Houlihan, the editor of Computer and Videogames, agrees: "There has been a move towards more religious gaming, both in America and the Middle East. However, these games are still very much a minority interest for the industry. Just like with music, the devil has all the best tunes - and all the best games."

Special Force Developer: **Hizbullah** Central Internet Bureau

Like Under Siege, Special Force is a more professional title than, say, Islamic Fun. Players simulate Hizbollah fighters during military operations against the Israeli army and action is inspired by actual Hizbollah operations. Stalking soldiers, blowing up tanks and full on street battles are the main aspects of the game as players run through a city battleground causing destruction.

(www.specialforce.net)

Islamic Fun Innovative Minds

A selection of simple games for children that aim to teach them about aspects of Islam.

Games like Building Blocks, where players create their own mosque, make up the majority. One stand-out mini-game is The Resistance, where players take the role of a farmer in south Lebanon who has joined Hamas to defend his land and family from the invading Zionists. (www.inminds.co.uk)

Under Siege Afkar Media

The sequel to Under Ash, Under Siege is a first-person shooter (FPS) game played

Jihad: play the game: Western PC games feature US forces destroying Arab enemies. Now Islam is fighting back. Rebecca Armstrong reports

from the perspective of a Palestinian. In single-player mode, Under Siege is like many FPS games featuring a specific enemy (in this case, the Israeli army), and gives players an arsenal of weapons with which to do battle. Choose from grenades, rocket launchers, sniper rifles and automatic weapons. Graphically, Under Siege is underdeveloped and very basic, so it won't be rivalling Far Cry in the FPS stakes. (www.underash.net)

Maze of Destiny IslamGames

In Maze of Destiny, players must battle the evil wizard Darlack to rescue the teachers of the Koran and re-establish the true worship of Allah. Maze of Destiny is reminiscent of Zelda, with its maze-based 2D levels. Gamers have to negotiate labyrinthine dungeons while avoiding being plied with women or drink. Simple but effective. (www.islamgames.com)

Ummah Defense 1 & 2 IslamGames

It's the year 2114 and the Earth is united under the banner of Islam. As a member of the Intergalactic Muslim Council, your job is to help coordinate Dawa efforts on other planets. But the Flying Evil Robot Armada attacks Earth and it's up to you to save the planet. The first title is a simple, Space Invaders -inspired game, while Ummah 2 is more sophisticated, like an early Mario title. (www.islamgames.com)

Load-Date: August 17, 2005

Nadia's wedding

The Irish Times

June 3, 2006 Saturday

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Section: WORLD; Under the Crescent; Pg. 13

Length: 1490 words

Body

When a female suicide bomber tried to blow up another Muslim woman's wedding, for many it epitomised the tensions in modern Islam, Mary Fitzgerald

The call of the muezzin sounds different in Amman. In this city built on seven hills the Muslim summons to prayer bounces and echoes through the deep valleys that cleave Jordan's sprawling capital. It's a sound that Nadia al-Alami has found comforting since childhood, a sound she says reinforces her sense of faith.

In many ways, Nadia is a typical modern Muslim woman. She prays. She fasts at Ramadan. She watches the younger generation of Muslim preachers on TV because she likes the way they apply Islam to contemporary life. Although she doesn't wear hijab - the Muslim headscarf - many of her friends do. She felt offended by the Danish cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad but abhorred the violent protests that followed. At ease with her faith, the 24-year-old graduate describes Islam as her compass - "It's the deepest, most basic thing I depend on. It's my connection with God. It's what gives me directions for the map of my life."

Faith is also important to Sajida Mubarak al-Rishawi, an Iraqi woman whose brother died fighting US troops in Falluja. Last November Sajida and her husband stood among guests at Nadia's wedding reception in an Amman hotel, explosives belts strapped around their waists. Her husband detonated his belt but Sajida failed to set off hers. The bombing claimed the lives of 27 wedding guests, including Nadia's parents and her husband Ashraf's father.

Admitting responsibility, Jordanian militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and his organisation al-Qaeda in Iraq employed language echoing that used to justify similar attacks in New York, London, Madrid, Bali, Turkey, Egypt and Morocco. The intention was not to kill Muslims, they insisted, rather to target "the dens of evil that were established on Muslim soil in Amman, in order to protect the faith and raise the banner of tawhid [monotheism]".

Sajida later appeared on Jordanian state TV, wearing a white headscarf and the explosives belt she failed to detonate. With a calm voice, she explained how she and her husband had carried out the attack. "He took a corner, and I took a corner," she said. "There was a wedding in the hotel, children, women and men. My husband detonated his belt. I tried to detonate mine, but it did not explode. I went out. The people started running and I ran away with them."

At the opening of her trial last month, where she appeared veiled and chained at the ankles, Sajida was defiant. "I have God to defend me," she said.

Nadia and Sajida frame what many have described as a battle for the soul of Islam, an ideological struggle that has taken on a new urgency in the wake of the September 11th attacks.

Nadia's wedding

Repelled by those who use violence in the name of Islam, ordinary Muslims throughout the world are refusing to allow their religion to be hijacked by an intolerant minority fuelled by what they see as obscurantist ideology.

"Using the name of Islam to justify this violence is making the world see us Muslims as terrorists," Nadia says, shaking her head. She says her faith has grown stronger since the bombings and she plans to start wearing hijab later this year.

"The people who do this kind of thing are terrorists. They do not have any relationship with Islam. When I saw Sajida wearing hijab on TV, I was shocked. How dare she? The people who killed my parents have nothing to do with my religion.

"The message of Islam is peace. Peace with ourselves, peace with others, peace with the whole universe."

The debate within the Islamic world is not just limited to combating extremism. Nor is it something new - the Muslim faith has always included different schools of thought and varying interpretations. What makes it different this time is the increasing sense of urgency.

Fourteen centuries after the Prophet Muhammad received the divine revelations that would form its core, Islam stands at a critical juncture. The world's fastest growing religion is caught in an existential dilemma, experiencing one of the most dynamic revivals in its history while trying to establish what it means to be Muslim in a globalised world dominated by a secular West that appears to many omnipotent, even predatory, in its politics, economy and culture.

As Sally (36), an Egyptian Muslim whose British husband converted to Islam, puts it: "We are different. That doesn't mean that we hate the West and what it stands for. It just means that we are different and we don't necessarily want to be like you. We want that difference respected."

The debate about the meaning and message of Islam in the 21st century takes place every day in mosques, study groups and televised sermons across the Muslim world from Cairo to Jakarta, as traditionalists and those who see themselves as reformers try to mesh Islamic principles and precepts with the realities of modern life.

In a faith with no central authority and no formal clergy, it is no easy task. The result is a cacophony of competing voices - from the moderate to the extreme - all claiming to hold the only true version of Islam. The spectrum of this debate reflects the immense diversity of the Muslim world, divided as it is by geography, language, culture and often turbulent histories.

Far from being homogenous, Islam is practised and observed differently across countries and cultures. Embracing some 1.4 billion people, ranging from the taxi driver in Indonesia who unfurls his prayer mat at the side of the road when he hears the muezzin, to the Egyptian student who wears her sequined headscarf with the latest boho chic fashion, its vast territory stretches eastward from the west coast of Africa to Indonesia.

Muslims form the majority in some 45 countries, with the largest number concentrated in Asia. Among them are members of three main groups - Sunni, Shia, and Sufi - all of which splinter into various subdivisions and sects.

Muslims talk of an Islamic reawakening that has been building for decades, powered by a groundswell in personal piety that is not limited just to the poor and disadvantaged. Whether it's more women choosing to wear hijab or more men shunning alcohol, many Muslim countries have witnessed a surge in devotion matched by strict observance of Islamic rituals.

It is not all confined to the personal. Financial institutions have sprung up offering a range of alternatives for saving, lending and investment that respect Islam's strict prohibition on interest. Technology has helped too - through the internet, satellite TV and telecommunications, the core idea of umma (community of believers) has taken on a whole new meaning, particularly for young Muslims eager to carve out a distinct faith-based identity.

They use Muslim matchmaking websites to find husbands or wives and use online fatwa services for advice on how to live their lives. They prefer to watch young TV preachers instead of the bearded sheikhs of the past and listen to

Nadia's wedding

modern reworkings of nasheed, Islamic devotional singing. Their mobile phones are as likely to ring with an exhortation to Allah as the latest hit.

For some Muslims, this revitalised sense of faith has crossed over to the ballot box. In recent years Islamist political parties of all hues, from the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jordan, Hamas in the Palestinian territories, **Hizbullah** in Lebanon and the Justice and Development party in Turkey, have made electoral gains by espousing democracy within a frame based on and protective of Islamic values. Underpinning all this is the idea that Islam is not merely a faith but an all-encompassing social system.

Many in Europe and the US have viewed these developments with dismay or fear, equating the rise of political Islam in particular with extremism and militancy. They question Islamist politicians' commitment to democracy and their position on the role of **women** and minorities.

In return, many Muslims accuse the West of being hostile towards Islam and Muslims. They cite US foreign policy and the publication of newspaper cartoons lampooning the Prophet Muhammad to support the sense that theirs is an embattled faith.

Amr Khaled, one of the Muslim world's most popular and influential TV preachers, believes there are misunderstandings on both sides. He recently attended a conference in Denmark to discuss the impact of the cartoon controversy.

"Many people in the West believe all Muslims are extremists and that Islam leads people to become extremists. That's just not true. Muslims have to accept part of the responsibility for this image but so do some people in the West," he says.

"There is a lack of justice, freedom and rights in many Muslim countries and in a lot of cases this is backed up by the West. These conditions encourage extremist thinking and terrorism.

"I believe there is extremism on both sides but we must not allow their voices to become louder than ours."

maryfitzgerald@irish-times.ie

Load-Date: June 3, 2006

The night the children of Qana died

The International Herald Tribune

July 31, 2006 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 898 words

Byline: Sabrina Tavernise

Dateline: QANA, Lebanon

Body

It was pitch black when the missiles came to this small mountain village. The children were asleep. Suddenly, a roof and a second floor were punched in on top of them. Dirt was forced into mouths.

Bodies were broken.

The bombing continued through the night, and it was not until Sunday morning that neighbors and emergency workers were able to reach those buried inside.

Digging under the rubble, they pulled out 28 bodies. Twenty of them were children. The youngest was 10 months.

Late Sunday night, they were still digging.

Tallies of the dead varied. Residents said that as many as 60 people had been inside the house. Some news agencies reported that 56 had been killed, and that 34 of them were children.

The Israeli airstrike at Qana was the single most lethal attack in the course of this sudden war. The survivors will remember it as the day their children died. For the village, it is a fresh pain in an old wound and a reminder of just how much of the burden of wars with Israel that they bear.

In 1996, Israelis attacked a United Nations camp in the village after refugees took shelter there. More than 100 were killed, many of them children.

The Israeli government apologized for that attack, as it did for this one. But it said that residents had been warned to leave.

But leaving southern Lebanon is now a dangerous and pricey business. The two extended families staying in the house the Shaloubs and the Hashims had discussed leaving several times over the past two weeks. But they were poor most family members worked in tobacco or construction and the family was big and weak, with a 95-year-old, two relatives who used wheelchairs and dozens of children. A taxi to Beirut, about the equivalent of \$1,000, was impossible.

And then there was the risk of the road. Dozens, including 21 refugees in the back of a pickup truck on July 15, have been killed on roads in Israeli strikes since the war began.

The night the children of Qana died

"We heard on the news they were bombing the Red Cross," said Zaineb Shalhoub, a 22-year-old who survived the bombing and was lying quietly in a hospital bed in Tyre. "There was just no way to go."

So they had moved to the house on the edge of a high ridge. It was dug into the earth and they thought it would be safer.

But the house's most valuable asset was its water. The town, mostly abandoned, had not had power or running water in many days and a neighbor had rigged a system to pump it. The Shalhoub and Hashims ran a pipe from that house to theirs, providing water.

Flowers placed on bodies

Rescuers clambered over rubble throughout the day, using their hands to pull the bodies of men, women and children from the buildings, Reuters reported.

"Why have they attacked 1- and 2-year-old children and defenseless women? What have they done wrong?" asked Mohamed Samai, whose relatives were among the dead.

The bodies were wrapped tightly in plastic sheets and taped closed. They were assembled under an awning in the town and flowers were placed on them.

A woman in red-patterned pajamas lay crumpled and lifeless in the broken masonry. A leg poked out from the shattered concrete nearby. A medic carried a dead child in his arms from rubble. Other children lay dead in the street.

A medic checked the pulse of a man covered in blood and raised his eyelids, desperately looking for signs of life before giving up. Rescue workers draped sheets over bodies, the rigid arm of one corpse pointing to the sky.

"This is not only Israel's fault, this is the fault of America and the Arab states that backed Israel's attack," Samai said. "If the Israelis want to attack. let them fight the resistance face-to-face." He finished speaking and collapsed.

The strike was less than a kilometer from the mass grave of more than 100 Lebanese killed in Qana in 1996 by Israel's shelling of a UN base. They, too, had been sheltering from bombardment.

For Fatima Balhas, the Israeli airstrike on her village revived painful memories of the 1996 campaign.

She lost five children and her husband in 1996.

"I am today reliving the Qana massacre," she said.

"This enemy does not know either mercy or human rights or democracy this enemy, which is supported by America," said Balhas, who has never fully recovered from her wounds.

Her family members are buried in a mass grave with the other victims of 1996 not far from the building destroyed by the latest airstrike. Rescue workers pulled the bodies of men, women and children from the rubble.

The 1996 victims had been seeking shelter in a UN peacekeepers' base in the village, which nestles in rolling hills dotted with olive trees in southern Lebanon and identifies itself as the place where Jesus turned water into wine.

The Israeli gunners who hit the compound said they had been targeting Hezbollah.

"The first massacre was committed under the UN flag," said Abdel Majid Saleh, a member of Parliament, as he viewed the devastation. "This massacre was committed in the shadow of olive trees. The land on which Jesus set foot has been turned into a symbol for martyrdom."

The international outcry over the 1996 attack on Qana helped force Israel to end its 17-day-long campaign.

The night the children of Qana died

"Ten years on, it appears that the Zionist Dracula's thirst has yet to be quenched," said the speaker of Lebanon's Parliament, Nabih Berri.

Essam Touni, the deputy governor of Qana, said: "There can be no peace in this way and no reconciliation with this enemy."

Load-Date: July 31, 2006

End of Document

In Scramble to Evade Israeli Bombs, the Living Leave the Dead Behind

The New York Times

July 21, 2006 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 2; Foreign Desk; Pg. 9; TURMOIL IN THE MIDEAST: AIRSTRIKES

Length: 841 words

Byline: By HASSAN M. FATTAH

Dateline: TYRE, Lebanon, July 20

Body

Carpenters are running out of wood for coffins. Bodies are stacked three or four high in a truck at the local hospital morgue. The stench is spreading in the rubble.

The morbid reality of Israel's bombing campaign of the south is reaching almost every corner of this city. Just a few miles from the Rest House hotel, where the United Nations was evacuating civilians on Thursday, wild dogs gnawed at the charred remains of a family bombed as they were trying to escape the village of Hosh, officials said.

Officials at the Tyre Government Hospital inside a local Palestinian refugee camp said they counted the bodies of 50 children among the 115 in the refrigerated truck in the morgue, though their count could not be independently confirmed.

Abdelmuhsin al-Husseini, Tyre's mayor, announced on Thursday that any bodies not claimed in the next two days by next of kin would be buried temporarily in a mass grave near the morgue until they could receive a proper burial once the fighting ends.

"I am asking the families, if they can come here, to claim the bodies," said Mr. Hussein, whose bloodshot eyes hinted at his mad scramble to secure food rations and bring some order to the city. "Otherwise, we have no choice but to bury them in mass graves."

With the roads and bridges to many surrounding villages bombed out, few families have come to the hospital to claim their dead.

Even if they could make the journey, they would fear being hit by airstrikes along the way, Mr. Hussein said. Emergency workers have been unwilling to brave the risk of recovering many bodies left along the road, leaving them to rot.

For those relatives who reach the morgue, conducting a proper burial is impossible while the bombing continues. Many have opted to leave the bodies at the morgue until the conflict ends.

The morgue has had to order more than 100 coffins with special handles to make it easier to remove them from the ground to be reburied later.

In Scramble to Evade Israeli Bombs, the Living Leave the Dead Behind

"What? He wants a hundred?" a local carpenter said, half shocked, half perplexed. "Where the hell am I going to get enough wood to build that many coffins?"

At the hospital, members of the medical staff now find themselves dealing with the dead more than saving the living.

"This hospital is working like a morgue more than a hospital," said Hala Hijazi, a volunteer whose mother is an anesthesiologist at the hospital. Lately, Ms. Hijazi said, she has begun to recognize some of the faces arriving here as the scale of the Israeli bombings has continued to widen. "A lot of the people are from Tyre, and we know some of them," she said of the bodies.

A pall overtook Tyre on Thursday, as United Nations peacekeepers loaded more than 600 United Nations employees, foreigners and Lebanese onto a ferry to Cyprus, then promptly packed up their makeshift evacuation center at the Rest House and left for their base in the town of Naqura.

Hundreds descended on the hotel on Wednesday, desperate to board the ferry. Despite fears that many would be left behind, almost all who sought refuge were able to board the ship Thursday.

But as the last United Nations peacekeepers left town on Thursday, those who remained braced for an even heavier bombardment.

For Ali and Ahmad al-Ghanam, brothers who have taken shelter in a home just a few blocks from the morgue, the refrigerated truck of dead bodies is a vivid reminder of the attack that killed 23 members of their family.

When Israeli loudspeakers warned villagers to evacuate the village of Marwaheen last Saturday, the families packed their belongings and headed for safety. More than 23 of them piled into a pickup and drove toward Tyre, with the brothers trailing behind. Another group set off for a nearby United Nations observation post, but were promptly turned away.

As the pickup raced to Tyre, Ali al-Ghanam said, Israeli boats shelled their convoy, hitting the car and injuring the women and children in the back. But within minutes an Israeli helicopter approached the car, firing a missile that blew the truck to pieces as the passengers struggled to jump out, he said.

His brother Mohammad, his wife and their six children, were killed instantly along with several of their relatives. The only survivor in the car was the brothers' 4-year-old niece, who survived with severe burns to much of her body.

"The dead stayed in the sun for hours until anyone could come and collect them," Mr. Ghanam said. "The Israelis can't understand that we are people, too. Should they wonder why so many of us support the resistance?" he said, speaking of Hezbollah.

The 23 bodies now lie in the truck, waiting to be buried. Mr. Ghanam said it would be impossible for them to be buried in their village while the bombing continued. Holding a funeral is impossible, but even digging a grave could attract fire, he said, assuming the remaining family were able to return to the village.

The brothers walked to the hospital on Thursday to sign documents allowing the hospital to bury the bodies in a mass grave.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

In Scramble to Evade Israeli Bombs, the Living Leave the Dead Behind

Photo: Residents of Tyre, Lebanon, headed north yesterday after being warned by the Israeli military to leave.
(Photo by Tyler Hicks/The New York Times)

Load-Date: July 21, 2006

End of Document

Abbas orders Israeli soldier found; Kidnappers demand release of prisoners

The International Herald Tribune

June 27, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 910 words

Byline: Steven Erlanger

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Ian Fisher contributed reporting for this article from Gaza.

*

The Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, ordered his security services on Monday to find a kidnapped Israeli soldier in the Gaza Strip as the Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, warned of a "comprehensive and ongoing military action" in Gaza by the Israeli military, which continued to mass troops and armor on the border with the territory.

As tensions built over the fate of the soldier, Corporal Gilad Shalit, 19, captured early Sunday morning in a raid by Palestinians into Israel through a long tunnel from Gaza, the groups holding him issued a statement demanding the release of all Palestinian prisoners who are women or under the age of 18 before revealing information about him.

Israeli officials immediately rejected the demand from the groups, which include the Popular Resistance Committees; the Army of Islam, a new grouping; and the military wing of Hamas, which is running the Palestinian government.

Olmert said Monday evening: "This is not a matter of negotiations; this is not a matter of bargaining."

The justice minister, Haim Ramon, said: "We have no intention of negotiating with Hamas. We demand that the Palestinian Authority return the kidnapped soldier so we do not have to take very harsh and painful measures."

There are about 95 Palestinian women and 313 Palestinians aged under 18 in Israeli jails, out of a prison population of some 9,000 Palestinians.

As pressure built on Olmert to retaliate, the Israeli call for the release of Shalit, who also holds French citizenship, was echoed by Western nations. Egyptian and French diplomats took a leading role in Gaza trying to convince the armed groups to let the corporal go.

Olmert said in Jerusalem: "Yesterday, I ordered the heads of the army to deploy our forces in order to be ready for comprehensive and ongoing military action, in order to strike at the terror organizations, their commanders and anyone involved in terror," Olmert said. "Let it be clear we will find them all, wherever they are, and they know it. Let it be clear that no one will be immune."

Abbas orders Israeli soldier found Kidnappers demand release of prisoners

Olmert made it clear on Sunday that Israel holds the Palestinian Authority from its president, Abbas, to the Hamas prime minister, Ismail Haniya responsible for the attack and the fate of Shalit. There is a wide expectation among Israeli officials and analysts that Israel will strike back in Gaza but how hard, and with what means, is likely to depend on the fate of Shalit.

Israeli officials said Monday that the seizure of a soldier appeared to be a prime aim of the Palestinian raid, in which two Israeli soldiers and two attackers were killed. They said that the militant groups, led by Hamas, were following the model of the Hezbollah militia in southern Lebanon and would try to bargain for the release of prisoners.

Shalit is being held by senior members of Hamas's military wing, according to a senior military intelligence officer who spoke to the foreign affairs and defense committee of the Israeli Parliament. The officer said that the soldier's whereabouts were not known but that he was believed to be "alive and lightly wounded."

Still, officials were puzzled that the groups did not release a video or some other proof that the soldier was alive.

The intelligence official also said that Haniya is at odds with the military wing of Hamas, which is believed by both Palestinians and Israelis to be under the command of the exiled Hamas leader, Khaled Meshal, who lives in Damascus.

Ghazi Hamad, spokesman for the Hamas government in Gaza, said in an interview that Haniya and the government were not a party to the raid.

"We are not involved in military action," he said. "We are never involved with this. All the Palestinian factions have military wings and political wings. This is because we are still in a liberation stage and a building stage."

But in an interview with The Times 10 days ago, Hamad insisted that Hamas was one organization with a single leadership and made decisions collectively.

On Monday, Hamad, reflecting the more anxious and responsible tone of the government, said Haniya was urging the militants "not to harm" the corporal "and to respect him as a prisoner." But Hamad stopped short of urging the groups to release their prisoner.

On Monday, after a briefing by the Israeli foreign minister, Tzipi Livni, the U.S. ambassador to Israel, Richard Jones, said: "This is a demonstration of the inability of the Hamas government so far to control its own ranks, let alone provide for the needs of the Palestinian people, and I think the world should think very hard about how we deal with an entity that can't even control its own house."

Efraim Halevy, former head of the Israeli spy agency, Mossad, a senior adviser to three prime ministers and former head of the National Security Council, said that the Shalit affair posed a serious test to Hamas, whether it could get its own house in order "and act like a responsible government." If so, he said, "it could be a turning point" in the way the world views Hamas.

But Hamas leaders in Gaza, like Haniya, "who appear to have been caught unaware," had to show that they were in charge of Palestinian affairs, not those who are in exile, like Meshal, Halevy said.

The raid and kidnapping were also a deep embarrassment to Abbas. "If it ends badly, if Abbas is shown to be less and less relevant than before, then he will be the big loser," Halevy said.

Load-Date: June 27, 2006

Can Hamas be transformed?: Hamas, which embraces violence as a political weapon and demands the destruction of Israel, must now choose its path

The Gazette (Montreal)

February 1, 2006 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL / OP-ED; Pg. A23

Length: 890 words

Byline: NICHOLAS GOLDBERG, Los Angeles Times

Body

I covered my first Hamas bombing in February 1996, when I was new to the Middle East and unused to violence. I remember walking in the wreckage, my shoes sticky from blood and body parts. The air still smelled of smoke and burning tires, and the corpses - 26 bodies covered with sheets - were lined up next to the burned-out skeleton of Jerusalem's No. 18 bus. Stunned survivors were sitting on curbs, heads in their hands; ambulance lights were flashing, and leftover bits of human flesh were being collected by the Orthodox for traditional Jewish burial.

It was the start of a Hamas terror epidemic that lasted through most of that winter. Despite the inclination of ordinary Israelis to repair the broken windows, remove the charred detritus and get back to business as usual, Hamas attacked another No. 18 bus the next Sunday, killing 19, and then a bomb was detonated outside a shopping mall in Tel Aviv the following day, killing 13 more. Each announcement of carnage was followed by expressions of mingled joy and rage in the Palestinian territories (from a small but highly televised segment of the population).

Suicide bombing was still a new phenomenon then. There had been hijackings in the 1970s and stone-throwing during the intifada in the 1980s. There had been the death of Leon Klinghoffer, the murder of the Olympic athletes at Munich and many other incidents. But in the 1990s, Hamas took the violence to a new level: When I lived in Jerusalem, you never knew which pizza parlour, bus, shopping mall or discotheque would be incinerated next.

Hamas in those days seemed utterly beyond the pale. After many years, Israeli and U.S. officials had finally overcome - or at least suppressed - their abhorrence at negotiating with Yasser Arafat, whose terrorist days were generally believed to be behind him and who had publicly renounced the use of violence to solve the conflict.

The bombs Hamas built and the bombers who carried them wielded, in the end, extraordinary political influence. The attacks in February and March 1996 led directly to the defeat of Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres in May and to the ascendance of Benjamin Netanyahu, who had never supported the Oslo peace process and slowed the return of West Bank cities to Palestinian control. The continuing attacks prompted the repeated closures of the Erez checkpoint in and out of Gaza (which helped devastate the Palestinian economy) and led to the stepping up of home demolitions. Hamas, along with the Israeli right, destroyed the Oslo peace process.

Today, however, the group stands on the verge of a new incarnation, preparing to take power as the result of a democratic election. What will it mean? Can it be, as Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas hopes, that political realities will moderate the Islamists? That the challenge of filling potholes will drive bombings from their

Can Hamas be transformed?: Hamas, which embraces violence as a political weapon and demands the destruction of Israel , must now choose its path

minds? That the desire of ordinary Palestinians for a negotiated solution will sway Hamas's politically savvy leaders?

After all, Hezbollah became a legitimate political party, up to a point. Gerry Adams tamed the Irish Republican Army. The Irgun's Menachem Begin and the Lehi's Yitzhak Shamir became prime ministers of Israel. Will Hamas also be transformed?

Or should we believe instead the disheartened Israelis who see Hamas as no more than a blood-soaked band of brigands, an untidy collection of religious fanatics who believe they have God on their side and can't, therefore, be expected to engage in the pragmatic compromises of government?

When I was a reporter in the region, my colleagues and I tried repeatedly to get to the bottom of some of these questions, but Hamas remained a cipher. I visited its mosques and schools. I went to the densely packed Gazan slums where it recruited its leaders and foot soldiers. I drank coffee with Hamas leader Abdulaziz Rantisi and tea with spokesperson Mahmoud Zahar. Twice, I went down a dusty Gaza road to the home of Sheik Ahmed Yassin, the wheelchair-bound founder and spiritual leader of Hamas. Conversations with these men, inevitably held beneath a picture of the Al Aqsa mosque or a map of Palestine, were generally civilized, polite and reasoned.

Are you unequivocally committed, we'd ask, to the destruction of Israel? Or, if there were a real, meaningful two-state solution - a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital - would you call off the violence? Sometimes the answer would be a qualified yes, sometimes an angry no. Sometimes they'd refuse to answer, or the answer would be unclear. "Why don't you ask the Israelis when they will stop their violence against our people," they'd say.

Like all parties out of power, Hamas could afford in those days to have it all ways. Its leaders didn't have to explain their tactics or ultimate goals. They weren't accountable to voters or to anyone else, so they didn't have to say whether they would ask women in the relatively secular city of Ramallah to wear the hijab, or seek to impose sharia law. They didn't have to say how they would turn the demoralized, encircled, overcrowded, economically distressed territory of Gaza into a livable place. Or how they would persuade Israel to stop enlarging West Bank settlements if they refused to negotiate.

But now they're in charge, and perhaps that will change. Perhaps now they'll have to provide some answers.

Graphic

Photo: AMMAR AWAD, REUTERS; A Palestinian boy holds a toy rifle during a rally to support the formation of a Hamas-led government.

Load-Date: February 1, 2006

Israel not in Liverpool's plans

St. Petersburg Times (Florida)

July 29, 2006 Saturday

1 Edition

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Section: SPORTS; Pg. 7C

Length: 911 words

Dateline: NYON, Switzerland

Body

Liverpool is willing to play Maccabi Haifa in Champions League qualifying matches as long as the games are held outside of Israel.

A draw on Friday pitted the clubs against each other, one day after UEFA asked Israel for safety guarantees in hosting soccer matches because of the current unrest in the Middle East.

Liverpool manager Rafa Benitez is strongly opposed to taking his team into the troubled area while Israel is fighting **Hezbollah**.

"It's a crazy situation and totally unacceptable to even think about us going over there at this time," Benitez said.

Liverpool said it would make an official protest to UEFA.

FINANCES

Woods is top earner

Tiger Woods, who won his 11th major golf title at the British Open this month, tops the list of Sports Illustrated's top-earning athletes for the third straight year.

Woods earned more than \$97.6- million in 2005, the magazine reported on its Web site. He made more than \$10.6-million in on-course earnings and \$87-million in endorsements.

Woods headed last year's list at \$86.4-million.

Golfer Phil Mickelson is second among U.S. athletes on the magazine's list at more than \$45.9-million, followed by basketball players Shaquille O'Neal (\$34-million) and Kobe Bryant (\$33.7-million) and pro football quarterback Carson Palmer (\$31.6-million).

NHL

Panthers keep pair

Florida avoided arbitration by re-signing defensemen Mike Van Ryn and Ric Jackman.

Israel not in Liverpool's plans

Van Ryn received a four-year deal after earning \$1.064-million last season. Jackman played 15 games with Florida last spring after being acquired from Pittsburgh. Financial terms were not disclosed.

CANUCKS: Vancouver signed free agent defenseman Yannick Tremblay to a one-year contract. Tremblay, who will earn \$450,000, played for the Mannheim Eagles of the German Hockey League last season.

SABRES: Buffalo and Tim Connolly avoided salary arbitration, agreeing to a three-year, \$8.9 million contract. The Sabres are confident he will fully recover from a season-ending concussion that forced him to miss Buffalo's final 10 playoff games..

SENATORS: Peter Schaefer agreed to a four-year, \$8.4-million contract with Ottawa. He posted career highs in goals (20), assists (30) and penalty minutes (40) last season, his third with the Senators.

TENNIS

Agassi, Roddick out

Andre Agassi bid his tennis goodbye to Los Angeles, and Andy Roddick withdrew from the tournament because of strained muscle.

Agassi, who polished his game in Los Angeles as a youth before winning four titles here as one of the sport's greats, lost to Fernando Gonzalez 6-4, 3-6, 7-5 in the Countrywide Classic quarterfinals.

Shortly after Agassi's ouster, Roddick also was out of the tournament. The top-seeded Roddick hurt his lower left side hitting a forehand during the third set of Thursday night's victory over Scott Oudesema.

BANK OF THE WEST CLASSIC: Tatiana Golovin upset fourth-seeded Anna-Lena Groenefeld 6-4, 7-6 (7-5) to reach the semifinals in Stanford, Calif. Patty Schnyder and Nicole Pietrangeli also had straight-set victories to advance to the semifinals.

BUDAPEST GRAND PRIX: Anna Smashnova beat top-seeded Catalina Castano 6-2, 6-2, advancing to the semifinals, where she will face Martina Muller. Second-seeded Michaela Krajicek eliminated Sara Errani 6-4, 6-4, advancing to a semifinal matchup with No. 5 seed Lourdes Dominguez Lino.

CROATIA OPEN: Five-time champion Carlos Moya beat Juan-Pablo Guzman 6-1, 6-4 in the quarterfinals. He will meet the winner of the match between fourth-seeded Novak Djokovic and Jiri Vanek. That match was suspended because of rain in Umag with Djokovic leading 6-1, 1-2. It will resume today.

GENERALI OPEN: Agustin Calleri beat defending champion Gaston Gaudio 7-5, 6-0 in the quarterfinals in Kitzbuehel, Austria. He will face Fernando Verdasco in the semifinals. In the other semifinal, seventh-seeded Juan Ignacio Chela will face eighth-seeded Mikhail Youzhny.

ACURA CLASSIC: Venus and Serena Williams added their names to the growing list of withdrawals from next week's event in Carlsbad, Calif. Lindsay Davenport and Justine Henin-Hardenne have also dropped out.

ET CETERA

NBA: Houston signed free-agent guard John Lucas III to a multiyear contract after waiving him in January. ... Indiana signed free agent Maceo Baston, who spent the last three seasons playing in Israel.

HORSE RACING: Barbaro's condition remained unchanged at the University of Pennsylvania's New Bolton Center in Kennett Square, Pa., according to Dean Richardson, the chief surgeon attending the Kentucky Derby winner. ... Seven horses were euthanized after being injured in competition or training during the first week of Del Mar's summer meeting, prompting the California track officials to seek answers.

Israel not in Liverpool's plans

BOXING: Roy Jones arrived in Boise, Idaho, despite local rumors he would not, for today's NABO light heavyweight championship bout against so-far overlooked champion Prince Badi Ajamu. ... Antonio Tarver of Tampa ponied up \$10,000 to join more than 8,500 entrants in the World Series of Poker in Las Vegas.

TRACK & FIELD: Asafa Powell extended his unbeaten streak to 18 races, winning the 100 meters in 9.91 seconds at the London Grand Prix meet at Crystal Palace. Another Jamaican, Sherone Simpson, beat Marion Jones in the women's 100 for the second time this month. And, in the night's upset, Xavier "X-Man" Carter was beaten in the men's 200 by Tyson Gay.

SHOOTING: Ying Chen of China won the gold medal in the 25-meter pistol event at the World Shooting Championships in Zagreb, Croatia.

Graphic

PHOTO, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Load-Date: July 29, 2006

End of Document

A history of violence: Barbara Kay defends Neil French, the ad man who told it like it is

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

October 26, 2005 Wednesday

National Edition

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Section: ISSUES & IDEAS; Pg. A22

Length: 868 words

Byline: Bret Stephens, National Post

Body

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas paid George W. Bush a friendly visit on Thursday. At the Rose Garden press conference that followed, Mr. Bush stressed Mr. Abbas's responsibility to "end terror attacks, dismantle terrorist infrastructure, maintain law and order and one day provide security for their own state." Mr. Abbas himself made no mention of the word "terrorism." But he did demand the release of those he called "prisoners of freedom," now being held in Israeli jails.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict no longer rivets world attention the way it did a few years ago. Still it rolls along, as it probably will for decades to come. And the reason for this is well-captured by Mr. Abbas's use of the term "prisoners of freedom."

Who are some of these prisoners? One is Ibrahim Ighnamat, a Hamas leader arrested last week by Israel in connection to his role in organizing a March, 1997, suicide bombing. Another is Jamal Tirawi of the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades: Mr. Tirawi had bullied a 14-year-old boy into becoming a suicide bomber by threatening to denounce him as a "collaborator."

And then there is 21-year-old Wafa Samir al-Bis, who was detained in June after the explosives she was carrying failed to detonate at an Israeli checkpoint. Her target was an Israeli hospital where she had previously been treated -- as a humanitarian gesture -- for burns suffered in a kitchen accident.

Many explanations have been given for the almost matchless barbarism into which Palestinian society has descended. One is the effect of Israeli occupation and all that has, in recent years, gone with it: the checkpoints, the closures, the petty harassments. I witnessed much of this personally when I lived in Israel, and there can be no discounting the embittering effect that a military curfew has on the ordinary Palestinians living under it.

Yet the checkpoints and curfews are not gratuitous acts of unkindness, nor are they artifacts of occupation. On the contrary, in the years when Israel was in full control of the territories there were no checkpoints or curfews, and Palestinians could move freely (and find employment) throughout the country. It was only with the start of the peace process in 1993 and the creation of autonomous Palestinian areas under the control of the late Yasser Arafat that terrorism became common. And it was only then that the checkpoints went up in earnest.

A history of violence: Barbara Kay defends Neil French, the ad man who told it like it is

In other words, while Palestinian actions go far to explain Israeli behavior, the reverse doesn't hold. How, then, are the Ighnamats, Tirawis and Bises of Palestinian society to be explained?

Consider a statistic: In the first nine months of 2005, more Palestinians were killed by other Palestinians than by Israelis -- 219 to 218, according to the Palestinian Authority. In the Gaza Strip, the departure of Israeli troops and settlers has brought anarchy, not freedom. Members of Hamas routinely fight gun battles with members of Fatah, Mahmoud Abbas's ruling political party. So-called "collaborators" are put to the gun by street mobs, their "guilt" sometimes nothing more than being the object of a neighbor's spite. Honor killings of "loose" women are common, as is the torture and murder of homosexuals.

Atop this culture of violence are the Hamas and Fatah leaders, the clan chieftains, the PA "generals" and "ministers." And standing atop them -- theoretically, at least -- is the Palestinian president. All were raised in this culture; most have had their uses for violence. For Arafat, those uses were to achieve mastery of his movement, and to harness its energies to his political purpose. Among Palestinians, his popularity owed chiefly to the fact that under his leadership all this violence achieved an astonishing measure of international respectability.

Hence Mr. Abbas's Rose Garden obeisances to the "prisoners of freedom." The Palestinian president leads a society in which dignity and violence have long been entwined, in which the absence of the latter risks the loss of the former. This is not to say that Mr. Abbas himself is a violent man. But his fate as a politician rests in the hands of violent men, and so far he has shown no appetite for confronting them.

Instead, he has sought to entice groups such as Hamas into a democratic process. As with Hezbollah in Lebanon, they have been happy to get what they can out of politics while refusing to lay down their arms. In doing so, they make a mockery of Mr. Abbas's stated commitment to "one authority, one law and one gun" -- that is, to the very idea of a state, and therefore to Mr. Abbas's presidency of it.

Talk to Palestinians, and you will often hear it said, like a mantra, that Palestinian dignity requires Palestinian statehood. This is either a conceit or a lie. Should a Palestinian state ever come into existence, it will be a small place, mostly poor. One can understand why Arafat spurned the offer of it -- and why his people cheered wildly when he did. Their dignity has always rested upon their violence, their struggle, their "prisoners of freedom."

For Mr. Abbas, the problem is that statehood and dignity are not a package. They are a choice. And if history is any guide, the choice he must make is not one he is likely to survive.

Graphic

Graphic/Diagram: Charicature of Mahmoud Abbas.

Load-Date: October 26, 2005

Young Iranians Speak Out (Online) for Democracy

New York Sun (Archive)

June 22, 2005 Wednesday

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Section: FOREIGN; Pg. 8

Length: 908 words

Byline: By RAMIN TALAIE, Special to the Sun

Dateline: TEHRAN, Iran

Body

The reformist newspaper Eqbal was shut down here on Monday by the city's mayor and a presidential hopeful, Mahdi Ahmadinejad.

As Friday's presidential runoff election between Ayatollah Hashemi Rafsanjani and Mr. Ahmadinejad approaches, the mayor learned that the paper was planning to publish an article suggesting there was fraud in last week's election and took swift action against it, the Associated Press reported.

Liberal voices in another medium have not been silenced, though. Bloggers have continued to use the Internet to spread their hopes of democracy for Iran, often at great risk to themselves.

The ministry in charge of communication in Iran, the Mokhabeerat, uses a filtering program to censor sexually explicit sites. It is now using the same technique to block access to blogs that convey dissident messages from inside Iran. Clever bloggers, however, persist and find ways around such constraints. According to unofficial projections, there are between 3 million and 4 million Internet subscribers in Iran. The online encyclopedia Wikipedia estimates that more than 65,000 blogs are written in Farsi.

Meanwhile, about 100 pro-democracy publications have been shut down in the last five years by the judiciary, which is led by an official appointed by Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the AP reported.

Iran's first blog was started in September 2001. By November of that year, an information technology columnist and computer programmer, Hussein Derakhshan, had published a how-to guide to blogging in Farsi. Mr. Derakhshan dished out tips on how to put legible Farsi online complete with right-to-left writing.

Currently living in Toronto, Mr. Derakhshan worries about his return to Iran someday. His fear is seemingly justified as bloggers come under attack, just as authorities cracked down on reformist newspapers a few years ago.

In April 2003, a journalist and blogger, Sina Motallebi, was arrested by 738 881 807 892729 920 798 932738 973 818 984741 1012 895 1024696 1026 784 1037 cause of comments made in his online journal. In November 2004, another blogger, Mojtaba Sami Nejad, was arrested for reporting the detention of three fellow bloggers at man-namanam.blogspot.com. While in prison, his blog was transferred to the blog of the Islamist group Hezbollah, irongroup.blogspot.com.

Young Iranians Speak Out (Online) for Democracy

Mr. Sami Nejad was temporarily released but was rearrested when he launched a new Web site at 8mdr8.blogspot.com. He was sentenced to two years in prison. The blogging community created an online petition, at www.petitiononline.com/mojasn/petition.html, to urge government officials and President Khatemi to release Mr. Sami Nejad immediately, but it was unsuccessful.

A 27-year-old journalist, Parastoo Dokoohaki, is also known as Zan Nevesht - the name of her blog, which translates to woman writer. Ms. Dokoohaki's day job is writing about social issues for the shuttered newspaper Eqbal. A self-proclaimed feminist, Ms. Dokoohaki supported a reformist candidate, Mostafa Moin, in last Friday's election and is aggravated about the vote results that left her candidate out of the runoff.

She and many others believed Mr. Moin would have posed a challenge to Mr. Rafsanjani, but Mr. Moin was not among the top five candidates in a field of eight.

In a recent dispatch, Zan Nevesht expressed concerns about the Mokhabeerat's prying eyes. Ms. Dokoohaki knows all about the filter 1025 986 1104 998930 1263 1009 1275962 1369 1096 1380system and worries about it often. Zan Nevesht gets about 1,500 hits a day and addresses the problems and hardships of young women in her country, a subject close to her heart.

Ms. Dokoohaki omits phrases she deems contentious enough to raise a red flag to filters and censors. She monitors and deletes replies from her readers that could likewise bring unwanted attention from authorities.

She knows she is being watched. After all, the blog of her would-be leader, Mr. Moin, at www.drMoin.ir.is not longer active.

A month ago, she was targeted by Ansar Al-Islam's hard-line newspaper Ya Sarat'al Hussein. The paper falsely reported that Mr. Moin paid Ms. Dokoohaki and others for their support and to attend one of his rallies.

Bloggers are mostly young, well-educated, and hail from big cities, since Internet access is an expense many young, unemployed Iranians cannot afford.

Those able to pay for service and willing to deal with its slow speed and lack of reliability have embraced blogging as a way to discuss divisive issues in a closed society, a 24-year-old Web designer, Payam Parsinejad, said. Mr. Parsinejad has created many of the blogs in Tehran. He also keeps a blog at www.tafteh.ws that steers clear of politics.

In an effort to fight hard-liners and perhaps legitimize blogging, a close ally of Mr. Khatemi and a former vice president for legal and parliamentary affairs, Mohammad Ali Abtahi, started his own blog in late 2003. It can be found at www.webneveshteha.com.

Mr. Abtahi, who is affectionately known as the "mullah blogger," since he is a Muslim cleric, writes about reformist issues. At his site, the name of which literally means "written in a Web site," Mr. Abtahi has supported the release of Mr. Sami Nejad.

The number of bloggers continues to grow despite government efforts to control them. Both Ms. Dokoohaki and Mr. Parsinejad say more bloggers are likely to be harassed and jailed, but they are optimistic that, despite the risks, their fellow bloggers will not be stopped.

Load-Date: June 22, 2005

Bombs Kill Montrealers: Seven dead in lebanon. All members of same family; four children among victims

The Gazette (Montreal)

July 17, 2006 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A1

Length: 772 words

Byline: MICHELLE LALONDE, The Gazette

Body

Hassan El-Akhras was marching along Rene Levesque Blvd. yesterday afternoon in a peaceful demonstration against recent Israeli bomb attacks on Lebanon when his cellphone rang with the devastating news.

Seven Canadian citizens visiting Lebanon - all members of El-Akhras's Montreal family - were killed yesterday in the bombing of Aitaroun, a village in southern Lebanon.

Four children between the ages of one and 8 were among the dead.

At least three other members of the same family were badly injured. The family had been hiding in the basement of their ancestral home for the past three days, family members said.

"My cousin just called me to say my father is dead, my mother is in hospital; two of my aunts, my uncle and his son and his grandson ... they are all martyrs," said El-Akhras, 31, in a quiet voice, clearly stunned by the news.

His sister, Hanan, cried out in anguish, clinging to a baby stroller to keep from collapsing.

Weeping women, teenage girls and children stood embracing each other on the sidewalk.

Several young men, still holding Lebanese flags and placards from the rally, called other family members on cellphones to deliver the grim news or to try to get more details.

Later, El-Akhras would receive another call from his cousin in Lebanon.

That call confirmed that his aunt Haniya Al-Akhras, his cousin's wife, Amira Al-Akhras, 23, and their four children,

Saja, 8, Zeinab, 6, Ahmad, 4, and Salam, one, were dead. El-Akhras said he didn't know whether his father, Ali El-Akhras, 70, or his uncle Ahmad Al-Akhras, 60, had died. The other was reported wounded, as were his mother, Saada El-Akhras and his cousin Ali El-Akhras, he said. El-Akhras said all his information was based on the phone calls from Lebanon.

The elder victims had all moved to Montreal from Lebanon in the early 1990s, El-Akhras said, while his cousin's four children were born here.

Bombs Kill Montrealers: Seven dead in Lebanon . All members of same family; four children among victims

Two more of his aunts, both Lebanese nationals, were also killed in the attack, he said.

He said his parents moved to Montreal in 1991, but returned frequently to Lebanon to visit relatives. This time, his parents had left Montreal for Lebanon in mid-April and were to stay six months. He and his sister had planned to join the family in Lebanon on Tuesday, but learned last week that all flights to the troubled region had been cancelled.

Montreal pharmacist Ali Al-Akhras is reported to have been seriously injured in the bombing. It is his wife and four children who are reported dead. He lives in Montreal North and owns a Jean Coutu pharmacy franchise on Queen Mary Rd. in Snowdon.

"I want this message to go to the prime minister," El-Akhras said of Stephen Harper.

"Tell Israel to stop the bombing. They are killing Canadian citizens. ... They are attacking civilians, and Canada has been supporting Israel without even knowing what is going on," he said.

An aide to Foreign Affairs Minister Peter McKay, Andre Lemay, said the department had received media reports of Canadian casualties but could not say how many Canadians are dead.

Harper is attending the G8 summit in St. Petersburg and is expected home late Wednesday evening. A spokesperson in the prime minister's office said Harper had been informed of the casualties in Lebanon.

Harper was not a popular man at yesterday's rally, organized by a group calling itself the Montreal Lebanese Committee. He infuriated many Lebanese Canadians when he called Israel's recent actions in Lebanon "measured" and agreed with U.S. President George W. Bush that Israel is simply defending itself.

The rally began in Phillips Square downtown, followed by a march east along Rene Levesque Blvd. to Complexe Guy Favreau. Many of the demonstrators wore Lebanese flags on their backs or around their necks.

About a dozen children headed the march for a period, shouting along with their parents: "Israel assassin, Canada complice!"

Some marchers carried signs with photos of Harper that said: "We were stupid for voting for you."

"Harper can't speak against Israel because of the U.S.," said Tony Elias, a photographer who left Lebanon for Montreal 16 years ago.

Guinoua Haidar was among the many at the rally who brought children along. Her two children, age 3 and 10 months, sat in strollers while the adults around them joined in the anti-Israel, anti-Bush, and sometimes anti-Harper chants.

"They are killing children, and leaving them (injured) without arms and legs," said Haidar, whose uncles, cousins and grandparents are holed up in bomb shelters in southern Lebanon.

"A lot of Lebanese people voted for Stephen Harper, and what are we getting back now?" added her husband, Wahib Abbas.

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Graphic

Colour Photo: MARCOS TOWNSEND, GAZETTE; In Ahuntsic, Samar El-Akhras is comforted by a friend (standing) and nephew Kalid, 12, after learning that several family members were killed in Israeli rocket attacks in Lebanon

Bombs Kill Montrealers: Seven dead in lebanon . All members of same family; four children among victims

yesterday. Among the dead are four children, ages one to 8, and their mother, whose husband owns a pharmacy on Queen Mary Rd. in Snowdon.;

Colour Photo: PHIL CARPENTER, GAZETTE; Lebanese Montrealers listen to a recorded address by **Hezbollah** leader Hassan Nasrallah in Dorchester Square yesterday during a demonstration against Israeli strikes.; Colour

Photo: MARCOS TOWNSEND, GAZETTE; A bombing in a southern Lebanese village yesterday has crushed a local family. Montreal pharmacist Ali Al-Akhras is reported to have been seriously injured in the bombing. His wife, Amira Al-Akhras, 23, was killed, as were the couple's four children, who were born in Canada. They were, from left, siblings Zeinab, 6, and Saja, 8, Ahmad, 4, and Salaam, one.

Load-Date: July 17, 2006

End of Document

Latest anti-US effort is a thrilling ride; FILM

Australian Financial Review

February 11, 2006 Saturday

First Edition

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Section: PERSPECTIVE; Review; Pg. 34

Length: 900 words

Byline: PETER CRAYFORD

Body

Syriana

Loosely based on Robert Baer's 2002 memoir, *See No Evil: The True Story of a Ground Soldier in the CIA's War on Terrorism*, the main character in this film, set largely in the Middle East, is a CIA agent played by George Clooney.

Directed and written by Stephen Gaghan, the film has some parallels with the structure of his Oscar-winning script for *Traffic*. The producer is Stephen Soderberg, who was *Traffic*'s director.

It's the story of an individual becoming involved in shady doings. As the film progresses both he and the audience come to realise the wider ramifications.

The film keeps you guessing as you attempt to piece together the fragments of a complicated narrative jigsaw, but it gets confusing.

The story revolves around two Arab princes in a Middle East emirate who are jockeying for position while their ageing father approaches death.

One brother is idealistic, and his succession may not be in the best interests of US oil policy.

The other is an amoral American sycophant.

There's an ensemble of supporting characters including an oil energy analyst (Matt Damon), a partner in a top Washington law firm (Christopher Plummer), a Justice Department investigator (David Clennon), an oil company executive (Chris Cooper), an Arab terrorist-in-training (Mazhar Munir), a *Hezbollah* agent (Mark Strong), a corrupt US politician (Tim Blake Nelson) and a shadowy intelligence operative (William Hurt). They are all drawn into a business deal, a merger of two oil companies that will benefit neither American consumers nor the population of the emirate.

And it will obliterate, for at least a generation, the only progressive Arab leader in the region.

The cynicism of those pursuing US interests at any cost is patently clear by the end as a group of terrorists crash their boat into a liquid gas tanker owned by the merged corporation. Unfortunately, the way the film contrives to get you to this conclusion may be too complicated for most audiences to follow. The failure is one of storytelling. New characters are introduced with little apparent connection.

Latest anti- US effort is a thrilling ride FILM

Clooney's character is a CIA agent who speaks Farsi. He's a Middle East old-hand who comes from a long tradition of CIA operatives on film. He doesn't realise he's being manipulated by policymakers in Washington who are keeping him in the dark while risking his life for dubious corporate ends.

Clooney gives a measured and alluring performance here but Matt Damon is hampered by his character's speechifying dialogue. *Syriana* is a challenging and confronting political thriller. Nothing quite like it has come out of Hollywood for some time.

It's an impressionistic presentation of the story between the lines of many newspaper articles. One wishes that it had been made with a little more craft, had connected more emotionally with its characters and had been more lucid. Then it might have garnered the audience its story deserves.

Still, there is much to recommend in it. *Syriana*. US. Rated MA. 128 minutes. Directed and written by Stephen Gaghan based on the book by Robert Baer. With: George Clooney, Matt Damon, Jeffrey Wright, Christopher Plummer. Opens February 16.

Casanova

If you thought we have too much voyeuristic celebrity gossip and scandal in our lives then you wouldn't want to go back to 1750s Venice. Much of the dialogue in *Casanova* seems to come from the period's tabloid equivalent - pamphleteering.

Directed by Lasse Hallstrom (*My Life as a Dog*, *Chocolat*) this Venetian costume drama set in the 1750s might well have been titled *My Life as a Cad*. There's not much new here.

Nowhere is it as visually exciting as Federico Fellini's flawed film of 1977 nor as witty as the 1998 film *Dangerous Beauty*.

Hallstrom's direction is bright if pedestrian, and he does get some good performances from his cast.

Oliver Platt is marvellous in his role as a purveyor of lard and deservedly attracts the affections of Lena Olin's widow and the director's sympathetic rendering.

Apart from the shadow of the Inquisition, the screenplay is a series of happy caricatures: the fat lard seller (Oliver Platt), the evil one (Jeremy Irons), the lascivious widow (Lena Olin), the righteous beauty (Sienna Miller), and the libidinous man of the moment (Heath Ledger).

Give it a few songs and it could be mistaken for a pantomime.

Casanova is the devil in breeches that many women (at least in 18th century Venice) seem to be drawn to. He's smug, a liar and a cad but humorous and beguiling. Yet, the best scenes are not between Casanova and his many conquests but with his valet, played by the Iranian-British comedian Omid Djalili, a foil who could have stepped out of Fellini's film.

Casanova was a much more interesting character than the fictional one on view here.

But the film is both fanciful and fun even as the hero's lust impels him into the pantaloons of a cross-dressing protofeminist (Sienna Miller) who's better at sword-play than he is. She's the secret author of *The Hopes of Women in a World of Men*, the Oprah-esque best seller of 1753.

Casanova is something of a romp and a farce that has been scripted like a sitcom. It is not un-enjoyable - when the comedy works - though when the characters keep falling into Venice's canals it becomes pure slapstick. *Casanova*. US. Rated M. 108 minutes. Directed by Lasse Hallstrom, screenplay by Jeffrey Hatcher and Kimberly Simi. With: Heath Ledger, Oliver Platt, Sienna Miller. Opens February 14.

Latest anti- US effort is a thrilling ride FILM

Graphic

PHOTO: George Clooney plays a Middle East old-hand in Syriana.

Load-Date: April 5, 2012

End of Document

Never Again

New York Sun (Archive)

August 29, 2005 Monday

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Section: EDITORIAL & OPINION; Pg. 7

Length: 952 words

Byline: Kenneth J. Bialkin

Body

On August 24, 2005, Israel announced substantial completion of the removal of Jewish citizens from 21 Gaza settlements and 4 in the West Bank without significant violence. Despite the poignancy of forced eviction from homes and settlements established more than 30 years ago, respect for the rule of law and commitment to democratic tradition triumphed over broken hearts, anguish over the government's decision, and the urging of a few religious leaders and other supporters to resist the force applied by the citizen-soldiers of Israel.

But the images flashed around the world of Jewish families uprooted and evicted through no personal fault of their own by young male and *female* soldiers who shed tears along with the settlers in the sad fulfillment of their duty has cut deeply into the minds and emotions of Jews everywhere, even those filled with pride and admiration for the people of Israel for their dedication to civil order. It is not Jews alone who shed tears in watching images of puzzled children, sobbing parents, and shocked citizens as they removed mezuzahs from their door posts, Torah scrolls from their closets and prepared to transfer the graves of those they refused to leave behind. The experience was traumatic for many in Israel and around the world who could only wonder why a land had to be rendered free of Jews because a larger number of Arabs would not tolerate them living in their midst.

Israel's unilateral separation from Gaza and four West Bank settlements was determined by a democratic process and accepted by an apparent majority in Israel, some more reluctantly than others. It was unilateral because it became obvious that Israel's willingness and efforts to negotiate mutually acceptable forms of living together in peace were not reciprocated by the Palestinian Arabs. The refusal or inability of Arafat and other leaders to convince their people to forego terror, abandon their refusal to accept the existence of the state of Israel, and live peacefully alongside a Jewish state convinced the government of Israel that it had no counterpart with whom a peace process could be pursued. With no one to whom to speak, Israel is embarking on a unilateral policy of separating itself from the Palestinians, a people unlucky in their benighted leadership who have thus far succeeded only to produce hatred of Israel. In this circumstance, who can say Israel is wrong in its determination to protect its people and pursue economic growth and social progress, whatever course the Palestinians follow? If a time should come when the Palestinians accept the existence and legitimacy of Israel, renounce terror and force, disarm the infrastructure of terror, and show an acceptance and appreciation of the benefits of freedom and peace with their neighbors, Israel has shown itself willing to follow a peace process within the framework of the road map. In the present circumstance it is mostly Palestinians who must suffer, but Israel does not owe them the rose garden they demand.

Many Arab leaders exult in the claim that Israel's evacuation from Gaza is a victory for a strategy of force and terror, compelling Israel to withdraw, as they also claimed when Israel left Lebanon. Some Israeli leaders opposed the

Never Again

Gaza withdrawal for the same reason, warning it would only further encourage Arab violence and aggression. Despite that risk, Israel has disengaged. Time alone will tell whether that disengagement will bring Israel the peace it seeks or the appreciation of world opinion for the trauma and sacrifice it has experienced in uprooting almost 9,000 citizens from their homes.

Prime Minister Sharon has said that until the Palestinians fulfill their defaulted steps under the road map, including dismantling the infrastructure of terror, disarming Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah, and other terrorist groups, and bringing criminals to justice, no one should expect Israel to renew further steps under the road map, which is based on reciprocal progress. It would be a sad commentary on the world's understanding of the risks, sacrifices, and sorrow endured by the Israeli people if Israel is forced away from Mr. Sharon's pledge. There are already too many examples of the world's efforts to place demands on Israel that are not justified by a sense of balance and historical justice.

A major lesson of the disengagement experience is that Israel should not be asked to test its institutions and the fabric of its society by a repeat of the experience and images of tearing Jews from their homes. The Jews of Israel and the Diaspora, as well as fair-minded people everywhere, will not wish to see this happen again. The Gaza disengagement teaches us that, even for those who may feel that Israel should ultimately make some adjustment in the location of Jews in Judea and Samaria, forcible eviction is unacceptable. The West Bank, Judea, and Samaria, unlike Gaza, have political, religious, historical, security, and sentimental roots in the hearts, minds, and souls of Israel and the Jewish people that cannot be denied and must be respected. Their claims are older and clearer and, to say the least, are at least as legitimate as the Arab ones.

For Israel to undertake any future disengagement or evictions of Jewish citizens from meaningful areas of Judea and Samaria, the Arab leopard would have to change its spots and perhaps even accept the present unthinkable prospect that a modern Palestinian society should embrace notions of freedom and human rights, forswear terror and violence, abandon corruption and mendacity, and, hopefully, savor the benefits of living in peace with a Jewish state. Until then, Israel should never again so test the unity of the Jewish people.

Load-Date: August 29, 2005

Won't end up like Iran: Cheney

The Toronto Star

February 7, 2005 Monday

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Length: 869 words

Byline: Tim Harper, Toronto Star

Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

Two of the leading figures in the Bush administration sought to dismiss concerns yesterday that Iraq was headed for an Iranian-style Islamic theocracy which will limit the rights of women and minorities.

U.S. Vice-President Dick Cheney and Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, in network television interviews, both said they thought it was too early to make such predictions and said secular leaders would provide a balance to the Islamic clerics who are emerging as the real power following the Jan. 30 elections.

"I think there are a great many people involved in the political process in Iraq who will seek some kind of balance," Cheney said in an interview on Fox News Sunday.

"But in the final analysis, the bottom line for everybody to remember here is, this is not going to be ... an Iraqi version of America. This is going to be Iraqi.

"It's going to be written by the Iraqis, for the Iraqis, implemented and executed by them."

The vice-president said Iraqis have watched the "dismal failure" of religious theocracy next door in Iran and fought a bloody eight-year war against that theocracy.

"The Shia in Iraq are Iraqis," Rumsfeld said on NBC's Meet the Press. "They're not Iranians. And the idea that they're going to end up with a government like Iran, with a handful of mullahs controlling much of the country, I think, is unlikely."

Rumsfeld pointed to another neighbour of Iran, Afghanistan, as a country which held free elections and fashioned a government based on its needs, not the model of its neighbour.

"I think it would be just an enormous mistake for that country to think that it could succeed with all of its opportunity, with its oil, its water, its intelligent population - to deny half of their population, women, the opportunity to participate fully, I think, just would be a terrible mistake."

Should Iraqi clerics be successful in placing some legal measures under Qur'anic law it would mean, among other things, that daughters receive half the inheritances of son.

Won't end up like Iran : Cheney

In some parts of Iraq already, alcohol-sellers have been banished from the streets and women, whose rights were promoted by the American occupation, are facing harassment if they take to the streets in anything other than head-to-toe black garb.

Cheney also said he did not know whether Iran had stopped a program of uranium enrichment, but said Washington would continue to back efforts by the governments of Britain, France and Germany to diplomatically force the Tehran regime to abandon its aspirations to acquire nuclear weapons.

"It all turns on this question of whether or not they should be enriching uranium," he said. "They claim they're doing it only for peaceful purposes, although there's some evidence to suggest that they have military aspirations and they're trying to acquire nuclear weapons."

Last week in London, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said U.S. military action against Iran is not on the table at this point, but Cheney echoed her caveat that no option has been withdrawn by President George W. Bush.

"It's a regime, obviously, that we've got major problems with, not only because of their search for nuclear weapons, (but) also the fact they've been a prime state sponsor of terror over the years, the prime movers behind Hezbollah (an Islamic resistance movement)," he said.

"So there are a lot of reasons why the Iranians are on the list of problem states. I think, if you look at that region of the world, a potential source for instability clearly is Iran if they continue on the course they're on."

He said if talks with the Europeans break down, the U.S. would likely go the United Nations seeking international sanctions against Iran.

Rumsfeld, asked on ABC's This Week, said he had no idea whether a limited military strike could lead to the overthrow of Iran's religious leadership.

"I've been amazed many times in my life," Rumsfeld said. "I was amazed at how rapidly the shah of Iran fell and the ayatollahs took over that country.

"It happened just seemingly like that, looking at it from outside. And you look at Romania. When that fell, it was fast.

"So we can't predict these things. We don't have intelligence that's that good."

Rumsfeld, in all interviews yesterday, had to deal with questions as to when Iraqi security forces would be properly trained to protect the country and allow American troops to return home.

He said the answer "wasn't knowable," and depended on the behaviour of neighbouring Iran and Syria, the reaction of the insurgency and the funding of terrorist leader Abu Mussab al-Zarqawi.

Massachusetts Senator Edward Kennedy, the leading Democratic proponent of an exit strategy with specifically defined target dates to draw down U.S. troops, accused Rumsfeld of making up policy on the fly.

"The problem is at the present time the Iraqis do not believe that they own the country," Kennedy said on Meet the Press. "The elections were an important down-payment on that, but still they ought to be able to have the kind of security ... they ought to be trained.

"We ought to get about the business of doing it. Why can't they defend their own country? How long do we have to have Americans fighting and dying? How long do we have to ask the taxpayers to continue to pay out?"

Graphic

Won't end up like Iran : Cheney

CHARLES ONIANS AFP-Getty Images An Iraqi soldier escorts a suspect in Baghdad's notorious Haifa St. district yesterday. The area is believed to be controlled by Saddam Hussein loyalists.

Load-Date: February 7, 2005

End of Document

News in Brief

The Philadelphia Inquirer

JANUARY 18, 2005 Tuesday CITY-D EDITION

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

Found on Philly.com

Section: NATIONAL; Pg. A04

Length: 869 words

Body

In the Nation

Utah officials end search

for victims of avalanche

* Authorities yesterday ended a search for victims of last week's avalanche near Park City, Utah, and said there was a good chance a body found Sunday was the lone victim. "Right now, we believe that we have taken the one sole victim out of there," Summit County Sheriff Dave Edmunds said at a news conference. Eyewitness accounts of Friday's avalanche initially led authorities to believe as many as five people may have been caught. - AP

Doctor convicted of killing

wife, children seeks parole

* Former Army physician Jeffrey MacDonald, convicted in North Carolina 25 years ago of the stabbing deaths of his pregnant wife and two daughters, will seek parole but will continue to proclaim his innocence, one of his attorneys said yesterday. MacDonald, eligible for parole since 1991, had declined to seek his freedom because he said he would have to admit guilt for the slayings at the family's Fort Bragg apartment Feb. 17, 1970. But MacDonald, 61, remarried a few years ago and has more reasons to want a life outside of prison, said his attorney, Tim Junkin. - AP

4 held in bombing of home;

owner spoke against dealers

* Police in Baltimore have arrested four suspects in the firebombing of the house of a woman who spoke out against drug trafficking. She was not injured in the fire early Saturday that caused minor damage to her home, police said. The 59-year-old woman, whose name was not released, is in protective custody. Intimidation by drug dealers is a top concern in Baltimore, where a couple and five children were killed in 2002 after their home was firebombed in retaliation for calls to police against drug dealers. - AP

Atlanta archbishop installed

News in Brief

on King birthday as tribute

* Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory, a Chicago native, became Atlanta's sixth archbishop and its third black archbishop yesterday. Gregory, 57, said he chose the Martin Luther King Birthday holiday for his installation as a tribute to the civil rights leader. King's widow, Coretta Scott King, was on hand for the ceremony. Gregory previously served as bishop in Belleville, Ill., and was the first black president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. - AP

Coast Guard resumes hunt

for 3 missing in Bering Sea

* The Coast Guard resumed its search of the Bering Sea yesterday for three people missing from a crab boat that sank in stormy weather Saturday about 800 miles west of Anchorage, Alaska. Two other crew members died and one survived. A man lost overboard from another crab boat about 150 miles northwest of St. Paul Island, Alaska, on Saturday was presumed dead and the search for him was suspended. - AP

In the World

Ukraine top court rejects

bids by defeated candidate

* Ukraine's Supreme Court yesterday rejected an array of motions from defeated presidential candidate Viktor Yanukovich and adjourned until today. The court's action left open the question of when former opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko might be inaugurated. Yushchenko was declared the winner of the Dec. 26 election with almost 52 percent of the vote to Yanukovich's 44.2 percent but cannot be inaugurated until the court resolves the appeal. - AP

Spanish judge indicts eight

over alleged 9/11 role

* A Spanish judge indicted eight people on terrorism charges yesterday, saying they had aided suspects in the Sept. 11 attacks. The indictment said the eight had provided logistics and counterfeit documents for suspects including Ramzi Binalshibh, an alleged would-be Sept. 11 hijacker who has been in U.S. custody since his 2002 capture. - AP

Rwanda opens effort to try

many tied to '94 genocide

* Rwanda launched the biggest phase yet of an effort to try up to a million people suspected of involvement in its 1994 genocide, opening hearings yesterday at more than 8,000 village courts, officials said. The government says the traditional gacaca hearings are the only way to handle the vast numbers of people suspected of participating in about 800,000 killings. - Reuters

Israeli warplanes bomb

Lebanon sites after attack

* Israeli warplanes twice bombed suspected Hezbollah targets along the border in southern Lebanon yesterday, wounding two women, after guerrillas blew up an Israeli bulldozer in a disputed area near the frontier, Lebanese officials said. The Israeli army said there were no casualties in the bulldozer attack, which took place in the disputed Chebaa Farms area. - AP

10th anniversary marked

of deadly Kobe earthquake

* Japan marked the 10th anniversary yesterday of the earthquake that ripped through the port city of Kobe, killing nearly 6,500 people, injuring more than 43,000, and damaging hundreds of thousands of buildings. Emperor Akihito was among those who attended ceremonies honoring victims of the tragedy on Jan. 17, 1995. - AP

Three British soldiers face

delay of trial in Iraq abuses

* A military judge yesterday delayed the court-martial of three British soldiers accused of mistreating detainees in Iraq. The trial of Cpl. Daniel Kenyon, Lance Cpl. Darren Larkin and Lance Cpl. Mark Cooley initially was scheduled to start yesterday at a British base in Osnabrueck, Germany. Military Judge Michael Hunter said more time was needed to hear pretrial motions. - AP

Graphic

PHOTO;

VADIM GHIRDA, Associated Press

A mother at last, Adriana Iliescu, 66, was resting yesterday. Iliescu, a professor who writes children's books, had Eliza Maria by cesarean in Bucharest, Romania. The world's oldest recorded woman to give birth, she took fertility treatments for nine years. The baby, just over 3 pounds, was doing well. A twin was stillborn.

Load-Date: September 6, 2005

End of Document

Why the refugee process needs work: It's those who follow the rules who seem to have the hardest time getting to stay

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

January 29, 2005 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: WESTCOAST NEWS; Pg. B1 ; Daphne Bramham

Length: 825 words

Byline: Daphne Bramham, Vancouver Sun

Body

One can't help but be disturbed by the threats from Washington this week to expand the war on terrorism to include Iran.

Bad enough for those of us sitting safe and comfortable in our homes and offices to hear the news. Just imagine what it must be like for Haleh Sahba and her family.

Sahba was deported to Iran in mid-December, having been turned down as a refugee claimant and having exhausted all of the appeals open to her.

Sahba had been a student activist, protesting the restrictions the Iranian government and its religious police had placed on women. After divorcing her husband, who has connections to the terrorist group Hezbollah, Sahba left Iran and made her way to Canada, claiming refugee status on arrival in Vancouver.

She came here because both her parents are Canadian citizens. As a refugee claimant, she got a permit to work and worked from the time she arrived. She was a valued employee at Starbucks and was coming up for promotion when she was deported.

Even though immigration officials had assured the Immigration and Refugee Board that Sahba would not be at risk if she were sent back, she was detained for 26 hours when she arrived in Tehran.

With no relatives in Iran except an uncle who has disowned her as the result of her divorce, Sahba's father, Habib, flew over to be with her. With the help of other family and friends, he secured his daughter's release by putting up four valuable pieces of property as a guarantee that she would appear in court Jan. 25.

That day came and went and Laleh Sahba, Haleh's sister, said neither Haleh or her father will talk about what has been happening in the courtroom.

When they've spoken, Laleh says her sister deflects questions about what is happening, asking instead what is happening here.

The family is holding out hope that Canada's new immigration minister, Joe Volpe, will issue her a temporary resident's permit.

Why the refugee process needs work: It's those who follow the rules who seem to have the hardest time getting to stay

For more than two weeks, Sahba's file has been sitting on the minister's desk. It's one of many files that is caught in the limbo of ministerial change. It arrived the day before Judy Sgro resigned to fight charges that she had promised to overturn the deportation order of Harjit Singh to stay in the country after he provided free pizza for her election campaign workers.

Now, Sahba's case is just a part of the mountain of briefing materials that Volpe has to plow through to get a handle on his new portfolio.

While for Volpe and immigration officials Sahba's case is just one of many, for Sahba, what's at stake is freedom.

A ministerial permit is the document she needs to get out of Iran, to buy an airline ticket and transit countries en route to Canada, where she would be allowed to apply to become a landed immigrant.

Another Iranian, Amir Kazemian is also caught in that paper mountain. He remains holed up in an Anglican church where he sought refuge last summer in a desperate bid to avoid deportation. Like Sahba, Kazemian fears what could happen to him if he's forced to return to Iran. Kazemian was a political activist. He was tortured before he left.

Like Sahba, Sgro promised a quick decision on his case just before she resigned.

While it's understandable that the new minister needs time, it's time that hangs heavily on people like Kazemian, Sahba and their families.

And what makes it all the more stressful for them and their families is that trying to get into Canada has already consumed years of their lives.

At year-end, the backlog of refugee claims was 27,290. That's down from 41,948 the previous year. But it's an indication of how slowly the process works. Sahba, for example, was in Canada for nearly four years before she finally had an answer.

What makes their cases so poignant is that these are two people who followed the rules.

They went to the hearings and showed up for meetings with immigration officials, unlike an estimated 36,000 or so people under deportation order who have simply disappeared.

Given their current situations, they, their families and friends can't help but be struck at the patent unfairness that someone like Singh could have delayed decisions on their fate.

They must wonder how a man like Singh -- a failed refugee claimant first ordered deported in 1992 -- remains in Canada even though he's been accused of making fake passports, been called by a federal judge "the guiding force" behind a \$1-million credit card scam, and been arrested in India for travelling on a fake passport and attempting to smuggle a four-year-old out of that country.

They must wonder how Singh managed to sponsor as landed immigrants both his sons (who ended up in jail because of the credit-card scam) and a daughter.

It should come as no surprise that good, honest people like Sahba, Kazemian and their families are disillusioned by a country they once held in high regard and are left to conclude that in Canada, honesty is punished and cheating rewarded.

We all should be demanding that the system be reformed.

dbramham@png.canwest.com

Load-Date: January 29, 2005

Why the refugee process needs work: It's those who follow the rules who seem to have the hardest time getting to stay

End of Document

Was Bush right?: The U.S. president invaded Iraq for all the wrong reasons, but the action led to Jan. 30 elections in that country - a pivotal event in the history of the Mideast

The Gazette (Montreal)

March 16, 2005 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL / OP-ED; Pg. A29; L. Ian MacDonald

Length: 821 words

Byline: L. IAN MACDONALD, Freelance

Body

What if turns out George W. Bush was right, for the wrong reasons, about Iraq and the Middle East?

His rationale for invading Iraq two years ago this week has since been entirely discredited. No weapons of mass destruction were ever found, nor were there any terrorists operating in Iraq then, though there are now. U.S. relations with its allies, including Canada, were strained, as many declined to join Bush's coalition of the willing. Saddam Hussein had obviously waged war against his own people, which would have been a more valid pretext for removing him, but he posed no immediate threat to the United States.

There was no plan for postwar reconstruction, and three times as many American soldiers have died since the end of combat operations as during the campaign itself, to say nothing of Iraqi civilian casualties.

All that being said, the election on Jan. 30 was clearly a seminal event not only for Iraq, but for the entire Middle East. The election changed the story line from insurgency to democracy.

The sight of women in chadors lining up with their children to vote was an inspirational image for viewers in the West. But it had an even bigger impact in Iraq and neighbouring countries, where the Arab world was watching on Al-Jazeera and other satellite channels.

In the Western world, we marvelled at the turnout of 60 per cent, equal to that in last year's Canadian and U.S. elections. But would we have dared to vote, much less taken our children with us, if our elections were held in the shadow of the insurgency's threat, "vote and die"? The turnout was all the more remarkable in light of the widespread boycott in the Sunni triangle.

In the Middle East, the story was that Iraqis, especially Iraqi women, were voting at all. The Iraqi election occurred only three weeks after the election of the moderate Mahmoud Abbas as president of the Palestinian Authority. He has not only denounced this intifada as a failure, and called for an end to the violence, he seems generally able to make it stick. Some of Yasser Arafat's associates were pointedly excluded from the new authority, after it was clear Palestinian public opinion would not tolerate their presence. Meanwhile, the Israelis are leaving Gaza and even closing down some settlements on the West Bank. Perhaps only a Likud hawk, like Ariel Sharon, could lead such an exit.

Was Bush right?: The U.S. president invaded Iraq for all the wrong reasons, but the action led to Jan. 30 elections in that country - a pivotal event in the his....

Since the Iraqi election, and the onset of "the Baghdad Spring," the germ of democracy appears to be spreading throughout the region. In Egypt, Hosni Mubarak has announced multi-party elections for the presidency in a country he has ruled unopposed for nearly a quarter-century. In Saudi Arabia, the ruling princes are permitting elections at the municipal level.

But the most breathtaking development is in Lebanon, where the Cedar Revolution is under way. One million people took to the streets of Beirut on Monday, telling the Syrians to get out of their country. The demonstration followed one organized by **Hezbollah** leader Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, when half a million people turned out asking the Syrians to stay. What else was Nasrallah to do, when the Syrians pay his bills? But he has also sent a signal to the Americans he wants a seat at the table, rather than to blow it up, and the U.S. appears willing to consider giving him one.

Whether the Syrians were behind the assassination of former prime minister Rafik Hariri, the killing began the process of the Lebanese taking back their country. The Syrians, in light of overwhelming international opposition to their continued presence in Lebanon, will eventually have no choice but to leave. The U.S. and France, the two major powers in the region, actually agree on this, as do the Egyptians and the Saudis.

There's no progress to be made on any of these fronts, peace in the Middle East or democracy across the entire region, without U.S. leadership. The question is what role, if any, a small country like Canada might play.

Well, we are close to the Americans, but we are not the Americans, an advantage in conducting any conversation in the Middle East. We have modest interests and influence in the region. Lebanon is a member of la Francophonie, where Canada enjoys the role of not being France. There is a significant Lebanese Canadian population, particularly in Montreal. As for the Israelis and Palestinians, we have standing on both sides.

One constructive role for Canada is to assist in building civil society and encouraging dialogue. One good example is the McGill Middle East Program in Civil Society and Peace Building, funded at \$4.4 million by the Canadian International Development Agency.

Graduate students in social studies from Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Territories spend a year at McGill, and then go back to their home region for a further year as social workers at five centres operated by the program.

It's a small drop of hope, in a sea of sorrow. But it's a beginning.

imacdonald@irpp.org

Graphic

Photo: HUSSEIN MALLA, AP; Lebanese opposition supporters wave flags at the crowd of demonstrators in Beirut's Place des Martyrs. Is democracy spreading?

Load-Date: March 16, 2005

LETTERS

Geelong Advertiser

June 20, 2005 Monday

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Section: LETTERS; Pg. 14

Length: 967 words

Body

Day to remember the world's refugees

TODAY is World Refugee Day, the day on which the world remembers the courage, sacrifices and determination of people -- families, men, women and children alone -- fleeing their own country because of persecution.

On this auspicious day, I ask the Federal Government and the Federal Opposition to rethink their immigration policies.

I also call on all members of the electorate to lobby their local members of parliament urging them to scrap mandatory detention.

The current policy demeans us as a nation. The Australian ideal of a fair go has somehow been forgotten in relation to this most vulnerable class of would-be citizens.

We need a system that ensures that people in our country who are exercising their fundamental human rights to seek asylum are allowed to live in the community and be treated with dignity and respect.

Alan Hands, convenor, Amnesty International Geelong

Reunion for Hubbard family descendents

A REUNION will be held on Sunday, July 31, at Maldon in the Victorian goldfields for the descendants of George Hubbard, who was a Tasmanian convict shipbuilder.

In 1858, two of his sons, George and Edward, settled in the Maldon, Huntly, Eaglehawk, Goornong area and between them fathered 27 children.

Hubbard girls married McAllan, Torpy, Unsgaard, Lewis, Asplin, Weymouth, Parish, Cordell, Bennetts, Rowe, Cox, Weeks, Wingrove, Presnell, Handke, Schott, Forward, Ballini, Cecolini, Hodge, Adams, Smythe.

Telephone me on 5259 3430 or Len Hubbard 5869 3354 for more details.

Jack Hubbard, Portarlington

Book lovers out in force

LETTERS

ON behalf of Geelong Regional Library Corporation, I would like to extend my congratulations and appreciation to the greater Geelong residents who came to hear George Negus and Ben Kozel speak at various libraries and other locations on June 9 and 10.

More than 500 people attended the six free talks by George and Ben within 24 hours.

Both authors were delighted by the overwhelming interest, as were our library staff.

The popularity of the tour was a testament not only to George and Ben's talents, but also to local residents who are passionate about literature.

George and Ben's tour followed another Library Corporation's event seven weeks ago, featuring author Greg Roberts, which attracted more than 300 residents to GPAC's Blakiston Theatre.

The Geelong Regional Library Corporation is committed to bringing more high-profile identities to the region, so keep an eye out for more information in your local library or at www.geelonglibraries.vic.gov.au.

Kylie Warne, activities and promotions officer, Geelong Regional Library Corporation

No understanding of grazing issues

I AM against the ban on cattlemen using the high country for grazing.

The cattlemen know and understand more about the high country than any of these people who have imposed this ban.

What would Steve Bracks or John Thwaites know or understand about the high country?

As far as John Woods, Rob Gell, and Ron Barassi saying the cattle are damaging the high country, what would they know? Have they ever been up into the high country to find out?

Take the cattle out of the high country and you will find blackberries and unwanted growth will take over and it will be a mess.

There will be no hope of controlling bad undergrowth or fires.

How many fires and damage have we had while the cattlemen run the high country grazing. None.

So let those who know the high country and understand cattle stay and leave them alone.

J. Fisher, Drysdale

Terrorists from whose perspective?

THE Israeli foreign minister (6/6/05 CNN) calls for **Hezbollah** to be disbanded under UN resolution 1559, claiming them to be a terrorist organisation.

The foreign minister should be reminded that Israel for decades has not complied with UN resolution 249, which calls for withdrawal of Israeli forces from Palestinian territory.

During this period of non-compliance thousands of Palestinians have been killed, their homes bulldozed, their economy shattered, their population suffering from humiliation via road blocks.

More than 8000 Palestinians have been jailed, most of whom are freedom fighters, while there is a special jail for young boys who throw stones at heavily armed soldiers who shoot to kill.

May I ask, who are the terrorists?

LETTERS

Albert Dennis, Belmont

No mandate for cattle ban

FORMER Labor Minister for Conservation Rod Mackenzie claims that romance clouds the facts on grazing in the Alpine National Park (GA 13/6).

After reading his letter, I would claim that it's not romance, but political bias that clouds the facts.

The Land Conservation Council's recommendations were always going to be a fait accompli.

Labor's claim that there is clear evidence of damage caused by the cattle is deliberately non-specific.

What definitive scientific evidence is there that all of a sudden, after 170 years, the Alpine National Park is being irrevocably damaged by cattle grazing?

If this were true, you would expect the place to have been completely destroyed after 170 years of continuous damage.

On the other hand, there is strong case to support the view that cattle grazing actually helps the region, by keeping the weeds down and helping the regeneration of native grasses.

Moreover, the presence of mountain cattlemen helps the environmental management of the region by reducing the presence of feral animals and certainly diminishes the chances of bushfires.

If you take the argument of the Green gods to its logical conclusion, we should ban cattle from grazing everywhere, because they clearly trample over fauna and flora wherever they graze. Amazingly, nature keeps regenerating itself.

No, Mr Mackenzie, Labor does not have a mandate to trample over the lives and history of country people and should brace itself for the same political backlash Kennett got and deserved.

Brian Handley, Geelong

Load-Date: June 20, 2005

Hate in the raw as mob rams UN

The Sun (England)

July 31, 2006 Monday

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Section: ISRAEL HALTS RAIDS FOR 48 HRS; MIDDLE EAST 2006

Length: 200 words

Byline: Nick Parker

Body

I WATCHED raw hate pour on to the streets of Beirut yesterday as a 5,000 strong mob vented their fury over the Qana horror.

Screaming protesters waving yellow Hezbollah banners used a makeshift battering ram to storm the city's United Nations headquarters.

They smashed and looted property, set the entrance of the building alight and broke windows with a hail of rocks and debris.

Mearvat Tallawi, UN secretary general Kofi Annan's permanent envoy in Beirut, was left cowering inside.

Hezbollah officials who orchestrated the violence had to persuade protesters not to drag her into the street.

Wailing

In 45 minutes of mayhem, the air was filled with the screams of women wailing "Death to Israel", smoke from burning debris and the ominous hum of Israeli warplanes high above.

Ringleaders led chants of "Victory to Hezbollah, Victory to God!"

Using walkie-talkies, they eventually ordered the mob to withdraw.

Virtually every ground-floor window was smashed before around 200 armed troops in riot gear backed by military police formed a cordon.

Feelings ran so high that no one dared attempt to halt the orgy of destruction sparked by the worst atrocity of the war so far -and there was not a single arrest.

Load-Date: July 31, 2006

ARTICLE: Death from the sky

The Nation (AsiaNet)

February 14, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: NATIONWIDE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 1521 words

Body

By ROEDAD KHAN. Friday, January 13, will go down in our history as a black day, a day of infamy, a day when every self-respecting Pakistani, who loves this country, must hang his head in shame. On that day, "America's war on terror" reached Damadola village in Bajaur; Bush's struggle of "good and evil" descended on a defenseless Pakistani village. Innocent blood was spilled in pursuit of Bush's ambitions and nightmares.

On that day, US spy planes targeted a little known village in Bajaur Agency. Missiles rained down killing 13 innocent men, women and children - all citizens of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. It was not an isolated incident. It was the second such strike by US forces inside Pakistan territory. The pre-dawn attack was purportedly conducted at the behest of the Central Intelligence Agency on the basis of intelligence reports that the No. 2 in the Al-Qaeda hierarchy, Al Zwahiri, was present in the village. Dead bodies lay all around the village. There were women who held children in their arms. All lay there dead, victims of tragic and diabolical American aggression. Who dares, I ask myself, to call this "collateral damage". Call it a massacre if you like, but it was a crime against humanity. There was no Al Zwahiri in Damadola village just as there were no Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq!

So, let me shine some sad, wintry sunlight on this sordid episode and the Pakistan government's miserable, cowardly response. Unfortunately, it is hard to bring the truth to the fore in this country.

According to the official spokesperson, the Foreign Office summoned the US Ambassador, Ryan C. Crocker, and lodged a protest. It appeared to be an out-of-the-ordinary protest, especially coming from a country listed as a frontline state in America's war against terrorism. A closer look at the wording of the press handout seems to suggest that it was no more than a 'token protest'.

Strangely, there was no strong condemnation of the violation of Pakistan's air space and infringement of its sovereignty by the US forces. It later transpired that the American Ambassador was never summoned to Foreign Office. It turned out to be a lie. The so-called 'protest' was 'lodged' by the Foreign Secretary when he met the envoy at the Prime Minister's house!!! An unprecedented and a novel form of 'protest' in the annals of diplomacy!

"The Oriental doesn't put the same high price on life as does a Westerner. Life is plentiful. Life is cheap in the Orient", one of the most important things General Westmoreland ever said. No wonder, government maintained mysterious silence for days after the air strike as if it was a non-event. Not one word of condemnation. Not one word of sympathy for the bereaved.

Neither the President nor the Prime Minister questioned whether the bombing of civilians in Bajaur did not constitute a violation of our sovereignty, an immoral act and a war crime, a crime against humanity, however much the Americans or their Pakistani "coalition partner" wanted to kill Al Zwahiri. Instead of going to Bajaur, the Prime Minister took off for Washington for his rendezvous with Bush!

ARTICLE: Death from the sky

To add insult to injury, General Musharraf told the media that Al Qaeda elements operating in Pakistan were also violating the country's sovereignty! "Why don't you talk about that", he told the media. Every student of Political Science knows that presence of such elements in the country is not a violation of sovereignty; it is a violation of laws and has to be distinguished from American air strike carried out inside our territory resulting in the death of innocent men, women and children.

Predictably, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice justified the attack and the killing of innocent people. She was quoted as telling reporters accompanying her en route to the Liberian capital of Monrovia that Washington could not deal "lightly" with Al Qaeda in Pakistan and was ready to address Islamabad's concerns, Rice said, "Pakistani forces are operating there and trying to take control and we are trying to help but I don't have anything on the specific situation (of the air strike). We will continue to work with the Pakistanis and we will try to address their concerns," she is quoted as having said. "Such strikes", she said, "would be repeated whenever necessary", or words to that effect. No repentance, no remorse, no regret, not one word of contrition

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The Nation (AsiaNet)

February 14, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: NATIONWIDE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 1521 words

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On that day, US spy planes targeted a little known village in Bajaur Agency. Missiles rained down killing 13 innocent men, women and children - all citizens of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. It was not an isolated incident. It was the second such strike by US forces inside Pakistan territory. The pre-dawn attack was purportedly conducted at the behest of the Central Intelligence Agency on the basis of intelligence reports that the No. 2 in the Al-Qaeda hierarchy, Al Zwahiri, was present in the village. Dead bodies lay all around the village. There were women who held children in their arms. All lay there dead, victims of tragic and diabolical American aggression. Who dares, I ask myself, to call this "collateral damage". Call it a massacre if you like, but it was a crime against humanity. There was no Al Zwahiri in Damadola village just as there were no Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq!

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Strangely, there was no strong condemnation of the violation of Pakistan's air space and infringement of its sovereignty by the US forces. It later transpired that the American Ambassador was never summoned to Foreign Office. It turned out to be a lie. The so-called 'protest' was 'lodged' by the Foreign Secretary when he met the envoy at the Prime Minister's house!!! An unprecedented and a novel form of 'protest' in the annals of diplomacy!

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February 14, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: NATIONWIDE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 1521 words

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Cartoon furor grows: EU fears violence as more papers print Muslim images

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

February 3, 2006 Friday

National Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A1

Length: 953 words

Byline: David Rennie and Tim Butcher, The Daily Telegraph; with files from Agence France-Presse

Dateline: BRUSSELS; JERUSALEM

Body

BRUSSELS and JERUSALEM - A leading Islamic cleric called for an "international day of anger" today over publication of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad and a Danish activist predicted that deadly violence could break out in Europe "at any minute."

As more European newspapers reprinted the cartoons, what started off as a row between Denmark's press and its Muslim population grew into a full-blown clash of civilizations pitting Western values of free expression against Muslim religious sensitivities.

Anger boiled over in the Gaza Strip, where gunmen from Islamic Jihad occupied the office of the European Union. Europeans began to leave the Palestinian territories after threats from the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades.

Jihad al-Momani, the editor of the Jordanian newspaper al-Shihan, was fired for trying to publish three of the 12 caricatures. He said that he was aiming to show his readers "the extent of the Danish offence."

A leading hardline Muslim cleric, Sheikh Yussef al-Qara-dawi, called for the day of anger to protest against the printing of the cartoons -- first published in the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten in September -- in other European papers.

"Let today be an international day of anger for God and his Prophet," said the sheikh, who is the head of the International Association of Muslim Scholars and one of the Arab world's most popular television preachers.

Ahmed Akkari, a Muslim theologian from Copenhagen, said he had attended a meeting this week with the Danish intelligence service, which called the situation "very, very tense."

He issued a warning that "a clash of civilizations" might result from the decision of newspapers in France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Switzerland to reproduce the 12 cartoons.

"The latest developments are very dangerous. If some militant group goes to a church and tries to do something wrong, it can really escalate and make a danger for European communities. It is more likely [than not], that any minute we will hear of violence unless the police can control the situation."

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Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the Danish Prime Minister, told the Danish newspaper Politiken that the issue had gone beyond a fight between Copenhagen and the Muslim world and now centred on Western free speech versus taboos in Islam.

"We are talking about an issue with fundamental significance to how democracies work," Mr. Rasmussen said.

Anger over the images continued to spread across the Muslim world yesterday. Demonstrations were conducted in several cities in Pakistan, and Afghanistan's President, Hamid Karzai, called the sketches an insult that "must never be allowed to be repeated."

But one Jordanian tabloid published three of the cartoons, appealing to Muslims to be "reasonable," according to Agence France-Presse.

"What brings more prejudice against Islam, these caricatures or pictures of a hostage-taker slashing the throat of his victim in front of the camera?" wrote the editor, Jihad Momani.

Hosni Mubarak, the Egyptian President, warned of "the near and long-term repercussions of the campaign of insults," which could lead to "radicalism and terrorism."

Hassan Nasrallah, leader of Lebanon's radical Shiite movement Hezbollah, said that if Muslims had killed British writer Salman Rushdie in accordance with the 1989 religious edict from Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, then "this rabble who insult our Prophet Muhammad ... would not have dared to do so."

The publication of Mr. Rushdie's novel The Satanic Verses in 1988 led to a similar clash of Western and Muslim values, with Iran's Khomeini issuing a fatwa calling for the author's death.

The controversy took an added twist yesterday, with sharp questions being asked about a group of Danish imams, including Mr. Akkari, who toured the Middle East denouncing Denmark for allowing images of the Prophet Muhammad to be published.

The group created a 43-page dossier on what they said was rampant racism and Islamophobia in Denmark and took it to politicians and leading clerics in Egypt and Lebanon in a series of trips late last year.

The Danish media have tried to pin the Muslim delegates down on how they came to include three extra, obscene cartoons in the dossier, in addition to the 12 images that started the dispute when they were published by Jyllands-Posten in September.

The extra cartoons, whose origins remain obscure, show Muhammad with a pig's snout, a dog raping a praying Muslim and Muhammad as a "pedophile demon."

The original 12 cartoons published in the newspaper included several that were satirical and intentionally provocative.

One shows the Prophet Muhammad with a turban shaped like a bomb, with a hissing fuse on top.

Another shows the Prophet grinning wildly, with a knife in his hand, and flanked by heavily veiled women.

A third shows him telling suicide bombers as they arrived in paradise: "Stop, we have run out of virgins."

Mr. Akkari denied suggestions that attempts had been made to convince Arab leaders that the three extra cartoons had been published in the mainstream Danish press, saying they had been clearly captioned as being racist images sent anonymously to Danish Muslims.

A leading Danish exporter to Arab countries yesterday announced its first job cuts in reaction to a Muslim boycott of the Scandinavian country's goods over the publication of the cartoons.

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Arla Foods, Europe's second-largest dairy company, said it would lay off 125 staff in its northern Danish factories, adding that a further 40 people would see their working hours reduced.

Arla Foods, a co-operative owned by some 11,600 milk producers in Denmark and Sweden, is Europe's second-largest dairy company.

It is also Denmark's biggest exporter to Arab countries, accounting for one-third of total Danish exports there.

Graphic

Black & White

Photo: Ahmed Jadallah, Reuters; Two Fatah gunmen aim their weapons at the French cultural centre's headquarters in the Gaza Strip yesterday. An international row over newspaper cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad gathered steam as more European dailies printed controversial Danish caricatures and Muslims increased pressure to stop them.

Load-Date: February 3, 2006

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Egyptian opposition bides time

The Toronto Star

September 10, 2005 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A12

Length: 925 words

Byline: Mitch Potter, Toronto Star

Dateline: CAIRO

Body

The barren concrete stairwell spirals upward around an elevator shaft that appears not to have seen movement since the British left Egypt. And at the end of a corridor that has also seen better days, a tiny wooden sign barely whispers the power that lies within.

"Muslim Brotherhood," it reads.

If true democracy had come to Egypt, the new president might today be behind this door. But the sudden Arab spring that led to Wednesday's first-yeet multi-party elections did not sprout a candidate from the Brotherhood. The country's oldest Islamic movement, founded in 1928, was forced to watch Hosni Mubarak trounce an opposition far weaker than itself, reclaiming the title of president for a fifth time.

Banned but unbowed, the Muslim Brotherhood sees time - and, by its own reckoning, as many as 40 per cent of the Egyptian people - on its side. Violence, this once bloody group now abhors. It is through evolution, not revolution, the movement patiently predicts its day will come.

And it promises that day need not be feared, not by Egypt, nor the West. Because the mellow, modern Brotherhood says it has come to realize the "Islamic democracy" of its dreams must govern with tolerance, or perish.

"We are not bitter. We are not angry. We know that freedom has its prices and burdens and this exclusion is part of it," Mohammed Habib, supreme council deputy, told the Toronto Star.

At 62, Habib is emblematic of the moderate face of the modern Brotherhood leadership. A university geography professor, Habib has spent three stints in Egyptian prisons for his activism since the 1970s, yet remains a genteel host.

He offers tea in formal Arabic, via the female translator accompanying his guest. Her head is not covered, which does not faze him. When the conversation turns to the group's vision of an Egypt that adheres to the teachings of Islam and what that might mean for women, he emphasizes his comfort with modernity.

"We are not standing with veils, waiting to cover this country," Habib says, addressing the translator as much as this reporter.

Egyptian opposition bides time

"There are some who think this way perhaps, but these ideas need to be changed. And they are changing. We believe in democracy. We believe democracy is consistent with Islam. And we believe the state is a civil institution." Such promises, Habib acknowledges, have yet to sway many Egyptians, who fear a bedrock fundamentalism lies beneath the tolerant facade.

Nor does it help that on the eve of another anniversary of the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the Muslim Brotherhood's international reputation tends to revolve around the fact that many decades ago its ranks included Ayman al-Zawahiri, now believed to be the second-in-command of Al Qaeda.

Habib makes it plain. He unabashedly criticizes Al Qaeda.

"We consider everything they do to be crimes."

During the run-up to elections, many Egyptians remarked upon the acquiescence of the Brotherhood, which urged its membership, estimated at as many as five million people, to participate by voting for any candidate of their choosing. The decision not to formally boycott struck many as suspicious.

"Some people wondered whether there was a deal with the regime. Were there promises that the Brotherhood could field a certain number of independent candidates in the upcoming parliamentary elections in exchange?" asked Abdallah Al-Ashaal, professor of international relations at the American University of Cairo.

"We don't know. But we do know that the Brotherhood has a generation of very gifted, very enlightened leaders now. They are not dogmatic any more and they understand the dilemma. They are better off co-operating, rather than trying to fight Mubarak, who has proven he will simply arrest and put them in jail."

Ashaal said the relationship that matters more is the one between Mubarak and Washington, which he says remains ambivalent to an Egypt so democratic as to give the Brotherhood the opportunity of full participation.

"America can push hard or it can push with feathers. And the impression of most Egyptians is that we are seeing feathers," he said. "But the danger of this equation is that Mubarak will take his victory as total validation for his policies, just as (U.S. President) George Bush took his last victory, with just 51 per cent of the vote, and rushed onward with his agenda.

"If that happens, many of us believe the other part of the game will be the ascension of Mubarak's son Gamal into the seat of power, one way or another. It suits the ruling party, it suits America, and it keeps the Brotherhood at bay."

Gamal Mubarak, 40, is widely seen as the guiding hand behind his father's democratic makeover.

"But it is not the faces that matter," warns Ashaal. "It's the corruption. And the expectations that this time 70 million Egyptian people are looking for someone to address their mountain of problems."

The Muslim Brotherhood isn't likely to interfere with any such transition. But its leaders admit the frustrations of watching from the wings as it sees other Islamic groups gain political foothold elsewhere in the region. **Hezbollah** of Lebanon is a case in point. And even the Palestinian group Hamas, an offshoot of the Brotherhood, is finding stronger democratic legs.

"We watch the situation in Lebanon and Palestine and we find there is dialogue. Hamas and others are involved in negotiations. They have a voice.

"But that is not our situation. Here we are restricted, chased away. We don't believe in revolutions, we don't believe in violence. We can only work peacefully to keep the popular pressure. It is our only choice."

Graphic

Egyptian opposition bides time

AMR NABIL AP Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood deputy leader Mohammed Habib speaks at a demonstration in front of a "national coalition for reform" sign.

Load-Date: September 10, 2005

End of Document

WORLD IN FOCUS; A war we dare not lose

The Advertiser (Australia)

June 10, 2006 Saturday

State Edition

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Section: MAGAZINE; Pg. W03

Length: 995 words

Byline: By Chris Kenny, adviser to Foreign Affairs Minister Alexander Downer

Body

IN what we call the War on Terrorism, we should all empathise with the Israelis or, to be conspicuously even-handed, the Israelis and the Palestinians. These are the people at the epicentre of the global struggle of our time. Like Berliners during the Cold War, their daily lives personify a broader struggle.

Perhaps if John F. Kennedy were alive today he would travel to Jerusalem - sacred to Christian, Muslim and Jew - and proclaim to the world that: "We are all Jerusalemites." The Israelis are bellwethers in a global challenge vital to our future. This battle is not between civilisations but for civilisation.

It pits liberal democracies and moderate Muslim states against extremist terrorists determined to forge a global Islamic caliphate ruling over a repressive, Taliban-style regime.

The struggle is one that the Israelis understand better than the rest of us. The war we are learning about has been their lot for decades. The jihadist ideology aims to dispense with moderate Muslim governments and Western liberal values in the same way that radical Arabs have long-aspired to eliminate the state of Israel. Just as Israel battles extremists in order to preserve its existence, so must we defend the values of freedom, democracy and tolerance that underpin our civilisation.

Last month, I saw how Israel and its people live with the daily threat from terrorism. Many organisations, and even nation states, oppose Israel's existence. At the heavily fortified northern border we looked across a UN patrolled no-man's land on to Lebanese rooftops, just a stone's throw away. This part of Lebanon is controlled by the Islamic extremist **Hezbollah** group, committed to the destruction of Israel and funded by the Iranian Government - whose President has repeatedly called for Israel's elimination. A 45 minute-drive later and we were on the Golan Heights, looking across to a Syrian village and again, to a country opposed to Israel's existence.

In Jerusalem, we spoke with Arnold Roth, a Melbourne-born expatriate whose daughter Keren was killed in a suicide bombing attack in a Jerusalem pizza bar. In Tel Aviv, we met a Russian immigrant who spent 11 months in a hospital burns ward after a similar attack.

We met UN officials who detailed the daily inconvenience and violence confronting the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. We saw sickening TV advertisements and educational aids which teach Palestinian children to glorify suicide bombers.

WORLD IN FOCUS A war we dare not lose

Yet amid these horrors we saw great diversity and even a hint of tolerance. On the Islamic holy day of Friday in Ramallah we heard the Muslim call to prayer, an hour later we saw Christians praying at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and that same night we joined a Jewish Sabbath dinner in Jerusalem. We met Arab-Israelis, Christian-Palestinians and Jewish agnostics as well as Israeli Druze villagers who are ethnically Arabic, whose religion derives from Islam but who are loyal to Israel. We visited a child-care centre where Arab, Christian and Jewish toddlers are marvellously (though sadly only temporarily) oblivious to their differences.

Israel is a thriving democracy and economic success story. But the unresolved problem of the stateless and impoverished Palestinians remains its running sore and Achilles heel.

The Israel/Palestine dispute involves issues of statehood, historical rights, family connections and regional pressures. But the jihadists inject their extremist ideology and tactics into this dispute to ensure it festers. They then cite the Israel/Palestine imbroglio to fuel the resentment that underpins their worldwide jihad against Western civilisation.

When Israel took the remarkable step of unilaterally withdrawing from the Gaza Strip, the extremists didn't embrace peace. They continued to fire rockets from the new sanctuary of Gaza, aiming to kill Israelis. And the despairing Palestinians elected a hateful Hamas Government, born out of the insidious Muslim Brotherhood and committed to the destruction of Israel. So the trauma for the Israelis and the Palestinians - and all of us - goes on. If this were a simple notion of Palestinian statehood, it conceivably could be settled. Terror attacks would cease, leaders would negotiate borders and the removal of some Jewish settlements and the two states could be established roughly along the 1967 border, possibly with some special arrangements for a mutual capital in Jerusalem.

Instead, the extremists use an evil perversion of Islam to prolong the trauma. They recruit suicide bombers and preach hatred.

As civilians are killed in suicide bomb attacks, children die when Israel retaliates against the terrorists and neighbourhoods are both protected and seriously inconvenienced by Berlin-style security walls and fences, the people of Jerusalem live the inevitable horror that confronts us all if we fail to realise the challenge and defeat terror.

Just as the terrorists aim to debilitate Israeli resolve, they aim to kill and wear down democrats and moderates in Afghanistan, Iraq and in South East Asian countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines. In Israel everyone knows it is a fight for survival. We need to understand ours is a similar fight. Our only hope - difficult as it may be - is to emulate the toughness and resolve of the Israelis and the patience of Palestinians who eschew violence. Like them we have no choice but to tackle the extremists head on, until civilisation triumphs over terror.

Chris Kenny travelled to Israel on an Australia-Israel and Jewish Affairs Council study tour.

Chris KENNY

* Former journalist with several Adelaide media outlets.

* Worked for South Australian premiers John Olsen and Rob Kerin.

* In 1993 published State of Denial about the collapse of the State Bank and Bannon Government.

* In 1996 published It would be nice if there was some Women's Business: the inside story behind the Hindmarsh Island Affair. His revelations helped lead to a Royal Commission into the matter.

Load-Date: June 9, 2006

Support is certainly not flagging

Western Daily Press

June 10, 2006 Saturday

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Section: Pg. 8

Length: 929 words

Byline: Mark Ford m.ford@bepp.co.uk

Body

He isn't even a football fan, but there can be few people enjoying World Cup fever as much as Robin Ashburner. Living on Exmoor, he is the founder of one of the country's biggest flag-making firms.

And as a patriotic fervour grips England, the firm is working hard than Wayne Rooney's physio to keep up with demand.

Such is the demand for the St George's Cross, in every shape and size, that the company is selling in the region of 1,000 a day.

It has got to the stage where the Specialist Flag Service factory in Swansea has had to disconnect the phone at times for fear of being overwhelmed by the clamour from supporters wanting to show their true colours.

"The World Cup has given us some problems," said Mr Ashburner. "People very often want something written on their flag, but for the past month we have had to say no, we just cannot keep up any more. The phone at the factory is disconnected half the time because there is no way we could cope.

"We do a lot of business over the internet and they get in in the morning there are already 150 orders before you even start the day, not just for a single flag but other enormous orders.

"Each time a jubilee or major football tournament comes along, the demand is bigger than the last time."

So far this year, sales of St George's Cross flags are 10 times that of last year, and sales in general for the past month 100 per cent up on the previous 12 months.

The company was set up by Mr Ashburner, who moved to Exford six years ago, in 1969. Throwing itself into the internet at an early stage, the firm has gone on to develop the world's biggest flag-selling website www.flagman.com and sells to every corner of the globe.

Many of the St George Crosses have been going to English expatriates desperate to show their allegiance while far from home.

The company prides itself in being able to produce any flag in any size - well almost any.

"The only one the Home Office won't let us make is the Hezbollah flag," said Mr Ashburner, who for nine of the past 10 years has been president of the British Flag Institute.

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"People think you wouldn't get many orders from swastikas, but you get quite a lot, for collectors and television and film productions," he said.

He passed on control of the company to his son Charles two years ago, but still keeps his hand in, sewing the odd flag from his workshop, as well as taking care of the flagpole erecting side of the business which is also flourishing.

The sight of the red cross on white background on so many cars and homes does make some people feel uneasy, concerned that it might hint at an ugly nationalism associated with right wing views and football hooligans.

But Mr Ashburner does not agree. He believes the popularity of flag-waving in England this year is more an indication that the descent Englishmen and women are learning not to be ashamed of a little positive patriotism.

"The people who complain about seeing the St George's Cross should realise there is a difference between patriotism and nationalism," he said.

"Nationalism seems to be associated with some shady political parties; what I think we are getting now is positive patriotism

"Those that are wishy washy about the flag tend to be white Brits who have taken it for granted. They forget that the two things that keep the nation together are the Monarchy and the flag.

"People should stand up and take notice when they are being patriotic, there's nothing wrong with it. We are happy to see it in other nation's, outside every town hall in France you see a Tricolor, but for some reason we don't seem to be comfortable with doing it ourselves.

"The World Cup brings it out in people, having pride in what we are. We may end up getting knocked out early, but at least the team will know the country is behind them."

And Mr Ashburner is not alone in urging people not to be frightened of the St George's flag revolution. Dr Anthony King, a Reader in Sociology at Exeter University, believes the millions of flags point to the creation of a new national identity.

HE has written about the social implications of flying England flags from cars since they appeared during the 2004 European Championship. "In placing a flag on their car, people announce their support of the England team, but this statement is not an individualistic expression of personal pride," he said. "It is all about creating a sense of solidarity with other, mostly anonymous, people." The increased use of St George's Cross itself was being widely welcomed by commentators as reclaiming the symbol from previous Far Right connotations.

"A potentially xenophobic British national identity expressed specifically by groups of young men in the 1970s and 1980s has been replaced by a more localised English national identity, symbolised by the Cross of St George since the 1990s.

"This English identity is more inclusive, cosmopolitan and ultimately transitional than the former British identity. "It encompasses social groups that were excluded before, going further to include women and immigrants, and is more open to other nations." He predicted the World Cup would have a positive impact on creating a national identity.

"The World Cup leads to an increased perception of a national community because it creates an opportunity for people to interact with each other on a regular basis within a charged atmosphere. The rituals surrounding sport are one of the most obvious ways that we can show networks building up to form a national identity," he said.

Dr King's ideas are expanded in The Sage Handbook Of Nations And Nationalism, published this month.

Support is certainly not flagging

End of Document

It is hard to deny Iraq is sinking fast

Western Morning News (Plymouth)

September 22, 2005

Default Edition

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Section: News; Other; Others; Pg. 12

Length: 945 words

Body

A S 160 servicemen are despatched from the Westcountry to Iraq, and our thoughts and best wishes are with them this morning, we should not pull the blanket over our heads and fail to see the new and harsh realities of Iraq after its long scorching summer.

There have been many voices in Britain, heard before and after the illegal invasion of Iraq in March 2003, forecasting that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to keep Iraq united in the future.

Today that is seen to be true.

While Whitehall's spokesmen can point to areas of Iraq where conditions are improving, for Iraq is a vast country of five million people, it is very hard to deny that Iraq is sinking fast. The Shia-lef Government of Ibrahim Jaafari looks weak and is losing its way. There are dangerous signs that it cannot impose its will on the local authorities in Southern Iraq where British troops are based. The coalition is crumbling at the edges and at a time when Iraq is desperate for greater international commitment. In Washington and in London, serious politicians are talking of the need for an exit strategy.

Hope, such as it is, has hovered around Iraq's proposed constitution. British diplomats have been trying to help it along behind the scenes. It was unfair of its critics to claim it had only been written by American stooges and exiles. The 71 members of the drafting committee had been appointed by Iraqis and came from wide political and ethnic backgrounds. The Sunni minority made a big mistake in boycotting January's elections, and would have paid a bigger price if unelected Sunni representatives had not been drafted, sensibly, on to the committee.

Many other countries in the region would be only too pleased to have their recently-elected representatives deciding on a new constitution. There is much in it that will have a wide measure of support inside and outside Iraq. For example, it is stated that Iraq will be republican, democratic and pluralist with 25 per cent of the seats in its Parliament reserved for women.

The main Sunni objections are over the use of the word "federal" and the treatment of former members of the Ba'ath Party. The Foreign Office is putting it about that some Sunni political leaders broadly welcome the draft constitution, but feel unable to say so in public in the present climate. This may, or may not, be the case. What is clear is that, at present, it looks as if those opposed to the constitution will win a two-thirds majority on October 15 in three of the country's 18 provinces. This would legally destroy the proposed constitution. It is by no means clear what would happen then.

It is hard to deny Iraq is sinking fast

There has been little coverage of the British authorities and the 7,000 British troops in southern Iraq. We have a Consul-General, Stewart Innes, in Basra who has been in post for several months. He comes under Britain's new ambassador in Baghdad, William Patey. The task of both is to have a strong dialogue with politicians and officials and support in every way the national political process.

The British troops are part of the Multi-National Division in the South East which has a British Commander, Major General John Riley. The British contingent is overstretched, but that said it is a well-trained, well-equipped and impressive force of which we can all be proud. There have been reports for weeks that the number of British soldiers in Iraq is going to be further reduced. It is likely that some will be flown to Afghanistan where Britain has taken on a large commitment.

The Shia South is confident that, representing the ethnic majority, events are going its way. No region was more pleased to see the back of Saddam Hussein. In practice, local people are more encouraged to work out their own future. This has led to the south becoming less tolerant. The south is becoming a mini-state and increasingly Islamist.

The pictures of individual and popular clerics are now displayed in the local police stations - not necessarily a political gesture in Iraq. The British have been concerned at the feuds between the Shia factions, one of which is the Mehdi Army, a banned militia loyal to Moqtadn al-Sadr. The police are trained and encouraged to keep above them. This does not always happen and, inevitably, police commanders will be wondering who they will be reporting to in a short while.

There have been disturbing reports for months that Shiite militiamen have been infiltrating the police. I presume this led to the recent placing in jail of two undercover British soldiers and their subsequent release in a bold but controversial operation.

To add to such problems, there are strong suspicions that Iran is getting more involved in the upsurge of violence in the south, possibly because of the election victory last month of the hawkish President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. No doubt he dislikes Britain's hardening position against Iran's nuclear programme. The UN Security Council might impose sanctions on Iran.

Military intelligence has suggested that Iran is supporting a terror group in south Iraq, run by Abu Mustafa al-Sheibani, which is believed to have nearly 300 members. It may have been behind the murder of six Royal Military Policemen back in 2003.

There has been an increase in the number of attack on our troops during the summer, and Iran may have supplied a sophisticated new armour-piercing bomb, which is also in the hands of Hezbollah in Lebanon.

In truth, Iran and other countries are linked with powerful forces in Iraq over which Washington, London and Baghdad have little or no control. The country seems to be sliding into the sort of anarchy, horror and despair that Lebanon experienced some years ago.

Load-Date: September 24, 2005

Support is certainly not flagging

Western Daily Press

June 10, 2006 Saturday

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Section: Pg. 8

Length: 929 words

Byline: Mark Ford m.ford@bepp.co.uk

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Inside the mind of a suicide bomber

Daily Telegraph (Sydney, Australia) (Sydney, Australia)

July 12, 2005 Tuesday

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Section: FEATURES; Historical Feature; Pg. 26

Length: 1043 words

Byline: KEITH SUTER

Body

Suicidal killers are a recent phenomenon in armed resistance groups, writes KEITH SUTER

Eighty-eight Australians were killed in Bali on October 12, 2002. They were among 202 who died. This was one of the worst suicide terrorist attacks in modern history.

Between 1980 and 2003, there were 315 suicide bombings worldwide. Most were directed at developed countries. Almost all the attacks have been against a handful of nations: Australia, the United States, France, India, Indonesia, Israel, Russia, Sri Lanka, Spain, and Turkey. Since the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, that nation has also been in the firing line.

MATP

The common aim of such a tactic is to force a democratic country to change its policy. Suicide bombing is generally a tool for groups fighting for national liberation of some sort. They see themselves fighting an invader or occupier (such as the US and its allies). Islamic fundamentalism is not necessarily involved.

The largest number of suicide attacks have been done by the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, who are a communist movement drawn from Hindu families. Of 315 such attacks recorded, 76 were carried out by the Tamil Tigers. They are fighting for the independence of northern Sri Lanka from the majority Buddhist Sinhalese. The Tigers are the only such group in the world to have killed two heads of government with suicide bombs: India's prime minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991 and Sri Lanka's president Ranasinghe Premadasa in 1993.

Modern suicide terrorist groups share a number of characteristics. In general they are militarily and numerically weaker than their opponents. Their goals, if not their tactics, are broadly supported by a distinct national community.

The militants have a close bond of loyalty to each other and a devotion to their leader. They have a system of initiation and rituals of commitment to the community.

Suicide terrorists are often educated people from affluent families, such as those involved in the September 11, 2001, attack on the US. They are not often, as we might think, psychologically disturbed young men. They seem quite well-adjusted (bearing in mind the rigorous training they undergo). Some of the most effective terrorists are women. Before 1980, the best-known suicide terror groups included the militant Jewish revolutionary groups the Zealots and the Sicarii (named after their dagger). They committed public assassinations about 2000 years ago against the Roman occupiers of the Holy Land. They attacked victims in broad daylight using daggers concealed under cloaks.

Inside the mind of a suicide bomber

Another famous group was The Assassins, Shiite Muslims based in Iran in the 11th and 12th centuries, who fought the Sunni rulers and Christian Crusaders. They welcomed death in combat.

Japanese kamikaze pilots targeted the military rather than civilians. But they were still willing to die for their cause, and did so frequently from October 25, 1944, until Japan's surrender on August 15, 1945. About 3843 pilots killed themselves. They failed to stop the Allies but exacted a high cost. They damaged or sank at least 375 Allied ships, killed 12,300 Allied service personnel and wounded 36,400. Japanese soldiers preferred to die in battle rather than face capture, seen as the ultimate humiliation.

Between 1945 and 1980, suicide attacks temporarily disappeared from the international scene.

There were numerous acts of suicide by individuals in the service of political causes, such as IRA prisoners going on a hunger strike in the 1970s in Northern Ireland.

But there is not a single instance of a suicide terrorist killing others from 1945-80. The modern use of suicide attacks began in the early 1980s, with the Islamic Hezbollah group in Lebanon. The largest loss of American military personnel in history -- in percentage terms -- took place on October 23, 1983, when a suicide terrorist drove a truckload of explosives into the US Marines compound in Beirut; 241 soldiers were killed (about 10 per cent of the force). There was a near-simultaneous attack on the French base, which killed 58 French troops.

The US and France immediately quit Lebanon. The toll was an inspiration to other would-be suicide attackers. Suicide attacks are used because they can be effective.

They helped force Israel out of southern Lebanon in 1985, and they have helped force Israel out of the Gaza Strip (the settlers' withdrawal is currently underway). This style of attack also had a hand in forcing the Sri Lankan Government to create an independent Tamil state from 1990.

The assassination of the Indian prime minister stopped any Indian attempt at ever again deploying troops in Sri Lanka to assist the Sri Lankan government.

Having scared India off, the Tamil Tigers have not found it necessary to attack Indian targets again.

Meanwhile, there is a stalemate in current campaigns, such as the Chechens rebelling against Russian control, the Kashmiris against India and the Iraqi rebels against the US and its allies. Osama bin Laden is still on the loose in southern Afghanistan or northern Pakistan. He is the spiritual leader of the international al-Qaeda network, probably behind last week's London terror attacks.

Terrorist groups have learned from each other. For example, Tamil Tigers pioneered the now common "suicide belt". This is an undergarment with specially made pockets to hold explosives and triggering devices that fit the human bomb's body. Other groups have followed this idea.

Terrorist groups need community support. First, such support enables a group to replenish its membership to make up for the losses through deaths in action.

Second, terrorist groups need to avoid detection by security forces. Broad sympathy among local populations means they can quickly find safe places in which to hide.

Finally, community support is necessary for acceptance of the suicide terrorists as being martyrs to the cause. Many suicide terrorists make videos to be shown after their death. In the Middle East, souvenirs such as keyrings honour martyrs with portraits.

Suicide attacks comprise just 3 per cent of all terrorist attacks from 1980 to 2003, but account for 48 per cent of the fatalities.

* Acknowledgments to Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism, by Robert Pape (Scribe, Melbourne, on sale from yesterday)

Inside the mind of a suicide bomber

Load-Date: July 11, 2005

End of Document

Realism and pessimism, Palestinians and Israelis;
Globalist

The International Herald Tribune

January 15, 2005 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 966 words

Byline: Roger Cohen

Dateline: RAMAT HASHARON, Israel

Body

What follows is a summary of a senior Israeli intelligence officer's presentation of his national security concerns. The officer is a pessimist, by nature, and because he is paid to imagine worst-case scenarios. But the history of the last half-century suggests pessimism is no more than realism in this part of the world.

**

Security Review 2005

The decision to dismantle settlements in Gaza is irrevocable. Israeli society is split between those opposed to this course and those who do not like it but think it is necessary. Still, the operation will go ahead. Its risks should not be underestimated.

International Herald Tribune

Consider this scenario. We are engaged in trying to move 5,000 inhabitants of the settlements at Gush Katif, in southern Gaza. The settlers are joined by 15,000 supporters from around the country. Children are crying, women screaming, men shouting. We've moved in trucks and buses and thousands of police officers and troops. In this mayhem, mortars are fired from the adjacent Palestinian town of Khan Yunis, perhaps by a faction determined to reinforce the impression we are leaving under fire. Ten Israelis are wounded. Under such conditions, can we proceed with the plan?

Even before this stage, there may be problems. A government decision on disengagement from Gaza has been made, but our citizens there have not yet received formal notification. People in their homes for a quarter-century may receive only three months' written notice to move. There will be appeals to the Supreme Court; their outcome is uncertain.

The prime minister's determination is such we must assume the operation will be completed, perhaps by September, despite such obstacles. Most people think our security will improve after that, at least in the Gaza area, because a reason to fight us will have been removed. That is a dangerous assumption.

In the absence of our forces and intelligence in Gaza, Palestinian military capability may improve. I refer to rockets with a longer range. I refer to the smuggling of surface-to-air missiles from Egypt. The possibility that a coastal town like Ashkelon will be hit exists. How would we respond?

Realism and pessimism, Palestinians and Israelis; Globalist

If we find a transformed Palestinian Authority led by Mahmoud Abbas, one that is strong and accountable, we may expect a determined effort to stop such attacks.

But our belief is that he is not powerful enough to dismantle terrorist groups, especially Hamas. Pressure from Hezbollah, from Iran and from Syria to maintain military pressure on Israel will be insistent. The most Abbas will obtain is a truce.

But a truce may only complicate our political situation.

Let's assume there is quiet. The Palestinians, backed by the Europeans and the Arab world, will say: You see, all the problems are caused by the Israeli occupation. If Israel would only do as it has done in Gaza and pull back to the 1967 lines, abandoning the West Bank, the conflict would be over. We know this is an illusion. But our view is not widely shared.

It is an illusion because many Palestinians still seek a state that would replace ours, rather than one that will exist alongside Israel. But Abbas will have several cards to play to put pressure on us.

He will point to a democracy as good as any in the Arab world. He will point to cleaned-up finances. He will point to reorganized security services. He will say the guns are quiet. He will recall that President George W. Bush once spoke of a Palestinian state by 2005. He will be in a hurry. That is when the complications will start, because we are not in a hurry.

The road map is clear. Its path to peace differs from the Oslo accords in one critical respect. Implicit in Oslo was the notion that peace leads to security. The road map says security comes first, then peace.

Until we can guarantee our security, we are not going to discuss a political solution. There has to be a full and final Palestinian decision to give up terror as a means to achieve political ends. A truce or a cease-fire are not enough.

We want to see Abbas arrest and try and sentence to life terms militants who have killed Israelis. This has never happened. We want to see a law saying it is illegal to carry weapons. We know what the dismantlement of Palestinian terror cells is. Until it happens, we must resist pressure to discuss a final-status peace. There is a perception that the road to such a peace is now open. But it's not that simple.

Even as a pessimist, however, I must acknowledge a few hopeful signs. Hamas has been weakened. It used to get 70 percent of its funds from Saudi Arabia. That channel has been curtailed. It has turned to Iran, to some effect. But a terror organization is like any business: it needs money to be successful. Hamas now has less.

Both sides have understood the need for compromise -- on territory, on Jerusalem. The gap is smaller. Credible leadership exists on both sides. Support from Washington, from Egypt, from Turkey is real. If the Palestinians will accept a state with interim borders -- an accord that is not definitive -- we may make headway.

Abbas understands that in the post-9/11 world, violence is counterproductive. The price is too high. He is credible when he says he opposes a militarized intifada. But his real strength, and his flexibility on issues such as the right of return of Palestinian refugees, remain in doubt.

In conclusion, I do not see a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the foreseeable future. But we may, if we are realistic, enter a period of calm marked by cooperation and sincere attempts to solve problems. That is the best-case scenario: not a peace agreement, but various agreements building peace.

However, because the Palestinians will want more, because our timetables are not synchronized, the worst may as ever be inevitable.

**

Load-Date: January 16, 2005

End of Document

Letters to the Editor; Bush should call for cease-fire

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

July 29, 2006 Saturday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. a4

Length: 139 words

Byline: SUELLEN FLYNN

Body

415 Glen Oak St.

President Bush's refusal to call for an immediate cease-fire in the war in Lebanon is politically reckless and morally indefensible. The administration is hoping that Israel will wipe out Hezbollah's military base. Even if they wipe out Hezbollah, the violence is creating more hatred among the refugees and creating more potential terrorists.

President Bush says a cease-fire now would not do any good. Not do any good? How about saving lives? We need a cease-fire now to stop the killing of innocent men, women and children on both sides and to stop this from becoming a wider conflict involving more Middle East countries. No matter how long the fighting lasts, eventually it will come down to a political settlement. Let's call for a cease-fire now and get the moderate Arab countries involved in solving the problem.

Load-Date: July 29, 2006

Keeping Memory Alive; ON THE GO

The Forward

May 12, 2006

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Section: Fast Forward; Pg. 14

Length: 1113 words

Byline: Masha Leon

Body

"In some paradoxical way, we each have come here to be alone - with our thoughts, with the last distant memory of loved ones long gone," said David Marwell, director of the Museum of Jewish Heritage - A Living Memorial to the Holocaust, at a Holocaust Remembrance Day event held April 23 at Hunter College. Noting the "responsibility to the past, to remember, mourn and honor those who perished," Marwell touted the museum's "garden of 18 stones - with a tree growing from each one - a tree that represents life and the promise of the future." The event was co-sponsored by the Warsaw Ghetto Resistance Organization, the Anti-Defamation League, the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, the American Jewish Congress-Council for World Jewry, the Consulate General of Israel in New York, the New York Board of Rabbis, UJA-Federation of New York and the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York.

"I learned what can happen when Jews have no power," said New York County District Attorney Robert Morgenthau, museum chairman. "Although I was blessed to be born in this great country, the Holocaust has played a significant role in my life. Along with other veterans, [I] helped defeat Hitler and his henchmen. Following the vision of mayor [Ed] Koch, I helped establish the Museum of Jewish Heritage, where memory is preserved and where education is our most important mission." Ambassador John Bolton, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, paid tribute to his Israeli counterpart, Dan Gillerman, and cheered the monumental January 17 U.N. Resolution that instituted worldwide commemoration of the Holocaust. "We cannot depend on occasional movies [to remind us] of the Holocaust," New York State Senator Charles Schumer said. Alluding to Iran and Hamas, he explained: "In every generation, there are those who would try to destroy us." Israel's consul general in New York, Arye Mekel, mused: "You'd have thought the world would have learned a lesson. All they want to do is destroy the Jews and Israel." Citing "the crazy leader of Iran, [as well as] Hamas and Hezbollah," he said: "This is not an Israeli problem. The world has to stop Iran."

Sam Bloch, president of the World Federation of Bergen-Belsen Survivors Association, delivered what he defined as "a symbolic speech" in Yiddish, "the language of [most of the victims] and survivors." Block later told me that when he was asked to speak at the 1995 anniversary of the liberation of Bergen-Belsen, the then-president of Germany insisted, "You must deliver your speech in Yiddish, because that's what most of the victims spoke." After a rather lengthy narrative of how and where the victims died, he concluded his talk: "Now, flowers and grass cover the shame of the world." Survivor Robert Donat recalled: "It was Passover 1947. We had recently come to America. My mother put a few potato peelings on the Seder plate to remember [concentration camps] Majdanek, Radom, Dachau and Auschwitz. My wife and I have kept up this tradition. Later, my father wrote the story of our family's journey through 'The Kingdom of the Holocaust' [Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963]. He wrote it for my children and their children and for all people, so they would [know] what this generation suffered in civilized Europe." (On the

Keeping Memory Alive ON THE GO

jacket of my copy of Donat's book, Elie Wiesel notes: "I have read hundreds of eye-witness accounts on the holocaust-kingdom...: I know of few other books of this kind that I could recommend without reservation.") As the Temple Emanu-El choir sang, a procession of **female** survivors - Ruth Westheimer among them - and their children and grandchildren mounted the stage to light three sets of six candles, symbolizing the 6 million lives lost. Interweaving pain with anger, the Fifth Avenue Synagogue's cantor, Joseph Malovany, sang a wrenching version of the prayer "El Ma'ale Rachamim" and then led the audience in singing the Partisan hymn "Zog Nit Keyn Mol" (Never say you are on your final road/Our step beats out the message - we are here!)

* * *

Anything negative that I say about ThinkFilm's 2005 movie "When Do We Eat? Sex, Drugs & Matzoh Ball Soup" probably will have little effect on ticket sales. There is an audience of Jews and gentiles who will find hilarious the film's pathologically dysfunctional family's attempt at a Passover Seder. What kind of rite were these people celebrating? Meant to bring together the family, their Seder turns into a battlefield of old hurts, clashes of ego and unsavory revelations. The bizarre gathering includes Ethan (Max Greenfield), who has left his father's business to become a Torah-quoting baal teshuvah and yet still has the hots for his cousin, who seduces him at the Seder. Jack Klugman, of "Odd Couple" fame, is pigeonholed as Artur, the family's grandfather. A Holocaust survivor, his fear of unpacking - a well-founded survivor trauma - should not have been an object of insensitive humor. Born in Santiago, Chile, the film's writer-director-producer's Salvador Litvak, has a name that suggests Litvak provenance. Though Litvaks are noted for their irreverence, by the time the film begins to reverse its vulgar spiral, I, a Warsaw-born Litvak, found that the taste of bitter herbs had become irreversible.

* * *

Last week I ran into comedy king Freddy Roman on Madison Avenue. After a hug and a couple of air kisses, I asked him, "Have you seen Jake Ehrenreich in 'A Jew Grows in Brooklyn'?" "Is it good?" he asked. "Would I be going to see it again if it wasn't?" I answered. This time I went with my Bronx-born husband, Joseph, who, during intermission, earned points from former stickball-playing Brooklynites when he told them that he had been a "three-sewer" stickball hitter on Tiffany Street. Ehrenreich's delicious, nostalgic, poignant and, at times, hilarious two-hour-marathon autobiographical retrospective of growing up in Brooklyn is pure joy. The son of Holocaust survivors, Ehrenreich presents an odyssey from Brooklyn to worldwide globetrotting musician, with rest stops in the Catskills as a multitalented tumbler-musician. He had the audience roaring. I won't give away the jokes or the stories, but Forward readers will get a kick out of the exposé about Joe and Paul, that haberdashery store whose jingle was a staple on the Forward's WEVD radio hour. If you remember when the beginning of phone numbers had names (like Kingsbridge-8), and you have warm memories of Catskill kochaleins, or classy hotels, you need not be from Brooklyn to relish the show. Just brush up your Simon Sez - you will be tested! After May 28, the show will be moving to Broadway's charming Lambs Theatre, on West 44th Street.

Graphic

IMAGE

IMAGE

Load-Date: June 14, 2006

Denmark faces international boycott over Muslim cartoons

The Times (London)

January 31, 2006, Tuesday

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Section: OVERSEAS NEWS; Pg. 29

Length: 1091 words

Byline: Anthony Browne

Body

Denmark faced the full fury of the Muslim world yesterday as a long-simmering row over newspaper cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad finally erupted.

There were street demonstrations and flag-burnings in the Middle East. Libya joined Saudi Arabia in withdrawing its ambassador from Copenhagen. Islamic governments and organisations, including the Muslim Council of Britain, issued denunciations and a boycott of Danish goods took hold across the Muslim world.

The Danish Government warned its citizens about travelling to Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Syria, and withdrew aid workers from the Gaza Strip.

Last night EU foreign ministers issued a statement in support of Denmark, and the European Commission threatened to report any government backing the boycott to the World Trade Organisation.

The fury echoed the outcry that followed the publication in 1988 of the Salman Rushdie novel *The Satanic Verses*. The trigger for the latest clash of cultures was the publication by the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* on September 30 of 12 cartoons of Muhammad. A biographer of the prophet had complained that no one would dare to illustrate his book, and the newspaper challenged cartoonists to draw pictures of the prophet in a self-declared battle for freedom of speech.

One submission showed Muhammad wearing a bomb-shaped turban; in another he tells dead suicide bombers that he has run out of virgins with which to reward them. Any portrayal of Muhammad is blasphemous in Islam, lest it encourages idolatry.

In October ambassadors from ten Muslim countries complained to Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the Danish Prime Minister, who refused to interfere with the press's freedom.

But the issue began to boil this month after the cartoons appeared in *Magazinet*, a Christian newspaper in Norway, and on the website of the Norwegian newspaper *Dagbladet*.

Imams denounced Denmark from their pulpits, the Arab press inflamed pent-up Muslim anger at the West and last Friday the Saudi Government recalled its ambassador, but still Mr Rasmussen refused to apologise. He condemned attempts to "demonise people because of religious beliefs", but argued: "The Government can in no way influence the media."

By yesterday governments across the Arab world were responding to public outrage.

Denmark faces international boycott over Muslim cartoons

Libya closed its embassy in Denmark and the Egyptian parliament demanded that its Government follow suit. The Kuwaiti and Jordanian governments called for explanations from their Danish ambassadors. President Lahoud of Lebanon condemned the cartoons, saying his country "cannot accept any insult to any religion". The Justice Minister of the United Arab Emirates said: "This is cultural terrorism, not freedom of expression." In Gaza, gunmen briefly occupied the EU office in Gaza and warned Danes and Norwegians to stay away. Palestinians in the West Bank burnt Danish flags. The Islamic groups Hamas and Hezbollah and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood demanded an apology.

Supermarkets in Algeria, Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Qatar, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen all removed Danish produce from their shelves. Arla Foods, a Danish company with annual sales of about \$430 million in the Middle East, said that the boycott was almost total and suspended production in Saudi Arabia.

The Muslim Council of Britain, whose leaders are to meet the Danish ambassador tomorrow, deplored the newspapers' refusal to apologise for printing "sacrilegious cartoons vilifying the Prophet Muhammad".

Bill Clinton, the former US President, added his voice, telling a conference in Qatar that he feared anti-Semitism would be replaced with anti-Islamic prejudice.

He condemned "these totally outrageous cartoons against Islam".

Per Stig Moeller, Denmark's Foreign Minister, insisted in Brussels last night: "We condemn blasphemy. We want respect for religions. But we cannot intervene. We have sent explanations but, as we have said before, freedom of expression is a matter for the courts, not for the Government."

A spokesman for Peter Mandelson, the EU Trade Commissioner, said that if the Saudi Government had encouraged the boycott of Danish goods, Mr Mandelson would take the matter to the WTO.

Carsten Juste, editor-in-chief of Jyllands-Posten, said that the drawings "were not in violation of Danish law but have offended many Muslims, which we would like to apologise for".

However, a spokesman for the newspaper said: "We do not apologize for printing the cartoons, it was our right to do so. We stand by our decision to print them."

www.timesonline.co.uk

Latest news www.dagbladet.no/kultur/2006/01/10/454375.html

FROM NEWSPAPER CHALLENGE TO DIPLOMATIC INCIDENT

September 30, 2005 Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten publishes 12 cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad

October 20 Ambassadors of ten Muslim countries complain to Danish Prime Minister.

Jyllands-Posten reports that illustrators have received death threats

November 14 Jamaat-e-Islami, a Pakistan-based group, protests in Islamabad

January 10, 2006 Cartoons reprinted by Magazinet, a Norwegian newspaper

January 26 Saudi Arabia recalls its ambassador and initiates boycott of Danish goods

January 27 Thousands denounce the cartoons during Friday prayers in Iraq

January 28 Danish company Arla places adverts in Middle Eastern newspapers to try to stop boycott of its produce

January 29 Jyllands-Posten prints a statement in Arabic saying the drawings were published in line with freedom of expression and not a campaign against Islam.

Denmark faces international boycott over Muslim cartoons

Palestinians burn Danish flags and Libya announces it will close its embassy in Denmark

January 30 EU says it will take World Trade Organisation action if boycott persists. Several Islamic groups, including Hamas and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, call for worldwide boycott of Danish products. Masked gunmen in storm EU office in Gaza

ISLAMIC CONFLICT

- * 1988 Ayatollah Khomeini issues fatwa against Salman Rushdie after publication of The Satanic Verses
- * 2001 The author Khalid Duran faces mass condemnation from Muslims for his book which sought to explain Islam to Jews, culminating in alleged death threats for his apostasy
- * 2002 Fatwa issued against the Nigerian journalist Isioma Daniel after she suggested that Muhammad might approve of the Miss World contest
- * 2004 Extremist kills the Dutch director Theo van Gogh after he made Submission, a ten-minute film about the abuse of Muslim women featuring Koranic verses written on female bodies
- * 2005 Swedish museum is forced to remove a painting depicting a couple making love while covered in verses from the Koran

Load-Date: January 31, 2006

End of Document

Democracy is more than just voting

The Philadelphia Inquirer

July 23, 2006 Sunday

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The Philadelphia Inquirer
Found on Philly.com

Section: CURRENTS; Pg. E07

Length: 1087 words

Body

Frida Ghitis

is a freelance correspondent on foreign affairs

It seems a distant memory now, but only a year ago, the Arab Middle East appeared poised for a democratic transformation. Even some of Washington's harshest critics grudgingly conceded that an "Arab Spring," inspired by American support and intervention, had begun to flower. Change was indeed coming to the least democratic region in the world.

Lebanon had seen a "Cedar Revolution," with massive popular protests forcing Syria to loosen its grip and pull its troops out of the country in time for new elections. Egypt's seemingly eternal president, Hosni Mubarak, announced he would allow other candidates to compete against him in the next election. Kuwait finally agreed to let women vote and run for office. And Saudi Arabia opened the polls for municipal councils. The world took notice when Lebanese Druze leader Walid Jumblatt described what he called "the start of a new Arab world."

"The Syrian people, the Egyptian people," Jumblatt noted, "all say that something is changing. The Berlin Wall has fallen. We can see it."

If so, someone quickly rebuilt much of it. Today, such optimism is not much more than a memory. Little more than a year after the Arab Spring, the blossoms are wilting in the summer heat. Israel and Hezbollah trade bombs, missiles and threats of all-out war, while the impotent government of Lebanon looks on, the country's army a sad irrelevance.

Iraq has a parliament but also chaos. In the Palestinian Territories, elections brought to power Hamas, a radical Islamic organization considered a terrorist organization by most Western nations. In Iraq, secular parties barely registered in elections against much better-organized religious parties. There, too, the sword looks mightier than the poll.

In Egypt, a questionable election turned members of the Islamic Brotherhood into the second-largest bloc in parliament. The government has indefinitely postponed the next elections, and repression is again the order of the day. For democracy advocates in Cairo, euphoria has given way to something bordering on despair.

Democracy is more than just voting

"The country is falling apart in front of our eyes and we can't do anything about it. It's like watching a train wreck." That's the mood according to one progressive Egyptian, known by his blog name, SandMonkey.

Not that pushing for democratic change in the Mideast was itself a mistake. After all, the Mideast's entrenched autocracies produced staggering economic, educational and political stagnation in the Arab world. They turned the region into a lab for extremist ideology spreading around the globe like a toxic oil spill. When government does nothing for its people and forbids participation in any organization except the mosque, fundamentalism by definition becomes the only alternative.

America's mistake lay in stressing elections while ignoring other indispensable elements of democracy. That let sly regimes trick the United States (again) into fearing that democracy would inevitably bring extremists to power.

Instead, America - and the world - should push for the basic requirements of democracy, the freedoms without which elections don't really mean very much: political parties, a free press, freedom of assembly, an independent judiciary, and other elements of civil society and human rights.

Beyond that, no democracy can survive with assorted militias using force to pursue objectives not shared by the elected government. As Lebanon painfully demonstrates, a government needs more than democratic elections to establish its credibility and authority. An essential requirement for a functioning sovereign state, as philosophers and political scientists have long noted, is that the government must have a monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force.

A government that claims to rule, while armed militias it cannot control run amok, risks becoming a bystander in the kind of chaos and instability we now see in Lebanon, the Palestinian Territories and Iraq. When militias take their orders from another government and foreign forces enter the scene, the will of voters becomes collateral damage - no matter how heartfelt the excitement on election day.

Elections alone are not enough. When I asked Alhamed Alanezi, a Saudi, if he ever participated in political activities, he told me he would do it "only if I wanted a little time to myself, away from the family, in a prison cell somewhere." Alanezi recently moved to London, where he writes the blog *The Religious Policeman*.

Iraq was unique, since the alternative to elections was keeping an American-appointed government in power. Elections were the only way to begin building a new system. But, just as in the rest of the region, years of political repression meant that only religious organizations have had the chance to promote their views. Hardly surprising, then, that they did so well in the polls.

Arab regimes have long argued that allowing people to vote would bring radicals to power. To prove this, countries such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia made sure any democratic test brought gains only to extremists. The most egregious example was Mubarak's imprisonment of his progressive opponent Ayman Nour. Nour, a liberal who challenged Mubarak for the presidency last year, today languishes in jail on trumped-up charges.

Democracy activists say they value and need America's help. Most - not all - think the Iraqi war was a terrible way to force democratic change. America, they say, should be firm and supportive, but it is the countries themselves that must take the lead.

Despite the reverses, it's not all brushfires and wilted flowers along the path to democracy. In some places, the United States has applied pressure in just the right spots.

I reached Lulwa al-Mulla, a democratic activist in Kuwait, during an unforgettable election day in the emirate. For the first time in history, women could run for office and cast their vote. Exhilarated and proud as she watched women streaming to the polls, she told me, "We fought for our democracy." Americans, she said, proved extremely helpful - not only by freeing Kuwait from Iraqi invaders in 1990, but also by pushing for women's rights and helping with democratic training and education.

Democracy is more than just voting

The region remains in desperate and urgent need of change. Accepting entrenched dictatorships will not help. Democracy remains the only solution. The last year proves only that achieving it will require much more than simply calling voters to the polls.

Contact Frida Ghitis at fghitis@gmail.com.

Load-Date: July 23, 2006

End of Document

The President may be waiting on a friend -but he'd be a fool to cry

The Times (London)

August 26, 2005, Friday

Copyright 2005 Times Newspapers Limited

Section: Features; 25

Length: 999 words

Byline: Gerard Baker

Body

THE ROLLING STONES are back in the news. They kicked off another concert tour in Boston on Monday and next month will release A Bigger Bang their first original, studio-produced album since 1997. For years these resourceful survivors of the rock era have been staving off the steady detumescence of encroaching irrelevance with a chemically reinvigorating mix of controversy and nostalgia. Bill Wyman's predilections, Mick Jagger's progeny, Keith Richards' toxicity and endless new compilations of decades-old tunes have kept the blood pumping into all the right places.

This time, the Viagra comes in the form of a song that, though no one has actually heard it yet, is already ensuring bumper CD and ticket sales. It's an anti Bush, anti-war track that goes by the title Sweet Neocon.

To Stones fans (and I count myself one) the lyrics suggest there hasn't been much of a revival in the song-writing ability that deserted Messrs Jagger and Richards when they reached normal retirement age a decade or so ago: "You say you're a Christian. I think you're a hypocrite. You say you're a patriot. Well I think you're full of shit."

Not exactly Masters of War, is it? But, hey, when your last outing included a number entitled Might as Well Get Juiced, your fans will take anything that still suggests consciousness.

And yet the timing is exquisite. As the Stones play once again to sold-out stadiums, President George Bush looks more and more like the political equivalent of a failed busker, mumbling his lines to ever less convincing effect and to ever more bemused and contemptuous onlookers.

He and his sweet neocon friends are besieged this late summer. Americans are dying in Iraq at a faster pace than ever. Outside the Crawford ranch Cindy Sheehan, the bereaved mother of a dead serviceman, continues to enjoy the friendly glare of media attention. Republicans are nervous, with some openly talking now about the need for a US withdrawal from Iraq. The President's approval ratings have dived further and are now, by some measures, lower than Richard Nixon's were when impeachment proceedings began against him over Watergate.

Far more important than the fortunes of this finite presidency, the neoconservative dream of democratic transformation in the Middle East looks as plausible these days as Mick Jagger in a leotard; the hard reality of the President's Iraq policy looks about as edifying.

Where once the US talked of creating a peaceful, stable democratic country, Iraq now looks closer than ever to a civil war between, on the one side, proponents of a Shia theocracy allied to Hezbollah-friendly Iran, and on the

The President may be waiting on a friend -but he'd be a fool to cry

other promoters of an international terrorist ideology allied to Saddam-friendly Baathists. Sorry, but whose side are we on again?

The travails of the constitution-making process have raised more doubts about the feasibility of democratic nation-building in an ethnically diverse Muslim country.

The struggle to get agreement on the proper role of Islam in the nation's basic law leaves most western democrats queasy about the status of women, gays and non-Muslims in the future Iraq. The failure to get the Sunnis to agree, and their campaign now to defeat the constitution, looks ominous.

All this is leading many in America, even conservatives, even neoconservatives, to begin to doubt the wisdom of the war. Did we really fight to make Iraq safe for fundamentalist mullahs to force women into hiding while thuggish Sunni, Shia and Kurdish militias duke it out on the streets? Mission accomplished?

And it leads inevitably, to the question at the heart of the neoconservative world view: weren't we better off with a dictatorship, that, for all its faults, at least walled in the chaos? The answer is still "no".

Not just because the case for invading Iraq was based on the former regime's grotesque defiance of international law -demonstrated repeatedly from the invasion of Iran up to UN Security Council resolution 1441. Nor is it that the moral imperative for powerful, free states to intervene on behalf of oppressed peoples is compelling.

The reason is that the apparent stability that Saddam provided for us was a false stability. You can't treat a people as he did for 30 years and not create the conditions for explosive violence with long-term implications for your own people and way beyond your own borders. Indeed what we are seeing now is not what would have happened in the absence of Saddam, but the consequences of what Saddam did to his own people for all that time. You cannot build an international order by embracing tyranny for half the world -we tried that in Iran and Saudi Arabia and Indonesia for decades. We didn't get stability; we got violence, much of it directed at us.

In any case, the criticism of the Iraq constitution-in-progress is overdone. It is not a perfect model of democracy; it was never going to be. But neither does it enshrine an Iranian-style Islamic law. Not the least important evidence for that is that Iraq's Shia leadership, having watched with disdain and alarm events to their east, have no desire to model their country on the powder-keg theocracy next door.

The most important thing about the document is that it is, above all else, Iraqi.

It was constructed by Iraqis and if it is approved by referendum, it will represent the will of the people. Self-determination remains, as it has done for a century now, the only real basis for lasting international peace.

The sweet neocons have got many things wrong. They may have been naive about how easily and quickly a free Iraq would emerge from Saddam's ruins. They may underestimate differing levels of ethnic, religious and political resistance to democracy. But the path of chaotic freedom down which they want to nudge the world remains a better route than the alternative, supposedly realist approach to international affairs that we have tried in the past. That, I'm afraid, winds up being nothing less than sympathy for the devil.

gerard.baker@thetimes.co.uk

Load-Date: August 26, 2005

Seattle Muslim shoots 6 at Jewish Centre: See I am a muslim A12

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

July 29, 2006 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A1

Length: 962 words

Byline: Phuong Cat Le, Brad Wong and Amy Rolph, Seattle Post-Intelligencer; with files from Jonathan Fowlie, Chantal Eustace and Emily Chung.

Dateline: SEATTLE

Body

SEATTLE -- Six people were shot -- one fatally -- Friday afternoon at the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle by a man who told a witness he was upset about "what was going on in Israel."

Seattle police spokesman Rich Pruitt said there was one shooter, who was apprehended without incident outside the Jewish Federation building at Third Avenue and Virginia Street.

"We believe it's a lone individual acting out his antagonism," said David Gomez, who heads the FBI's counterterrorism efforts in Seattle.

Vancouver's Jewish community was "in a state of shock and disbelief" at the violence targeted at its sister community in Seattle, said Michael Elterman, chairman of the Canada-Israel Committee for the Pacific Region.

"I think we are going to become far more vigilant than we have been, realizing it has hit very close to home," Elterman said, adding that security around Jewish institutions in Vancouver will most certainly be beefed up.

U.S. authorities did not release any details about the alleged gunman and would not discuss possible motives.

"There's nothing to indicate that it's terrorism-related," Gomez said. "But we're monitoring the entire situation."

The gunman forced his way through the security door at the federation after an employee had punched in her security code, Marla Meislin-Dietrich, a database coordinator for the center, told The Associated Press. "He said 'I am a Muslim American, angry at Israel,' before opening fire on everyone," Meislin-Dietrich said. "He was randomly shooting at everyone."

The Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle is a fund raising and fund allocation organization.

"Seattle Fire Department spokeswoman Helen Fitzpatrick confirmed one person had died.

Harborview Medical Center spokeswoman Pamela Steele said five victims were taken to her facility, all women ranging in age from their 20s to 40s. Each suffered gunshot wounds to the abdomen, knee, groin or arm. Three were in critical condition and still in the operating room at press time Friday. Two were in satisfactory condition.

Seattle Muslim shoots 6 at Jewish Centre: See I am a muslim A12

One of the women listed in satisfactory condition is 20 weeks pregnant and was shot in the arm. Doctors believe she will be okay.

Elterman said while the level of violence in Seattle was unusual, Jewish institutions around the world have been on alert since the recent conflict between Hezbollah and Israel began. "We do see an increase in threats and in nasty phone calls whenever Israel is at war," he said.

But threats are not going to stop a rally in support of Israel from going ahead in Vancouver on Monday, said Adam Carroll, Director, Pacific Region Canada-Israel Committee.

"We can't be terrorized or intimidated. We're going to be sowing our solidarity and support with Israel and that's not going to change," he said.

Mira Oreck, acting regional director of the Canadian Jewish Congress, Pacific region, said the kind of violence seen in Seattle came without warning. "We are extremely saddened and frankly outraged by the event," she said.

U.S. authorities received a 911 call at 4:03 p.m. with reports of shots fired at the Jewish Federation and a possible hostage situation, Assistant Seattle Police Chief Nick Metz said at an early evening news conference.

Officers converged on the scene and took a man into custody without incident. At one point, the alleged gunman had been talking to a police dispatcher, Metz said.

There were more than 10 people in the Jewish Federation building at the time, Metz said.

One witness, who declined to give her name, said a man walked into the Jewish Federation building with a gun, said he was upset about what was going on in Israel, then opened fire. After the shootings, the man said to call 911, the witness said. The witness said the man identified himself as an American Muslim.

Witnesses to the afternoon shooting and people who work at the Jewish Federation described a chaotic, terrifying scene.

Kami Knatt, who works at the federation's Holocaust centre, said she saw a wounded coworker fall down. Knatt took her sweater off and tried to stop the bleeding.

"I asked her 'Are you okay?' She said 'No I've been shot.' I kept saying 'It's going to be okay.' "

The victim told Knatt: "I'm going to black out, I'm going to black out." Knatt replied: "You're going to be all right."

Several workers and victims ran toward a nearby Starbucks. There was a small pool of blood outside the coffee shop.

Nathaniel Mullins, 43, was turning onto Lenora Street with his 19-year-old daughter when he heard police say "Get back! get back!"

Mullins said he saw two shooting victims. "They were covered in blood," he said.

"We were scared, heck yeah. It shocked me for a moment."

Zach Carstensen, who is the director of government relations for the Jewish Federation, said he heard shots and screams.

"People started running and I started running with them," Carstensen said.

Asked whether he thought his office had been targeted because of the conflict in the Mideast, Carstensen said he wasn't sure. "We're all a little shaken," he said.

Sam Peterson, 18, who lives in an apartment on Third and Blanchard, said she heard at least one gunshot.

Seattle Muslim shoots 6 at Jewish Centre: See I am a muslim A12

She saw a blonde woman "drop to the ground. She screamed."

Immediately after the shooting, a SWAT team searched the federation building, looking for any other victims, anyone hiding or any other possible shooters, Pruitt said.

Police blocked off several city blocks to investigate.

Rabbi Daniel Weiner at Temple De Hirsch Sinai in Seattle, said his congregation was planning to meet in Bellevue on Friday evening anyway, but were waiting for police to advise them as to whether to go ahead with the services.

Weiner, who described the federation as like "the Jewish version of the United Way," said he is at a loss to understand why people in the building would have been attacked.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Elaine Thompson, Associated Press; A woman is taken from the scene of a shooting Friday in downtown Seattle. At least six people were shot, one fatally.

Load-Date: July 29, 2006

End of Document

Two thousand and counting

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

October 27, 2005 Thursday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; Pg. 1

Length: 1042 words

Byline: Paul McGeough

Body

Death comes quickly in Iraq. But some die quicker than others, writes Paul McGeough.

Rory Carroll lived to explain why 2000 young Americans have died in Iraq's bitter war.

The British journalist's account of his brief abduction in Baghdad last week is a disturbing window into the ordinariness of this trillion-dollar insurgency that frustrates Washington's democracy plans for the Middle East with such seeming ease.

The grim statistical milestone of being the 2000th American victim of the insurgents was allotted to a 34-year-old Texan, Sergeant George Alexander, who died on Saturday in the American hospital where he was being treated for wounds he suffered in a roadside bombing.

But this insurgency survives only because Iraqis let it operate around them in their homes and villages, in their tribes and mosques. In their communities there are few secrets, but very few are willing to spill the beans to the authorities - Iraqi or American.

It was the domestic ordinariness of Carroll's imprisonment that jarred under the stairs in an ordinary Iraqi home where women went about their chores and children squealed with delight when he was brought out to eat and to exercise.

Whole families and wider circles of friends and acquaintances are in on the movement of thousands of rank-and-file insurgents, offering shelter, sympathy and signals on what the Americans are up to.

Washington offers multi-million dollar rewards for information on the insurgency's high-profile leaders, but even this appeal to baser instincts has failed.

Despite all Washington's promises of reconstruction and all that democracy has to offer, the extent of the American failure to win the trust of Iraqis, to win in the vital battle for hearts and minds, is borne out in reports in the British press in the last week.

They reveal that an opinion poll commissioned secretly by British military authorities found 45 per cent of Iraqis believe that attacks on foreign troops are justified. Given that Sunnis who back the insurgency account for about 20 per cent of the population, that is a staggering figure.

Two thousand and counting

More than 80 per cent of respondents across the country indicated strong opposition to the presence of foreign troops. And while 70-plus per cent said they had no confidence in them, 67 per cent said the presence of the foreigners made them feel less secure; and 43 per cent reckoned that conditions for peace and stability had deteriorated.

It's not just Americans who die in this war. Statistics on Iraqi civilian deaths are kept with less precision, but the most respected tally is that of Iraq Body Count, a US-based non-profit group, which estimates Iraqi deaths at between 26,690 and 30,051.

Death in Iraq now comes quicker - for while it took the insurgents 18 months to kill the first 1000 US troops, it took only 14 months to despatch the second 1000.

Iraqi civilians are dying at a faster rate, too, the estimate for this year is 60 a day compared with 40 a day last year. More than 90 per cent of the US deaths have occurred since George Bush stood in May 2003 before a banner that read "mission accomplished" and said major combat operations had ended in Iraq.

The insurgency is now firmly dug in. Defying repeated claims by the authorities in Washington and Baghdad that victory is imminent, it has established its sources of weapons and funds and is so comfortable in its operations that it even buses in Afghan fighters to train them to fight the Americans.

In the early days of the insurgency, when the Americans still hoped to be welcomed with flowers and candy, the attacks were almost schoolboyish - a shot from a rooftop, a grenade dropped from a traffic overpass. But as the Americans armoured up, the insurgents went after their check-point teams.

Their information was good because they were infiltrating the new Iraqi police and army services and their weapons and tactics were upgraded as they perfected crude roadside explosives and suicide bombers. And when the Americans started pulling back, the insurgents made the agencies of the new Iraqi government and Shiite mosques their prime targets.

The only plan that the US has is to train Iraqi troops in sufficient numbers to take on the fight themselves. But that is a fractured process in which the timeline is continually stretched into the future.

The numbers trained are often rubbery and well short of the fighting force needed. And now the US brass has identified another problem - it will probably take two or more years for the Iraqis to learn how to deploy and supply their forces in the field.

Coupled with a prediction by the US Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, that the insurgency could last for another 12 years, these teething problems add weight to the prediction by Linda Bilmes, a former assistant secretary in the US Department of Commerce, that the cost of fighting the war and caring for thousands of injured veterans, could stretch to \$US1.3 trillion.

That's the landscape as it has evolved. What some observers see in the future is even more disturbing.

An observation by the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, that the bombs used against British forces in the south of the country were similar to those used by Hezbollah, the Iran-backed Shiite militia in Lebanon, prompted some analysts to predict that neighbouring Iran would likely encourage the Iraqi Shiites to turn their guns on the Americans.

There is much pretence in Iraq. Neighbouring countries, particularly Iran, are accused of stirring the Iraqi pot from behind diplomatic veils, and the Shiite leadership in Baghdad might insist that it is not responding to attempts to incite civil war.

But the Shiites are fighting back. Their private armies have taken control of entire sections of the military, police and intelligence services. They run their own illegal prisons - I have seen them - and now they round up Sunnis for summary execution. The week before last, I spoke by phone to an associate of Iraq's top breed of Shiite henchmen.

Two thousand and counting

He reported that his acquaintance had executed 37 Sunnis in the previous 24 hours. That night, he added, they would be guests at one of the highest Shiite tables in the land for Iftar, the twilight breaking of the Ramadan fast.

Coming to terms with that lot remains a mighty challenge.

Graphic

PHOTO: Sergeant George Alexander ... the 2000th American to die in Iraq.

Load-Date: July 17, 2007

End of Document

Rasmussen says Danes are bitter over crisis; He points to attempts to gain commercial advantage in Mideast

The International Herald Tribune

February 10, 2006 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 1036 words

Byline: John Vinocur and Dan Bilefsky

Dateline: COPENHAGEN

Body

Asked Thursday whether Danes felt abandoned by their allies during a week of crisis with the Islamic world, Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen replied that attempts to secure commercial advantage at his country's expense had struck at their hearts.

At the same time, Rasmussen tried to shield the Bush administration and some of Denmark's partners in NATO from accusations that they had been tardy and overcautious in coming to its defense in the crisis, which the prime minister said was more about attempts by Iran and Syria to cause diversions in the Middle East than 12 cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad in a Danish newspaper.

Looking tired after what he acknowledged had been a difficult week, Rasmussen said in an interview in his office that attempts by European companies in the Middle East to disassociate themselves from Denmark or Danish products was considered by Danes to be "disgraceful."

Rasmussen did not refer to a particular business organization or country. But his response came in reply to a question referring to attempts in the Arab world by companies associated with Nestle, the Swiss food giant, and Carrefour, the French retailer, to distance themselves from Denmark. Danish industry estimates it has lost more than \$55 million in sales in the Middle East since the furor began.

Rasmussen appeared particularly irritated about the circumstances because they contradict "all our efforts to promote free trade."

But the prime minister avoided criticizing the Bush administration for its slow and cautious defense of an ally. President George W. Bush referred to his solidarity with Denmark for the first time on Wednesday after five days of rioting in the Middle East against Danish citizens and Danish embassies.

"I have never doubted that Bush would stand up for Denmark," Rasmussen said. "He values faithfulness and loyalty. I was not surprised he decided to call me and express support."

Rasmussen reiterated that there would be no Danish apology for the cartoons. He brushed aside any suggestion that Denmark's policies requiring that immigrants accommodate Danish tradition were at fault, and asserted: "We are on the right track." More broadly, he said, "I see a very clear tendency that other European countries will go in our direction."

Rasmussen says Danes are bitter over crisis He points to attempts to gain commercial advantage in Mideast

In light of statements here that Denmark had been abandoned in the early phase of the crisis, Rasmussen was asked whether the Danish Parliament would maintain troops in Iraq and Afghanistan if it were asked to vote on the issue tomorrow.

"The situation would be the same. We haven't changed," he said. He added, referring to the allies: "It's crucial that Denmark feel their strong support when we need it."

Rasmussen argued that the cartoon crisis had been hijacked by Middle East countries that were using the caricatures for domestic ends. He said Iran, isolated over its nuclear program, was using the cartoons to generate support in the Muslim world while Syria, under investigation for the assassination of the former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri, was trying to create a distraction. And the Palestinian Authority, divided over the recent election of Hamas representatives, was exploiting the cartoon crisis to unite its disparate elements, he said.

"We have religious extremists who exploit the situation and fuel the flames to pursue their own agenda, and people shouldn't make any mistake about that. Religious extremists aim at destabilizing the situation in the whole region," he said.

Rasmussen said that Western allies were slow to understand the magnitude of the crisis. "I think we have to realize that it was only at the weekend" that the allies "realized how much more was at stake" than a debate about the propriety of 12 cartoons.

Rasmussen could not point to a clear path toward a resolution of the confrontation but said he hoped that reasonable voices would be able to find a common ground. He avoided any comment about a statement on Wednesday by the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, that Denmark must ask for forgiveness for the publication of the cartoons, or calls from the Hezbollah leader, Hassan Nasrallah, Thursday for Muslims not to rest until Denmark had apologized.

When asked if leaders from more moderate Muslim countries were getting involved in attempts to find a solution, Rasmussen replied, "We have to be a bit discreet. I can't go into details about diplomatic contacts."

The crisis would be discussed at a meeting continuing Friday of NATO defense ministers in Sicily, he said. But Denmark expected no statement at the meeting's conclusion.

Rasmussen said he believed that Islam was compatible with democracy but argued it was incumbent on Muslim immigrants in Denmark and in Europe in general to embrace the liberal values of their adopted countries. "Denmark is a liberal country. We do believe in individual liberty and freedom. People can live according to their own customs," he said. "However, I think we have to insist on respecting our core values, including freedom of expression, gender equality for women and men and a clear distinction between politics and religion." Rasmussen said the perception of Denmark in the Muslim world had been distorted by falsehoods spread by cellphone and Internet messages across the Middle East. In particular, he said the Danish government was re-evaluating its relations with local Muslim leaders who traveled to the Middle East in December, and had stoked tensions by showing the cartoons to religious leaders, including caricatures depicting Muhammad as a pig that never appeared in the Danish press.

Asked if he would have done anything differently in retrospect, Rasmussen said he had no regrets. "I don't think we could have done something in another way," he said. "We are witnessing events with deep sadness and disbelief. We are not used to it in Denmark."

He added that the crisis had awakened Denmark to the implications of operating in a globalized world. But he said he did not believe it would fundamentally alter the country of 5.4 million. "The effect will not be a more inward-looking Denmark," he said. "But the core values on which we have built our society will remain. Danes will not change that view."

Rasmussen says Danes are bitter over crisis He points to attempts to gain commercial advantage in Mideast

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Students Take Active Role In Effort To Save Darfur

The Tampa Tribune (Florida)

July 29, 2006 Saturday

FINAL EDITION

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Section: BAYLIFE AT HOME; Pg. 6

Length: 1002 words

Byline: MICHELLE BEARDEN, The Tampa Tribune

Body

By MICHELLE BEARDEN

The Tampa Tribune

Where's the outrage?

The numbers are staggering. In the past three years, the western Sudan region of Darfur has become a humanitarian nightmare: up to 3.5 million hungry people, 2.5 million displaced from their homes and an estimated 400,000 dead, according to figures compiled by Savedarfur.org.

What started as a civil conflict between rebel groups and Sudanese government-supported militias has erupted into full-blown genocide.

Remember Rwanda? And how the international community reacted too late? It's happening again.

The world is a frightening place. You can start with the carnage in the Middle East, with Israel and **Hezbollah** determined to blow each other up. Iran, Iraq, Syria, North Korea. The list goes on.

So why should we care what's happening in an impoverished, dusty corner of the world with no economic impact whatsoever on our rich nation?

Because we are all citizens of this globe.

If you don't feel that way, perhaps you should take a lesson from a dozen or so Tampa Catholic High School students and an enlightened social studies teacher.

Band Enlightens Student

Zach Clifford, 18, a freshman at the University of Central Florida in Orlando, had his epiphany during a State Radio concert in Jacksonville this year. Band members spoke out against the violence in Darfur and urged fans to sign a petition asking the United States to take a stronger role in stopping it.

"It seemed hard to believe that something so terrible was taking place, and you didn't hear much about it in the news," Zach says.

Students Take Active Role In Effort To Save Darfur

An activist was born. When he returned home to Tampa, Zach visited the Web site and became even more outraged.

He sought out Sara Mehlretter, who taught an international relations class at Tampa Catholic, and talked to her about the injustice. She sensed his drive to do something - anything - to raise awareness about Darfur and invited him to speak to her class, which was studying genocide.

The joy of being a teacher is watching students "get it." And Mehlretter saw that as Zach shared what he had learned about the struggle in Sudan.

"It's one thing when you're oblivious to what's happening in that part of the world. It's another thing to know and to just ignore it. I asked the students this: 'Now that you know, what are you going to do about it?'" she says.

They took up collections.

Before and after school, they raised nearly \$1,600. Zach's father, Thom Clifford, a national account manager for Reebok, persuaded his employer to make a matching donation through its human rights division. In all, the students were able to send nearly \$3,100 to the cause.

Zach and a school buddy, Daniel Fernandez, also headed to a Darfur political-awareness rally in Boca Raton in late April to keep gathering information and give their support.

And even though he has graduated from Tampa Catholic and moved on to Orlando, Zach continues setting up booths at concerts to push the petitions. He's starting a chapter of STAND - Students Taking Action Now for Darfur - at UCF this fall. And he wears and peddles the green rubber bracelets that proclaim "Not On My Watch."

That statement apparently was penned by President Bush, who wrote it in the margins of a report on Rwanda during his first year in office. It has become the slogan for activists such as Zach.

Fellow Student Joins Campaign

Erythel Saint Marc, a Tampa Catholic junior, got her Darfur enlightenment after watching a BBC special last year. She started telling her friends about women and girls being raped, citizens forced from their homes and children starving, but they didn't pay too much attention.

Erythel found a brotherhood when she heard about Zach's campaign. She joined his money-raising efforts and did some consciousness-raising of her own. She produced a DVD with still pictures and an audio track, made posters and wrote a letter to Bush asking for intervention.

"I never heard back," she says.

Still, she does not feel her efforts are in vain.

"I think you can persuade people with words. You can persuade them to take a stand and speak out against something. Being silent won't get anything done," she says.

Zach is majoring in political science and history, with plans to go to law school and specialize in humanitarian law. He wants to one day help those who need it the most.

Erythel dreams of being either a pediatrician or a journalist. Either way, she can take those skills to developing nations and make a difference.

All of this makes Mehlretter very proud. She says celebrities such as George Clooney and Mia Farrow have discovered Darfur and are bringing attention to its humanitarian crisis. But she is just as pleased students such as Zach and Erythel are doing their part.

Students Take Active Role In Effort To Save Darfur

"It's all about shining a light on a place that seems to be in darkness," Mehlretter says. "Better to do this than end up apologizing years later for what we ignored."

Keyword: Darfur, for more on the Sudan crisis, including Erythel Saint Marc's presentation.

Michelle Bearden shows images of Darfur on her "Keeping the Faith" segment at 9 a.m. Sunday on WFLA-TV.

Photo credit: Tribune photo by MANUEL M. MARTINEZ

Photo: With help from teacher Sara Mehlretter, center, Tampa Catholic student Erythel Saint Marc and former student Zach Clifford are working to raise money to help the people of western Sudan.

Photo credit: The Associated Press

Photo: In June, Sudanese schoolgirls welcomed Mia Farrow, who serves as a UNICEF ambassador. The actress is trying to bring attention to the crisis in Sudan.

Photo credit: McClatchy-Tribune

Photo: Maj. Gregoire Seshengero of the African Union peacekeeping troops takes notes as people describe a rebel attack on their village of Tarny.

Photo credit: The Associated Press file photo (2004)

Photo: A displaced woman carries her child near her hut at a camp in northern Darfur. Sudan's civil conflict has reportedly left thousands dead and millions more hungry or homeless.

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Notes

FAITH & VALUES

Graphic

PHOTO 4

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Load-Date: July 31, 2006

Tale of Two Hostages

New York Sun (Archive)

January 26, 2006 Thursday

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Section: EDITORIAL & OPINION; Pg. 6

Length: 1105 words

Byline: Daniel Johnson

Body

Here is a tale of two hostages, one British, one German: both attractive, highly educated, high-powered modern European women. Both are Arabic-speaking and Islamophile, both on self-appointed missions to "help" the Palestinians and the Iraqis respectively. Both were initially treated as heroines by the British and German media; both ended by colluding with their kidnappers, and both gave Islamism a propaganda coup.

Kate Burton, the British hostage, had worked in Gaza for the United Nations. A few months ago she attached herself to al Mezan, a Palestinian "human rights" organization that seems to devote most of its energy to denouncing Israel, while doing nothing to counteract the self-inflicted evils of Palestinian society.

Ms. Burton was not a field worker but a fundraiser for al Mezan. Such groups are largely Western-financed and wholly parasitical on Western guilt. That guilt complex in turn is fed by institutions such as London University's School of Oriental and African Studies, or SOAS, where Ms. Burton studied. Despite its high academic reputation in the past - the greatest living Middle Eastern historian, Bernard Lewis, taught there many years ago - SOAS has lately become a source of anti-Americanism, academic boycotts of Israel and support for jihad.

Ms. Burton was kidnapped with her elderly parents in December, while on a tour of Gaza. Western anti-Zionists can now gloat over wrecked former Israeli settlements. But Ms. Burton risked her own and her parents' lives to gratify her schadenfreude: Several visitors have been kidnapped in Gaza in the last year.

The kidnappers held the Burtons for only four days, but in a quiet holiday period the story led the British news agenda. This gave various terrorist groups, including Hamas, an opportunity to pose as moderates by calling for their release. Public figures in Britain appealed on behalf of the Burtons, prayer vigils were held and great emphasis was laid on the fact that Ms. Burton was a committed pro-Palestinian activist.

The shadowy group holding the Burtons, the Brigades of the Mujahidin, demanded that Britain and the European Union put pressure on Israel over various grievances. No ransom seems to have been demanded or paid, but the kidnappers apparently received assurances that a protest would be lodged about the "nogo" zone along the Gaza border. This is designed to protect Israelis against the terrorist incursions, which still continue and are likely to increase, assuming that Hamas does well in yesterday's Palestinian election.

No pressure, on the other hand, was exerted by the Europeans on the Palestinian Authority to arrest the culprits. Gaza is a terrorist fiefdom in which nobody expects the rule of law to be enforced - least of all since the Israelis washed their hands of the place.

Tale of Two Hostages

Once Ms. Burton was released, she praised her kidnappers for being "kind," adding that they had "a sensitive side." She would return to Gaza as soon as possible. The British Foreign Office has apparently made no objection to Ms. Burton's insouciant attitude, but many people were irritated to find their prayers and good offices exploited by a woman who made common cause with the culprits.

The case of Susanne Osthoff, the German archaeologist who was kidnapped in Iraq last November and held for about three weeks, is even more disturbing. Ms. Osthoff, who had lived in Iraq for many years, appeared in a video while she was in captivity, blindfolded, and flanked by armed terrorists. She claimed that her captors were working for Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq.

Ms. Osthoff was presented by the German media as an intrepid guardian of Iraq's archaeological heritage against tomb-raiders; the fact that she was a critic of the United States helped to make her into a cause celebre. A nationwide campaign for her release was launched, with torchlit vigils and appeals from across the entire political spectrum, including Muslim leaders. The former chancellor, Gerhard Schroder, was particularly vociferous.

Faced with this hullabaloo, the new coalition government of Chancellor Angela Merkel panicked. A ransom, believed to be as much as \$5 million, was paid, thereby rewarding blackmail and offering an incentive for future abductions.

But the kidnappers wanted more - and they got it. One of the most notorious terrorists in German custody, Mohammed Ali Hamadi, was given early release from his life sentence and flown immediately to his native Lebanon. This broke solemn undertakings given to the United States after Hamadi was convicted of the murder of U.S. Navy diver Robert Dean Stethem in 1985 during the hijacking of a TWA airliner by Hezbollah. This act of appeasement has set a disgraceful precedent and leaves an indelible stain on the reputation of Ms. Merkel and the honor of the German Federal Republic.

While Ms. Osthoff was taking a shower at the German embassy in Baghdad after her release, intelligence officers found that she was secretly carrying "several thousand dollars" concealed in her clothes. The serial numbers on the banknotes matched those on the ransom money. Despite her claims that the money was compensation for cash that the kidnappers had taken from her, the impression remained that the "victim" seemed to have a share of the loot.

Worse was to come. Ms. Osthoff let it be known that she would return to Iraq as soon as possible and failed to thank her benefactors. Then she appeared on al-Jazeera, dressed as a fundamentalist Muslim in a burka, with only her eyes visible, expressing sympathy for her kidnappers' aims. Either Ms. Osthoff had become a fanatic or she had duped everybody. Her credibility has collapsed.

For Ms. Merkel, the Osthoff affair has been a disaster. Germany's first female leader has emerged from the first serious test of her resolve looking not only cowardly but also naive and gullible. When I last saw her in London, before her election, she was at pains to insist that she was not "the German Frau Thatcher."

We can now see just what Ms. Merkel meant by that. Margaret Thatcher always refused to negotiate with terrorists or to give them what she called "the oxygen of publicity." Her decision to storm the Libyan embassy in London in 1984, after gunmen inside shot demonstrators and killed a policewoman, proved that she meant it.

As for the hostages who identify with their kidnappers: This is not only a psychological phenomenon (the "Stockholm syndrome"), but a political one, too. Europe is being held hostage by the Islamists in its midst. If our leaders are not yet ready to stand up to them, the women of Europe might as well buy their burkas now.

Load-Date: January 26, 2006

'We don't do God, we do Palestine and Iraq'

The Sunday Times (London)

February 12, 2006

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Section: FEATURES; News; Pg. 12

Length: 1019 words

Byline: Amir Taheri

Body

It looks like a duck, quacks like a duck and flies like a duck. And yet it insists that it is not a duck. This is the image that comes to mind when watching those anti-cartoon marches in western capitals, including London, in the name of Islam.

Isn't Islam supposed to be a religion? Shouldn't it be concerned with the broader issues of human existence rather than with a set of cartoons, a Dutch television documentary, the head-covers of French schoolgirls or a novel by a British-Indian author?

Today the visible Islam, the loudest Islam, is a political movement masquerading as a religion. Many mosques in this country have been transformed into political clubs where Kashmir, Iraq and Palestine and "the misdeeds of Anglo-Saxon imperialism" have replaced issues of religious faith as the principal theme.

Not long ago when I asked an imam in a London mosque why it was that God hardly featured in his sermons, he thought I had lost the plot. "What matters today is the suffering of our brethren under occupation," he snapped.

In other words: in our Islam we don't do God, we do Palestine, Kashmir, Afghanistan and Iraq.

That is not all. This political Islam also has grievances about aspects of British and more broadly European domestic politics. It is unhappy that gays and lesbians are allowed to live without hindrance. It does not like the way women are allowed to "get cheeky" and even argue with their menfolk.

It is scandalised by the West's "corruption and debauchery" and that there is no "moral force" to set strict limits to individual liberties.

"We have no religious grievances in this country," said Azam Tamimi, a pro Hamas British Muslim scholar. "Here we can practise our religion with more freedom than in any Muslim-ruled country. It is therefore natural that we should focus on political rather than religious issues."

There are at least three reasons for the excessive politicisation of Islam in the West.

The first is that Muslims in the West come from a wide variety of ethnic, sectarian and cultural backgrounds. Many have long histories of sectarian feuds in their homelands. Since those feuds cannot be continued here they tend to minimise the religious aspects of Islam and emphasise the political themes that can unite them.

'We don't do God, we do Palestine and Iraq '

For example, no Sunni Muslims could ever agree with a Qaderi or a Jaafari Muslim on key theological issues. But all three hate gay marriages and can unite in a march against Israel.

The second reason is that the public expression of Islam is controlled by political groups and parties that are often banned in the Muslim world itself.

Once again Britain and the West in general offer the only space in which all Islamic political movements can thrive. There are more than 400 Islamic associations and societies in Britain operating through some 2,000 mosques. But scratch any one of them and you will find that it is, in fact, a cover for a political movement.

Because it offers a unique freedom, Britain has become host to dozens of Islamist parties which are banned in the Muslim world. The Algerian Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), the Tunisian An-Nahda al-Islamiyah, the pan-Islamist Hizb al-Tahrir (Liberation party), the Iranian Mujaheddin Khalq (People's Holy Warriors), the Iranian-sponsored **Hezbollah** movement and a number of other groups that could best be described as terrorist outfits have had propaganda bases and safe havens in Britain for two decades.

The third reason for the politicisation of Islam in Britain is its rapprochement with the extreme left over the past decade. Today political Islam and the British extreme left are in coalition in a number of organisations, including the anti-war alliance. Muslims provide the street muscle and the "poor masses" that the traditionally atheistic extreme left lacks. In exchange the extreme left puts its experience in militant politics at the service of political Islam. Hatred of "bourgeois democracy", anti-Americanism and opposition to Israel provide the unifying factors of this unnatural alliance.

Islam cannot have it both ways: pretend to be a religion and demand special respect while operating as a political ideology which, by definition, must be open to criticism and even denigration.

Politicised Islam's attempt at destroying individual freedoms is as much a threat to Islam as the inquisition was to Christianity.

By preaching martyrdom as the highest goal for Muslims and beating the drums of "the clash of civilisations", it is also a threat to world peace.

To protect itself, Islam needs to revive its theology with emphasis on divinity.

In other words, Islam must re-become a religion.

It is a sad fact that such terms as spirituality (ruhaniyat), theology (kalam), theologian (mutukallim), and philosopher (failasuf) have disappeared from the Islamic lexicon. Excessive politicisation is killing Islam as a religion and, at the same time, destroying Muslim literature, art and culture. More importantly, as far as Britain is concerned it is also mobilising negative energies that could threaten our democracy.

This does not mean that Muslims should stay out of politics or not be concerned about Palestine, Iraq and Kashmir or any political cause.

It means they should recognise that those causes are political, not religious.

Nobody prevents Muslims practising their faith in Palestine or Kashmir, let alone Iraq. These disputes are about territory, borders, statehood, form of government, not about faith.

Politicised Islam is a form of totalitarianism. Its primary victims are Muslims.

In many Muslim countries it has been exposed and can no longer deceive the masses.

In the West, however, it has duped media, government and academia into treating it not as a political movement, but as a religion.

'We don't do God, we do Palestine and Iraq '

Advocates of politicised Islam claim that a call for Islam to return to God, to resuscitate its dead theology and to re-become a religion is nothing but a "Zionist- imperialist plot" to divert "the rage of the Muslim masses".

More Muslims, however, are beginning to miss God, to feel His absence in their religious discourse and to long for His return where He belongs -at the heart of the faith.

Load-Date: February 12, 2006

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Two thousand and counting

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

October 27, 2005 Thursday

Fourth Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; Pg. 1

Length: 1058 words

Byline: Paul McGeough

Body

Death comes quickly in Iraq. But some die quicker than others, writes Paul McGeough.

Rory Carroll lived to explain why 2000 US soldiers have died in Iraq's bitter war.

The British journalist's account of his brief abduction in Baghdad last week is a disturbing window into the ordinariness of this trillion-dollar insurgency that frustrates Washington's democracy plans for the Middle East with such seeming ease.

The grim statistical milestone of being the 2000th American soldier victim of the insurgents was allotted to a 34-year-old Texan, Sergeant George Alexander, who died on Saturday in the American hospital where he was being treated for wounds he suffered in a roadside bombing. And hasn't taken long for the toll to rise. The 2001st US soldier was killed in a vehicle accident on Tuesday in southern Iraq.

But it's not just Americans who die in this war. Statistics on Iraqi civilian deaths are kept with less precision, but the most respected tally, from the Iraq Body Count, estimates Iraqi deaths at between 26,690 and 30,051.

This insurgency survives only because Iraqis let it operate around them in their homes and villages, in their tribes and mosques. In their communities there are few secrets, but very few are willing to spill the beans to the authorities - Iraqi or American.

It was the domestic ordinariness of Carroll's imprisonment that jarred - under the stairs in an ordinary Iraqi home where women went about their chores and children squealed with delight when he was brought out to eat and to exercise.

Whole families and wider circles of friends are in on the movement of thousands of rank-and-file insurgents, offering shelter, sympathy and signals on what the Americans are up to. Washington offers multi-million dollar rewards for information on the insurgency's high-profile leaders, but even this appeal to baser instincts has failed.

Despite all Washington's promises of reconstruction and all that democracy has to offer, the extent of the American failure to win the trust of Iraqis, to win in the vital battle for hearts and minds, is borne out in reports in the British press in the past week.

Two thousand and counting

They reveal that an opinion poll commissioned secretly by the British military found 45 per cent of Iraqis believe attacks on foreign troops are justified. Given that Sunnis who back the insurgency account for about 20 per cent of the population, that is a staggering figure.

More than 80 per cent of respondents across the country indicated strong opposition to the presence of foreign troops. And while 70-plus per cent said they had no confidence in them, 67 per cent said the presence of the foreigners made them feel less secure; and 43 per cent reckoned that conditions for peace and stability had deteriorated.

Death in Iraq now comes quicker - for while it took the insurgents 18 months to kill the first 1000 US troops, it took only 14 months to despatch the second 1000.

Iraqi civilians are dying at a faster rate, too, the estimate for this year is 60 a day compared with 40 a day last year. More than 90 per cent of the US deaths have occurred since George Bush stood in May 2003 before a banner that read "mission accomplished" and said major combat operations had ended in Iraq.

The insurgency is now firmly dug in. Defying repeated claims by the authorities in Washington and Baghdad that victory is imminent, it has established its sources of weapons and funds and is so comfortable in its operations that it even buses in Afghan fighters to train them to fight the Americans.

In the early days of the insurgency, when the Americans still hoped to be welcomed with flowers and candy, the attacks were almost schoolboyish - a shot from a rooftop, a grenade dropped from a traffic overpass. But as the Americans armoured up, the insurgents went after their check-point teams.

Their information was good because they were infiltrating the new Iraqi police and army services and their weapons and tactics were upgraded as they perfected crude roadside explosives and suicide bombers. And when the Americans started pulling back, the insurgents made the agencies of the new Iraqi government and Shiite mosques their prime targets.

The only plan that the US has is to train Iraqi troops in sufficient numbers to take on the fight themselves. But that is a fractured process in which the timeline is continually stretched into the future.

The numbers trained are often rubbery and well short of the fighting force needed. And now the US brass has identified another problem - it will probably take two or more years for the Iraqis to learn how to deploy and supply their forces in the field.

Coupled with a prediction by the US Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, that the insurgency could last for another 12 years, these teething problems add weight to the prediction by Linda Bilmes, a former assistant secretary in the US Department of Commerce, that the cost of fighting the war and caring for thousands of injured veterans, could stretch to \$US1.3 trillion.

That's the landscape as it has evolved. What some observers see in the future is even more disturbing.

An observation by the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, that the bombs used against British forces in the south of the country were similar to those used by Hezbollah, the Iran-backed Shiite militia in Lebanon, prompted some analysts to predict that neighbouring Iran would likely encourage the Iraqi Shiites to turn their guns on the Americans.

There is much pretence in Iraq. Neighbouring countries, particularly Iran, are accused of stirring the Iraqi pot from behind diplomatic veils, and the Shiite leadership in Baghdad might insist that it is not responding to attempts to incite civil war.

But the Shiites are fighting back. Their private armies have taken control of entire sections of the military, police and intelligence services. They run their own illegal prisons - I have seen them - and now they round up Sunnis for summary execution. The week before last, I spoke by phone to an associate of Iraq's top breed of Shiite henchmen.

Two thousand and counting

He reported that his acquaintance had executed 37 Sunnis in the previous 24 hours. That night, he added, they would be guests at one of the highest Shiite tables in the land for Iftar, the twilight breaking of the Ramadan fast.

Coming to terms with that lot remains a mighty challenge.

Counting the cost - Page 11

Graphic

PHOTO: Sergeant George Alexander ... the 2000th US soldier to die in Iraq.

Load-Date: July 17, 2007

End of Document

**Syrian opposition doubts real reform;
The regime is changing just enough to survive
under the intense international scrutiny, they contend.**

The Philadelphia Inquirer

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Byline: Hannah Allam INQUIRER FOREIGN STAFF

Dateline: DAMASCUS, Syria

Body

Syrian opposition leaders are watching with a mixture of jealousy and despair as voters in other Arab countries cast ballots in elections hailed as the slow march of democracy throughout the Middle East.

Initially hopeful that reforms in Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt and the Palestinian territories would lead to an opening in Syria, opposition figures say it now appears change will again pass them by.

The Baath Party regime led by President Bashar al-Assad is adapting just enough to survive under intense international scrutiny, Syrian dissidents said in recent interviews. The change is not nearly enough to make a real difference in the lives of a population now in its fourth decade of authoritarian rule.

"The whole region is changing, and we're being left behind," lamented Bisan Bouni, a human-rights advocate whose father, a member of the Communist Party, was imprisoned for most of her life. "We were optimistic at first, but not anymore. It's clear we're just going to be even more isolated."

Syria is deemed the last rogue Arab state, the refuge of anti-American extremist groups and the recipient of mounting threats from the United States and Israel.

Under pressure, Syria withdrew its forces from Lebanon after nearly three decades of making decisions for Beirut from Damascus, and Assad's Baath Party this month held its first national congress since 2000. Many Syrians were thrilled at the prospect that the government might end the country's perpetual state of emergency and offer citizenship to thousands of stateless Kurds, the largest minority.

Instead, the regime made a vague promise to allow rival political parties, as long as they were not based on ethnicity or religion. That effectively ruled out a voice for Kurdish and Islamist groups, key components of the opposition.

Syrian opposition doubts real reform; The regime is changing just enough to survive under the intense international scrutiny, they contend.

"The problem in this country is the same problem that Iraq had: it's Article 8 of the constitution, which says the Baath Party must be the ruling party in Syria," said Mohammed Shahrour, a Syrian author and outspoken critic of the regime. "Touching that article is impossible. It's just a dream. The regime will survive until the end of this century. They're not afraid of the internal opposition."

Haitham Mullah, a vocal opposition figure who spent seven years in prison after calling for change, described the regime as performing a "striptease for the Americans," shedding just enough authoritarian rules to stave off a U.S.-led attack.

"We think the Americans are weakening despotic regimes, but we're not sure they're strengthening the opposition," said Michel Kilo, a Syrian dissident writer. "When we were asking for democracy, America was supporting a despot. Now that they're asking for democracy, they want it their way."

Riad al-Daoudi, a university dean and adviser to the Syrian foreign ministry, said he met with U.S. diplomats in London last year to hear their demands: Close all offices of Palestinian militant groups; end relations with the Lebanese guerrilla group Hezbollah; improve security along the Iraqi border; and take steps toward political reform.

But talks broke down, Daoudi said, because the American officials were not offering anything in return.

"We are trying to avoid any face-to-face clashes with the United States," Daoudi said. " . . . They've asked for reforms, and we've introduced reforms. But we're talking about a structure that's been in place for 40 years. You can't just shake it up and expect change. You can't ask a government to dissolve itself."

Ahmed al-Hajj Ali, a member of a government committee formed to introduce reforms to the Baath Party, said dismantling the party would only erode the secular net keeping Islamist extremists at bay. As proof, he pointed to a bullet wound on his cheek that he said came from a 1978 attack by members of the banned Muslim Brotherhood.

Such opposition groups, he said, don't offer a better plan for Syria: "If they ruled, there would be catastrophe."

While there have been no major political reforms, Syrians say, the oppressive social climate has eased since the death in 2000 of the former President Hafez al-Assad, the current leader's father.

Syrian officials bristle at comparisons to Saddam Hussein's Iraq. After all, they argue, Syrians can surf the Internet, watch satellite television and criticize the regime in moderation.

Shoppers crowd marketplaces until midnight, foreign tourists stroll in ancient quarters and bottles of real Coca-Cola can now be found stashed behind shelves of government-approved alternatives, such as Mandarin Cola.

There are no American fast-food joints, but Syrians munch chicken nuggets and cheeseburgers at restaurants in the capital. At one downtown cafe popular with Damascus teenagers, girls in head scarves puffed on hookahs as they watched NASCAR races on a big-screen TV. Outside, women in skintight jeans strutted past a billboard for a popular new play, Excuse me, America.

"People think that Syria has tanks in the streets and intelligence agents lurking on every corner," said Fayeze al-Sayegh, editor of the state-run Al Thawra newspaper. "I wish they could see how it really is. We've never in our lives practiced terrorism."

The opposition views the easing of social restrictions as a poor substitute for democracy, an appeasement to keep Syrians distracted from the country's sluggish socialist economy, unemployment and crowded prisons.

"They're not really changing. They're just adding makeup to the same faces and silk gloves to the same old hands," said Anwar al-Bunni, a human-rights attorney. "They're ready to give America whatever it wants to stay in power. They're just trying to buy time, to let the bad times pass in order to survive."

Contact reporter Hannah Allam at hallam@krwashington.com.

Syrian opposition doubts real reform; The regime is changing just enough to survive under the intense international scrutiny, they contend.

Graphic

PHOTO;

Mohammed Shahrour: Ousting rulers "just a dream."

Riad al-Daoudi, an adviser to Syria's minister of foreign affairs, met with American diplomats last year and told them that reform would have to be gradual.

PAUL ASSAKER, Knight-Ridder Tribune

Haitham Mullah, a leading opposition figure, said Syria's government was giving the U.S. what it thought the U.S. wanted, to stave off an American-led attack.

Ahmed al-Hajj Ali is working on changes in the Baath Party.

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End of Document

House of Saud reigns uneasily over kingdom in transition

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

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THIRD EDITION

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Section: NEWSWATCH; Pg. B4

Length: 1098 words

Byline: By Victor T. Le Vine SPECIAL TO THE POST-DISPATCH

Body

Everybody who was anybody came to King Fahd's funeral in August.

Many came ostensibly to pay tribute to the man, but also because it would not do to offend King Abdullah, who, as crown prince, ran Saudi Arabia for the past 10 years, and who now controls the spigot on the world's premier supply of oil.

The Bushes, good friends of the Saudi royal family, sent Vice President Dick Cheney (another old friend and business partner of the Saudi royals); there was also France's President Jacques Chirac, Britain's Prince Charles and Japan's Crown Prince Naruhito, among others.

The august assemblage in Riyadh was also an international gathering of the tribe of international oil producers and guzzlers, pledging their mutual solidarity. And for good reason: Never has a Saudi royal transition been so fraught with danger for the House of Saud, and never has the kingdom seemed so vulnerable to domestic and foreign dangers.

Almost by definition, every leadership transition in the Middle East is, if not a period of crisis, then at least one of extreme unease at all levels. Because there is no accepted template for leadership succession in Muslim countries, every time a head of state dies, the question of the legitimacy of his regime surfaces, and with it, the possibility of violent change.

Except for Israel, almost every other country in the Middle East has experienced violent leadership change at least once, some several times, though there have been periods of relative calm during eras when one ruler or his dynasty have held sway.

Every Middle East regime tries to ensure its own survival, often by creating some form of dynastic succession. Moreover, each new ruler tries to find ways to secure the acceptance of those they rule, be it by charismatic appeal (Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt, Habib Bourguiba in Tunisia, Moammar Gadhafi in Libya), or tradition (the kings of Jordan and Morocco); beneficence (the kings and emirs of the Persian Gulf), or piety and generosity (the kings of Saudi Arabia).

The late King Fahd gave up the title of king, preferring instead to be called "Guardian of the Two Holy Mosques," thus emphasizing the Saudis' claim to stewardship of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.

House of Saud reigns uneasily over kingdom in transition

Calls for change

The Saudis have been fortunate to have been in charge for over 75 years; in the centuries prior to their arrival, there were no fewer than 300 violent attempts to seize control of these iconic cities. So despite the ostensibly smooth transition from Fahd to Abdullah, the Saudis are again -- this time not so quietly -- seized with transition jitters.

What's bothering them?

First, King Abdullah is 82, the Crown Prince, Sultan, is 78, and the rest of the senior princes -- the "founding father generation" of the remaining sons of Ibn Saud -- are themselves octogenarians or in their late 70s. They've been in power since Ibn Saud's death in 1953, but are now in their twilight, and it is unlikely that they will be able to contain all those who will seek power when they are gone.

The Royal family in Saudi Arabia has about 25,000 members; about 200, including the king, sit at the top of the nation's power, according to a 2004 study. This family elite fill virtually every important position in the kingdom, from governorships, to the two military establishments, to the ministries, to the major educational institutions, to the largest business groups and banks.

The ferment for change is certainly visible in Saudi Arabia. A significant number of younger royals are impatient to fill the top jobs in the kingdom. More important, a growing layer of midlevel nonroyals, themselves beneficiaries of the extravagant spending of the past 20 years, are increasingly tired of royal rule and the ostentatious corruption during Fahd's reign.

Fahd's creation of a Consultative Council (which met infrequently and had only minimal input on policy matters), some liberalization in the status of women (now permitted to run commercial enterprises), the recent "semidemocratic" local elections, and a number of other policy concessions toward a more open society have all failed to satisfy that midlevel thirst for political change.

Protests, terrorism

In 2003 and early 2004, a group of liberals, intellectuals, professors, former Wahhabi scholars, judges and even women presented petitions for what seemed (at least to the royals) to be a program for radical changes in the regime, including a demand to transform the kingdom into a constitutional monarchy. The protesters were not firebrands, but all nurtured within the regime and beneficiaries of its largesse. The subtext of their protest was -- and remains -- that they can no longer be bought off, or coerced into silence.

Not surprisingly, under pressure from ultraconservative clerics, they were promptly swatted down for their presumption, and over 200 found themselves arrested or accused of sedition; many still linger in jail. Then, later in 2004, Crown Prince Abdullah called for a national dialogue and loosened some the restrictions on open criticism of the regime. Nevertheless, the unhappiness of the reformers persisted, remaining as one of the latent but potent threats to the kingdom.

There is more. Not only has the country's long-repressed Shiite minority become increasingly restive, but a terrorist insurgency waged mainly by offshoots of al-Qaida and ultrafundamentalists seeking to keep the kingdom "pure" has presented the most serious challenge yet to the regime.

According to official Saudi sources, during the two years prior to February-March 2005, a total of 221 people, including 92 terrorists, were killed in terrorist attacks and clashes.

Terrorist attacks, about 30 of them, date to 1979, when the Great Mosque in Mecca was seized by religious rebels, and include not only recent acts by al-Qaida, but also a number involving Hezbollah and several other militant Muslim organizations.

House of Saud reigns uneasily over kingdom in transition

The regime worries that its own security units may have been infiltrated by al-Qaida operatives, and it has recently tightened its cooperative links with Western counterterrorism agencies -- moves denounced by the kingdom's ultraconservative clergy.

In sum, as King Abdullah must certainly already know, the job of running his realm has gotten much more difficult than it was during the halcyon days of the 1970s, when Saudi oil ruled the world's petrochemical supply and OPEC was arguably the world's most powerful economic force.

Today, the kingdom is in near-crisis, or worse, and Abdullah may not have much more time to save his country from collapse. Or maybe it's already too late -- the next year will tell.

Notes

Victor T. Le Vine is professor emeritus of political science at Washington University. Saudi Arabia

Load-Date: December 30, 2005

America's arrest of the British boss of an internet betting site, BetonSports, has stunned the booming \$10bn gambling industry.

The Sunday Telegraph (LONDON)

July 23, 2006 Sunday

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Byline: William Langley

Body

In a softly humming office above a shopping centre in San Jose, the threadbare capital of Costa Rica, banks of computers are trying to keep pace with the world's prodigious appetite for a bet. Tens of millions of dollars a month speed through this innocuous looking complex - just one of many in the city.

It isn't hard to set up an online gambling business in Costa Rica. Or Antigua. Or the Dominican Republic. Or any of the other conveniently out-of-the-way, unregulated, tax-free places from which a new breed of cyber-entrepreneurs operate. The authorities are hospitable, the locals hungry for work, and the profits mouth-watering. There's just one big problem - the one that landed David Carruthers, the British chief executive of BetonSports, a leading online site, in a Texas jail last week.

The United States is a lucrative market for online betting, with an estimated 8 million punters wagering around \$10 billion-plus a year. Under the 1961 Wire Act, however, online and telephone sports betting are illegal and, in a long-threatened crackdown, the Department of Justice arrested Mr Carruthers as he changed planes in Dallas en route to Costa Rica. The former Ladbrokes executive, 48, was charged, with 10 others, with racketeering, conspiracy and fraud in an alleged \$4.5 billion illegal gambling racket.

The reaction was instant. In London, BetonSports' high-flying shares, listed on the Alternative Investment Market, fell rapidly and were then suspended at the company's request. The shares of other internet gaming firms dropped too, and an industry conference scheduled for this weekend in Las Vegas was cancelled.

The arrests were keenly felt on this side of the Atlantic; in striking contrast to the US, Britain is welcoming internet gaming companies. When the Gambling Act 2005 becomes law next year, cyber casinos can base themselves in Britain, monitored by the Gambling Commission.

The controversial legislation was passed despite warnings that such sites fuel gambling addiction. The rapid growth of online gambling - Britons spend around pounds 5bn a year on it, up from virtually nothing a decade ago - has led many deep into debt; the average online gambling debt in 2004 was pounds 25,676, up pounds 5,000 from the year before. Its 24-hour-a-day anonymity attracts new punters - including women and children unwilling or unable to use high-street bookies.

Several high profile cases illustrate the dangers. Earlier this month, Bryan Benjafield, an accounts administrator from Dorset, admitted stealing more than pounds 1 million from his firm to fund online gambling. He spent up to pounds 17,000 a day betting on sport and casino games.

America 's arrest of the British boss of an internet betting site, BetonSports , has stunned the booming \$10bn gambling industry.

It is this kind of case that has fuelled the puritanical zeal of the US authorities to crack down on companies like BetonSports, which believed they could circumvent US law by operating offshore. The Justice department was unimpressed: "We have said for a long time that internet gambling is illegal," said a spokesman, "and that any company which engages in it does so at its own risk. Some people have not been paying attention."

This may be because "some people" have been too busy getting rich. The internet has become the gambling industry's new Klondike, with some 1,700 sites offering odds on sporting events, casino games and poker. "The official estimate is that it's a \$10 billion business in the US alone," says an industry source, "but that's a massive understatement; \$25 billion would be closer to the mark."

This flood of cyber-money, 80 per cent of which is thought to originate in the US, has made billionaires of industry pioneers, like Gary Kaplan, the controversial, publicity-shy founder of BetonSports.

Kaplan, a stocky, one-time New York bookie with a chequered past and several pseudonyms, is one of the co-accused with Mr Carruthers. Unlike his chief executive, however, Mr Kaplan is not in custody: he is said to have fled from his Costa Rica estate, believing that bounty hunters were planning forcibly to return him to the US, where he is wanted by the FBI on various charges, including tax evasion. He is rumoured to be in Israel now, preferring to dodge Hezbollah rockets rather than risk US justice.

By these standards, the balding, bespectacled Edinburgh-born Mr Carruthers lacks colour. Although he loves fine wines and food - and once booked the Pussycat Dolls, the female pop band, to open a club in Costa Rica - the man who started as a Ladbrokes shop manager at 19 appeared in court last week wearing a lime-green T-shirt, faded jeans and grey suede shoes.

"He's a career betting man," says a former colleague. "Works hard, not much charisma, still wears braces on his teeth." Yet Mr Carruthers boldly went where few other internet gambling pioneers dared. A strong believer in the public's right to bet online, he made several trips to Washington, arguing that the business should be legitimised. "His case," says the ex-colleague, "is that people are going to gamble anyway, and that the US would be better off accepting the industry, regulating it, and taxing the revenues."

It was a high-stakes strategy which succeeded only in marking him out. Mr Carruthers flew into Dallas from London last Sunday with his wife Carol, not having the slightest inkling the authorities were waiting to pounce in the transit lounge. Among others arrested, in separate raids, were Mr Kaplan's brother, Neil, and his sister, Lori, both of whom have roles in the company.

Yet the signs that the US was planning to get tough on the maverick bookies were there. A bill is moving through Congress seeking to ban financial institutions from processing online bets. Another move seeks to prevent media organisations carrying ads for internet gambling.

The big question concentrating minds in sunny San Jose and elsewhere this weekend is exactly who will end up in prison, and how damaging the crackdown will be to an industry that was expected to be worth \$25 billion by 2010. For Mr Carruthers, already sitting in a Dallas jail and facing charges that could land him with a lengthy sojourn, the odds are not looking good.

Load-Date: July 24, 2006

Filmmaker Confronts 'Protocols' Myth in Documentary

The Forward

January 14, 2005

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Byline: Jon Kalish

Body

In the weeks and months after the attacks of September 11, 2001, filmmaker Marc Levin kept hearing from New York City cab drivers that no Jews had died in the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. One Egyptian driver not only repeated the canard that "Jews were warned about 9/11," but posited that the alleged heads-up was consistent with "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion," the notorious fictional 19th-century account of a meeting held by Jews to plot world domination.

"I just kind of flipped out," Levin said, recalling his reaction. "I said, 'My great-grandfather was at that meeting.' The cabbie didn't know what to make of that exactly."

Then Levin heard that an Arab American newspaper in Patterson, N.J., had started serializing "Protocols." That did it. He became determined to use his craft to document the re-emergence of "Protocols" and antisemitism in the wake of 9/11.

Two years later, he finished "The Protocols of Zion," which will have its world premiere at the Sundance Film Festival in Utah on January 21. In the 90-minute film, Levin, one of the nation's most respected documentary filmmakers, personally confronts antisemites of various stripes. Levin predicts the documentary will "stir it up" at Sundance, where he expects to negotiate a distribution deal for a theatrical run that could begin as early as this spring or summer. HBO already has bought North American television rights to the film and will run it in 2006. Levin also anticipates a sale of European TV rights.

"Marc couldn't read the newspapers and see the potential for antisemitism at the level it is at without doing something," said Mark Benjamin, who served as director of photography on "Protocols" and has worked with Levin on some 25 documentaries and feature films. "He had to make this film."

Levin's great-grandfather obviously wasn't part of the fictional Elders of Zion confab, but he was responsible for the Levin family's first foray into the motion picture business. Isaac Levin purchased a couple of movie theaters in New York in the early 1900s, one of which still generates income for the family. A couple of generations later, Isaac's grandson, Al - Marc's father - became a TV producer. Marc joined his father on Bill Moyers's production team during the early days of public television. Today, a third generation of Levin is poised to enter the film biz: Marc Levin's son, Daniel, is studying film in college, where he recently made a black comedy about assault weapons.

The family also has quite a history in both organized religion and organized labor. Marc Levin's grandfather, Herman Levin of Brooklyn, helped the late Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan found the Jewish Reconstructionist movement in

Filmmaker Confronts 'Protocols' Myth in Documentary

the 1930s after growing displeased with the role of women in his Conservative synagogue. (The record should note that Levin's synagogue, the East Midwood Jewish Center, now bills itself as an egalitarian congregation.)

Levin's parents were labor organizers before becoming white-collar professionals. Prior to her career as a psychologist and college professor, his mother, Hannah, was a shop steward for the old International Union of Electrical Workers. And Levin's father worked for the International Association of Machinists, organizing New Jersey railroad workers. Al Levin went on to a job as a rewrite man at Dorothy Schiff's old New York Post. He served as one of Bill Moyers's producers for many years.

"I stand in awe of how much further Marc has gone on his own," said Al Levin, the 79-year-old family patriarch, who lives in a house in Maplewood, N.J., "decorated" by two graffiti artist grandsons. "Marc is at a level of producing that far surpasses what I was able to accomplish."

Marc Levin's success in both the documentary and feature film world is unusual. Among other awards, he won a national Emmy in 1988 for a Bill Moyers special on the Iran-Contra affair, "The Secret Government." He made the feature film "Slam" after working on a documentary about a Washington, D.C., jail. "Slam" told the story of a fictional African-American performance poet imprisoned for a minor drug offense, winning a Grand Jury Prize at Sundance and the Camera d'Or at Cannes in 1998.

A couple of Levin's features received what kindly could be called lukewarm critical response. His first feature, "Blowback," was about a fanatical CIA agent.

"It was somewhat of a lunatic endeavor," Levin said with a chuckle during a walk through his sprawling production office on the far west side of Manhattan.

Levin also made "Brooklyn Babylon," which was released in 2000. Its storyline included an improbable romance between a Hasidic woman and a Rastafarian rapper in Brooklyn's Crown Heights.

Initially, Levin was inclined to lampoon the Protocols by dramatizing it with a cast of "Jewish elders" to include Mel Brooks, Rob Reiner and Woody Allen. But apparently both the Hezbollah satellite TV network and Egyptian television beat him to the punch by releasing their own models of just such dramatizations in two different programs.

Levin came to the conclusion that the best way to approach the topic was in documentary form, but he knew he wouldn't make an academic, PBS-style historical documentary.

"I decided I was just going to get out there and mix it up with the people who were buying and proselytizing [with] this stuff," he explains.

What emerged is a documentary in which Levin confronts Arab Americans, black nationalists, Christian evangelicals, skinheads and a street vendor selling the Protocols on the perimeter of a demonstration against the war in Iraq. It is the first time in his career that Levin wanders in front of the camera.

"Marc stands nose to nose with these guys and says it's a big lie," said Benjamin, who, like Levin, is a critic of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank but is also concerned about the potential for "explosive antisemitism" in Europe and the United States.

But Levin insists his "Protocols" film is about something larger than antisemitism.

"In the end, it's about a journey to the heart of hate," Levin told the Forward. "It's about how you deal with people who hate not just Jews, but Americans, Christians, whoever. And they're willing to blow themselves up. They're willing to blow up the whole world."

Graphic

IMAGE

Load-Date: June 14, 2006

End of Document

Harper to fly evacuees home

The Toronto Star
July 20, 2006 Thursday

Copyright 2006 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A01

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Byline: Oakland Ross, Toronto Star With files from Les Whittington, Star wire services

Dateline: LARNACA, Cyprus

Body

This palm-rimmed Mediterranean island calls itself "the gateway to peace and safety" in a war-scarred region, and it was here that Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper spent the night last night, sleeping aboard his airplane.

"This is something that's quite important to the PM," said an official from Harper's office, who briefed a handful of Canadian reporters early this morning in a restaurant at Larnaca's modest airport. "We don't know when he will be leaving."

Harper was determined to wait for an estimated 261 Canadian evacuees who last night were at sea somewhere between the Lebanese capital and the coast of Cyprus, which this week has been receiving hundreds of foreign nationals a day, all fleeing the aerial bombardment and the bloodshed in the conflict between Israel and Arab militants in southern Lebanon.

Chartered by the Canadian government, a 62-metre cruising yacht called the Blue Dawn departed Beirut harbour last night, and an ambitious Canadian rescue effort was finally, formally underway.

During a stopover in Paris on the way home from the recent G-8 summit in St. Petersburg, Russia, Harper and his staff decided to detour to Cyprus to carry at least some of the first flurry of Canadian evacuees home.

To make space on Harper's aircraft, 21 reporters and photographers who had been travelling with him through Britain, Russia and France were left in Paris, and personnel on the aircraft was drastically reduced. The skeleton crew included a doctor, at least a half-dozen RCMP security personnel, the Prime Minister's official photographer and three communications assistants. Harper's wife, Laureen, was also on board.

That left room for about 100 Canadian evacuees to make the non-stop trip to Ottawa.

The Canadian government has seven vessels booked to evacuate people from Lebanon but the vast majority are going to Turkey, not Cyprus.

The foreign affairs department also chartered an aircraft to meet the Canadians arriving in Cyprus and said enough seats would be available on the two planes to fly out the entire first boatload of evacuees.

It was unclear when the other ships and aircraft would arrive.

Harper to fly evacuees home

"There is a bottleneck, all countries are having difficulty getting their ships into the harbour" in Beirut, Sandra Buckler, the Prime Minister's spokesperson, said earlier yesterday.

The federal government has also commissioned Air Transat and Air Canada to provide flights home for some of the thousands of Canadian refugees trying to flee Lebanon.

The government was finalizing its plans yesterday to have Air Canada fly home Canadians from Turkey and Cyprus, while Air Transat has confirmed it will pick up 1,000 Canadian evacuees from Turkey.

Harper's aircraft touched down in Cyprus at a little past 11 p.m. local time yesterday, and he was greeted by Cypriot foreign minister Yiorgos Lillikas, who boarded the plane.

Harper did not leave the plane last night, and an official in his office said he was not expected to disembark at any point during his brief stay in Cyprus.

The Challenger is equipped with a separate sleeping compartment, but the official from Harper's office said the room was a modest affair, as was the Prime Minister's bed.

"It's not the most comfortable," the official said. "It's small in size."

The official objected to recent reports in the Canadian news media that have been critical of what some call a slow start to the country's efforts to rescue its citizens trapped in Lebanon by the current conflict.

"We have acted quite quickly," the official said. "We've acted within days."

He described the operation as a complex logistical challenge and noted that Canada has more of its nationals in Lebanon at present - as many as 50,000 by some estimates - than any other Western country.

On Monday, 16 Canadians arrived here aboard an Italian naval destroyer, the first of their compatriots to escape the war by way of Cyprus, but they will not be among the passengers aboard the Prime Minister's aircraft when it leaves the island.

"I think they are leaving later on," said a Canadian diplomat yesterday.

Those who do join Harper for the homeward journey will likely be selected on the basis of urgency, with the sick, elderly, families with small children, and pregnant women at the top of the list, the official from Harper's office said.

He became vague, however, when asked what security screening the rescued passengers or their luggage would be subjected to before they boarded the Prime Minister's plane.

"There's a certain process they need to pass," he said, but he did not elaborate.

In Paris early yesterday, Harper denied that his detour was a publicity stunt meant to counter criticism that his government had mishandled efforts to rescue Canadians from Lebanon.

"It's more than a symbolic trip, there is a need for air support in Cyprus," Harper told reporters after he cancelled his return to Ottawa and ordered his government Airbus to Cyprus.

"Because of the seriousness of the situation and our relative proximity to Cyprus, I've decided to take the Canadian Forces aircraft we've been travelling on to help airlift evacuees back home.

"We believe it's the right thing to do and that's why we are going to do it," Harper said. Buckler told reporters the federal government would foot the cost of the rescue operation, which could take weeks.

Harper said Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert telephoned him yesterday to "communicate the sorrow of the Israeli government" for the death of eight Canadians killed in an Israeli air strike in Lebanon this week.

Harper to fly evacuees home

Harper said he received assurances from Olmert that the Israeli military would try to minimize civilian casualties in the fighting in Lebanon and would not block ships carrying Canadians from Beirut.

In his call to Harper, Olmert expressed his appreciation for Canada's statements of support for Israel in the campaign against **Hezbollah** and Hamas.

Australian Prime Minister John Howard also called Harper yesterday and asked for help getting Australians out of Lebanon. Harper reportedly said Canada would do what it could.

Load-Date: July 20, 2006

End of Document

20,000 from Canada await rescue by boat: Chartered cruise ships to start evacuation on Wednesday

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

July 18, 2006 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Byline: Matthew Fisher, Juliet O'Neill and Chantal Eustace, with file from Mike Blanchfield, Ottawa Citizen., CanWest News Service; Vancouver Sun; with files from Ottawa Citizen

Body

A fleet of six chartered cruise ships is to begin the evacuation of as many as 20,000 Canadians from Lebanon Wednesday as attacks by Israeli warplanes continue to hammer the capital Beirut and other areas of the country.

After being criticized for not doing enough to help the thousands of Canadians stranded in the country, especially in the wake of the deaths of eight members of one Lebanese-Canadian family who died in an Israeli airstrike on the weekend, the Conservative government said Monday its rescue effort would take about 4,500 people daily to Cyprus by ship.

Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay accused his critics of the "utmost irresponsibility," and said Canada has pulled evacuation plans together as quickly as any other country.

"This is not an easy exercise," he said in an interview. "Planning started as soon as the conflict erupted."

North Vancouver resident Mohamad Seblani, 56, is relieved evacuation plans are underway but says things need to move quickly.

His wife and two children are in Lebanon on vacation and he fears for their safety.

"I don't know what our government is waiting for? It's getting worse every day," he says. "I'm afraid for them. I'm so worried for them."

Seblani says he wants his family out of Lebanon as soon as possible.

Mona Chaaban, 50, a restaurant owner in Vancouver with extended family in Lebanon, agrees the government's response is too little too late.

"With all respect to my government, it's taken them too long to act," says Chaaban. "It took six or seven days. It doesn't look good for Canada."

20,000 from Canada await rescue by boat: Chartered cruise ships to start evacuation on Wednesday

MacKay said the cruise ships, each with a capacity of 600 to 900 passengers, would start picking up Canadians at the port of Beirut as of mid-day Wednesday. They will ferry people back and forth for at least three days, possibly more.

The government doesn't know how many Canadians want out, but the number of those registered with the government has doubled to about 25,000 in the last few days and about 50,000 are believed to be in the country.

MacKay guessed a third of them are in the south part of the country, where bombing by Israel precludes any rescue of Canadians or safe overland passage to Beirut.

"The intensity right now of the bombing is such that to send people there, even to send buses or armoured cars, we don't have that equipment on the ground," he said.

A 16-member Canadian military contingency planning assistance team will oversee the evacuation at each end, ensuring orderly boarding of passengers based on a priority system that puts ill or injured or elderly people, and women and children first, he said.

"Once they're on the boat there will be time to decide whether the flights have to take off right away, whether there might have to be an overnight, all of those logistical plans will be worked out by the teams on the ground," he said.

Responding to a string of weekend reports in which Canadians complained they could not find out about evacuation or about their loved ones, MacKay defended the government's communication system. He said wait times for those calling had been reduced to five minutes, that 40 more personnel were en route to Lebanon to help the embassy and that more than 100 wardens, Canadians who live in Lebanon, would help ensure communication among Canadians within the country.

MacKay rejected critics who say Canadians have had to wait too long to get in touch with the embassy or Foreign Affairs, and that evacuation plans have lagged behind other countries and may not work smoothly. He said it's easy to criticize from the sidelines, but that simply fuels insecurity, frustration and anger.

"This is going to be a mess," predicted Jim Karygiannis, Liberal MP for Scarborough-Agincourt. "They've dropped the ball on this, massively. They're not prepared."

Vancouver resident Nick Kahwaji is pleased with the evacuation plans for his Canadian friends and family, but worries this strategy could make things worse.

"I'm happy Stephen Harper will accelerate evacuation but it's a double-edged sword," Kahwaji said. "If we get the western people out quickly, it could escalate war. They'll be safe, but we think it will escalate war."

Kahwaji said he'd like the Canadian government to act a mediator in the dispute.

"We want Canada to broker a ceasefire," said Kahwaji. "We'd like it to be resolved through negotiation and understanding."

Rida Bazzi, a 35-year-old Vancouver pharmacist, said the evacuation plans won't help his loved ones trapped in Lebanon since they are not Canadian citizens.

"Canada plays a role of a peaceful country all over the world," Bazzi said. "I'd like Canada to find a peaceful solution and stop the killing."

The immediate plan is to have chartered flights waiting at an airport in Cyprus to fly people back to Canada, MacKay said, although that part is still a bit sketchy and depends on numbers of people and the capacity of the airport.

For now, Canada has chartered three planes.

20,000 from Canada await rescue by boat: Chartered cruise ships to start evacuation on Wednesday

The United States is planning to evacuate several thousands of its citizens from Lebanon, while groups ranging from a few dozen to several hundred have already been rescued -- most overland to Syria -- by Sweden, Norway, Britain, Denmark and Germany.

Officials from Jordan say about 1,200 people fleeing Lebanon through Syria have been arriving daily. Syria puts the number of the displaced crossing its border at about 100,000.

As many as 100 Israeli warplanes ranged over Lebanon for the sixth day Monday, hitting army bases in the north and a gas tank farm in northern Beirut. The aircraft, which have flown more than 2,000 sorties since last Wednesday, also returned to attack old targets, pounding the port of Beirut and destroying the last two functioning tanks containing jet fuel at the Beirut airport. Gas stations were also targeted again across the country.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert vowed Monday that the attacks would continue until three soldiers kidnapped by Hezbollah and Hamas are returned.

"Israel will not be held hostage -- not by terror gangs or by a terrorist authority or by any sovereign state," Olmert said in a speech that was broadcast live across Israel.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Mark Van Manen, Vancouver Sun; Mohamed Seblane is concerned for the safety of his children, Mustafa, 16, and daughter Rabab, 14, who are on a vacation in Lebanon, in the town of Rayak in the east.

Load-Date: July 18, 2006

End of Document

Israel Unveils New Shoah Museum To a World Still Bent on Destruction

The Forward

March 18, 2005

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Section: News; Pg. 1

Length: 1127 words

Byline: Limor Livnat

Body

World leaders and delegations from more than 30 nations arrived in Jerusalem Tuesday for the inauguration of the new museum at Yad Vashem, Israel's national Holocaust memorial. Rather than further focus on the documentary aspects of the Nazi genocide, the new Holocaust center, which is four times as large as the existing museum, will explore the unprecedented tragedy by stressing the personal stories of the murdered victims and eradicated communities.

The message of the humanitarian obligation of remembrance embodied by Yad Vashem's new museum has never been more current or more vital. With blatant antisemitism experiencing a dangerous renaissance in national capitals from London to Paris to Buenos Aires to Tehran, the new exhibition of the systematic destruction of European Jewry will help visitors better understand the warning bells of unconstrained racial and religious hatred that are sounding globally unchallenged.

For Israelis the lessons of the Holocaust are sadly never permitted to be very far from our minds. Our national homeland, which was molded into being out of the ashes of the concentration camps and the tattered remnants of those who survived the murder of 6 million of our people, has been threatened with destruction since the very hour we proclaimed our independence in 1948. In the nearly 57 years since then, we have fought six major wars and weathered unrelenting terrorist attacks on our civilians both in Israel and abroad.

Barely a week has passed in the last half-century without a new deadly offense being leveled against our cities and towns by our Arab neighbors. This has been coupled with some of recent history's most brutal terrorist attacks on Jewish synagogues, institutions, communities and individuals as a surrogate means of inflicting suffering on our nation.

For too long, our neighbors' mosques, media and even textbooks and school curricula have promoted hatred and the genocide of the Jewish people. Tragically, these days it seems to surprise no one but ourselves to learn of the latest cemetery desecration, antisemitic epithet or violent attack on Jews somewhere in the world.

The expanded museum's inauguration comes against a background of the government of Iran and its proxies - the terrorist organizations **Hezbollah**, Hamas and Islamic Jihad - threatening renewed attacks against Israel that could again destabilize our region and derail peace talks with the Palestinians. Tehran's ongoing refusal to abandon its quest for a nuclear bomb, which it has insistently implied it will use against the Jewish state, has become our number-one security concern. While international conflicts between other nations are mostly limited to border disputes and struggles over maritime rights, when Israel is involved it is always our very future existence that is being threatened, with complete destruction lying at the core of the aggression.

Israel Unveils New Shoah Museum To a World Still Bent on Destruction

For Israelis, and for Jews everywhere, the awareness of the Holocaust is part and parcel of our very identity. The names Aushwitz, Treblinka, Dachau, Buchenwald and Mauthausen have become a sacred part of our heritage. If the world leaders who visited Jerusalem this week want to better understand our foreign policy concerns and our inflexible demand for security guarantees, then the exhibits and displays at the new Yad Vashem museum will provide invaluable insights. Indeed, for Israelis the lessons of our tragic past are never permitted to be anachronisms; they are always relevant and reflective of our current reality.

In the coming days, Jews around the world will celebrate our most joyful festival of Purim. The holiday, like so many others in our tradition, commemorates the miraculous redemption of the Jewish community of ancient Persia from a wicked antisemite, Haman, who was obsessed with our people's physical and spiritual destruction. Haman, who had managed to ingratiate himself with the all-powerful monarch of the day, utilizes his connections and good will to convince the king to fix a calendar date upon which to murder all the Jews of the vast Persian empire.

Like other fanatical haters throughout the ages, this viceroy employs the classic antisemitic logic to whisper his case in the king's ear: "There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your realm. Their laws are different from every other people's. They do not observe even the king's laws; therefore it is not befitting the king to tolerate them. If it please the king, let it be recorded that they be destroyed." (Book of Esther III:8-9)

Through a complex series of wondrous and providential coincidences, however, a Jewish heroine, Esther, is chosen to be queen and the stage is set for her to foil the conspiracy and turn the tables on Haman. As this admirable women of valor vacillates over the life-threatening risk she must personally subject herself to in order to save her people, she is pointedly probed into action by her uncle: "Do not imagine that you will be able to escape in the king's palace, any more than the rest of the Jews.... And who knows whether it was just for such a time as this that you attained your royal position." (Book of Esther IV:13-14) Esther is charged to sacrifice herself if necessary, but most of all she must act.

As such, in our worldview it is a clear line that unifies the ancient Persian tyrants who sought our destruction centuries ago to the murderous Nazis who practiced genocide against us, to the current Islamic suicide bombers who have devastated our Israeli cities, to the modern-day rulers in Persia who scurry to secure an Iranian nuclear weapon with which to destroy our people. All of these, we understand, must be confronted and fought.

In the Israel of my childhood, we used to say about certain people that they "came from there." I use this expression now, knowing that the "there" we whispered about - the Shoah - is not just one place. And we see that even those who "came from there," even they cannot always remember everything. The names. The faces. The loved ones. The world that was - and was destroyed.

None of us could possibly remember the 6 million names. But each of us can assume the responsibility for one personal memory, of an individual or a family. To get to know intimately the story of a single community.

This is the intent of Yad Vashem's new museum - to personalize this complex contemporary story and simply teach it so its universal lessons can be absorbed by all. For Jews, the past merits remembering not solely as an eternal memorial to our past suffering, but also as a shining beacon and guide for all of humanity to avoid the tragedies and horror once again in our shared futures. Indeed, in each generation to remember, and to never again forget.

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Democracy not an export item

THE AUSTRALIAN

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Byline: Leon Hadar

Body

MATP

The irrational response to the Danish cartoons shows that the Middle East may not be fit for democracy after all, argues Leon Hadar

IN a new film, *Looking for Comedy in the Muslim World*, comedian Albert Brooks is dispatched to south Asia by humourless Bush administration officials to look for, well, comedy in the Muslim world.

Trying to cope with the depressing reality of a post-September 11 world in which Americans now occupy some parts of an angry anti-American Muslim universe, the gloomy bureaucrats in Washington hope a Jewish comic from Hollywood will help them discover what makes Muslims laugh.

After all, laughter is a universal trait, and if we Westerners laugh, the Muslims will probably laugh with us. And who knows? This could be a form of Preventive Comedic Diplomacy: A laugh a day in Baghdad, Kabul and Tehran could keep the US military away.

Unfortunately, Brooks's mission of making the Muslim world safe for comedy proves to be a sad joke. As with most of his liberal Hollywood colleagues, Brooks believes that all cultures can be brought together by shared commitment to universal values. But these fellows in India and Pakistan just don't get his sarcastic and self-deprecating sense of humour, not to mention the double entendres and sexual innuendoes.

His *Comedy Hour* is a flop and he discovers to his chagrin that while Muslims do laugh "like us", their concept of what is funny is not the kind that might work for a stand-up comedian in New York, Melbourne or, for that matter, a

cartoonist in Copenhagen. It's not that the 12 cartoons of the prophet Mohammed published in the small Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* were very funny; they were quite tasteless and offensive. But you could say that about much of the stuff that we find any day of the week in our Western media, including caricatures that mock Jesus, bash Catholic priests, offend Jews and insult racial minorities.

If you don't like what you see, feel free to send angry letters to the editor, boycott and demonstrate against the offensive newspaper and ask public figures to condemn it. But in a society where freedom of expression is valued, you don't threaten the life or use violence against those who disturb your political beliefs or religious sensibilities. And that includes crude anti-fill-the-blank cartoonists.

Democracy not an export item

That this kind of commitment to a free exchange of ideas and tolerance of dissent that those of us who were raised and educated in the West seem to take for granted, like the air we breathe, is not shared by many Muslims across the world, and especially those residing in the Arab Middle East, has become quite evident in a very dramatic way in recent days.

The violence perpetrated by the mobs in centres of Arab civilisation, such as Beirut, Damascus and Cairo, is very disturbing and reflects an illiberal political culture that is breeding religious intolerance and anti-modern attitudes. And it is strengthening the power of radical Islamic groups, ranging from the Arab-Sunni Muslim Brotherhood to the Shia Hezbollah.

What is even more disturbing is that some of this anti-Western frenzy has exploded in places in the Arab Middle East -- in the new Iraq and in Palestine -- where the Bush administration has been promoting its campaign to spread freedom and where open elections were show-cased by Washington as highlighting its Wilsonian agenda of making the region safe for democracy.

Indeed, members of the radical political Islamist groups elected to power during this US-produced celebration of democracy -- Iraq's Shia clerics and Palestine's Hamas terrorist group -- have, with rare exceptions, been serving as cheerleaders for mobs attacking Americans and Europeans, including Danish troops maintaining peace in Iraq and officers of the European Union in Gaza, which is the main source of economic assistance for the Palestinians.

But the neoconservative intellectuals who have been the driving force behind the pro-democracy campaign in the Middle East refuse to admit that, not unlike Brooks's comedy spiel, their own democracy shtick has been a policy disaster. In two strategic parts of the Middle East -- the Persian Gulf and Israel/Palestine -- it has led to the victory of political parties whose values run contrary to that of the US.

These groups, for instance, would reverse women's rights and give second-class citizenship to non-Muslims. And their goals -- in Iraq, an alliance with Iran, and in Palestine, a refusal to recognise Israel -- would harm US strategic interests, the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and hinder efforts to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

So much for the idea that free elections give birth to liberal pro-Western governments. As policy analyst Fareed Zakaria argues, elections that take place in societies that lack the necessary institutional foundations -- a functioning civil society, free markets, independent press and judiciary, religious tolerance -- tend to produce an "illiberal democracy" that only exacerbates the problems of divisions and dysfunction and bring to power nationalist and religious populists who exploit their people's fears of the "other".

From that perspective, the US push for democracy in the Middle East has been a self-defeating strategy that has made the region safe for nationalism and other radical forms of ethnic, religious, and tribal movements that regard the US and its allies in the region as the source of all evil. It's difficult for American neoconservatives who fantasise about a global multicultural community committed to liberal democratic values to admit that perhaps the Muslims are not "like us" after all.

They laugh, but don't appreciate our sense of humour. They want to be free, but don't share our concept of liberal democracy, a set of values and institutions that can only develop through a long process of trial and error and in a hospitable environment. Perhaps the time has come for Washington to adopt a more realistic approach and stop looking for democracy in the Middle East while pursuing a policy that secures the real interests of the Western democracies in the region.

After all, liberal democracy, like humour, is not an export commodity. And, unlike humour, it's a very serious business.

Leon Hadar, a research fellow in foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute in Washington, is author of *Sandstorm: Policy Failure in the Middle East* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

Democracy not an export item

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'Arab Spring' of democracy owes thanks to George Bush

The Sun Herald (Sydney, Australia)

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Late Edition

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Byline: MIRANDA DEVINE

Body

IT HAS been amusing watching the tortured knots various pundits have contorted themselves into trying to deny that the flickerings of freedom in the Arab world have anything to do with US foreign policy post 9/11 and, especially, the dreaded George Bush.

Since the invasion of Iraq, a series of events, remarkable when taken together, have occurred in the Middle East, prompting optimists to predict an "Arab Spring" of democracy.

There was Iraq's "purple revolution", as Bush has dubbed it, after the purple-ink-stained fingers of voters. Under the calm leadership of Grand Ayatollah Ali Husaini Sistani, the Shiite majority which won the elections is busy involving the Kurdish and Sunni minorities in the democratic process, which keeps proceeding, despite the expectations of Western doomsayers.

Then there was Lebanon's "cedar revolution", when people-power toppled the Syrian puppet government, although by last week, nine days later, the old prime minister, Omar Karami, was back in power and Syrian-backed **Hezbollah** supporters were out in numbers. But Syria is pulling out thousands of troops as well as its intelligence agents and last week a reported 1 million democracy activists took to the streets of Beirut, some carrying signs that read, "Thank You, George W. Bush."

In Saudi Arabia municipal elections were held, for the first time. In Kuwait, protesters rallied outside Parliament to demand **women** be given the vote. "**Women's** rights, now," read the placards. In Egypt, Hosni Mubarak promised a free presidential election. And while Libya isn't anywhere near democracy, a few days after Saddam Hussein was arrested, leader Muammar Gaddafi renounced his weapons of mass destruction. All a crazy coincidence?

ABC journalist Monica Attard appeared on Richard Glover's 702 radio program on Thursday to declare the so-called Arab Spring had nothing to do with Iraq, not "by any stretch of the imagination". Those who claim a link do so because it "suits their propaganda purposes". So why now? asked Glover. Attard thought the Arab news network Al-Jazeera and the flowering of regional media might be responsible. In UK's The Guardian, Timothy Garton Ash had someone else in mind, asking: "Has Osama bin Laden started a revolution in the Middle East?" Anyone but Bush.

But at a lunch of pastrami on rye in Sydney on Friday, Israel's former ambassador to the UN, Dore Gold, had a different view. As president of the Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs think-tank, he has been adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and long involved with high-level negotiations in the Middle East, including those in

'Arab Spring' of democracy owes thanks to George Bush

1996 among the US, Lebanon, Syria and France to create the Monitoring Group for Southern Lebanon. So you might say he knows what he's talking about.

Gold says it is too early to write a history book chapter titled " Arab Spring", not even a chapter titled "Late Winter", as one wag suggested.

But, "I think the Iraq war and the fall of Saddam Hussein has ignited something across the region . . . A psychological wall has come down. When an Arab dictatorship collapsed from an assault by coalition forces, perhaps that put a lot of dictatorships on notice.

"In order to defeat terrorism you have to do more than win militarily.

"You have to set conditions which make the ideology of militant Islam less palatable and give an alternative. Only by promoting this democratic ideal can you offer young people a different vision and pull away the outer rings of support for organisations like al-Qaeda."

Last week's agreement in Cairo between Palestinian factions and terrorist groups is a step forward. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, unlike his late predecessor Yasser Arafat, now "realises the use of terrorism by Palestinians is completely self-defeating".

There is not yet talk of peace, only of Tahdi'a, says Gold, which means a period of "calm" in Arabic. But, "Am I optimistic? Yes, there is a basis to feel good." As for the United Nations, it has failed to resolve international conflicts, and shown itself impotent in the face of genocide in places such as Rwanda and Bosnia.

The emerging alternative is a "realignment of global politics [which] involves a coalition of US and its allies in coalitions of the willing".

Australia is in the box seat, along with Britain, Israel, India, Japan, South Korea and Singapore.

Gold's informed and commonsense assessments show you don't have to be a Pollyanna when looking at the Middle East, but neither do you have to deny reality.

Pay TV cashes in on Easter 'gift'

JUST when Channel Seven was smoking on the audience front, it pulls Desperate Housewives off the air for three whole weeks. The excuse is Easter, a holiday which lasts all of four days.

The real reason, of course, is the antiquated non-ratings period, when the free-to-air networks cram repeats and garbage down our throats. Only these days we don't have to reward their arrogance. We have choice.

Brendan Moo, head of publicity for Foxtel, sees the non-ratings period as a gift, with viewers flocking to subscription TV. "We celebrate," he said on Friday.

This Easter, Foxtel plans many stunts to woo free-to-air refugees: Fox 8 has a marathon of Australia's Next Top Model. And Fox Classics is running all 255 episodes of M*A*S*H.

Moo, a former Nine publicist, says non-ratings periods are meaningless. "It's treating the viewer with disdain."

Nine's short-sighted programming arrogance over the years has ended up costing it viewer loyalty, and now the same is happening at Seven. Surely it's not the hallmark of that nice David Leckie, Seven's chief executive, formerly of Nine?

We can stand it

SO pregnant women in "Rude Sydney" can't find a bloke to stand up for them in the bus, allegedly. Why so helpless?

'Arab Spring' of democracy owes thanks to George Bush

Surely 21st-century babes don't need to play the Renaissance damsel in distress waiting for Sir Walter Raleigh to spread his cloak over a puddle. No, pregnant post-feminist strap-hangers must assert themselves. Lean over a seated fellow passenger and simply ask: "Could I please have your seat because my legs are killing me?"

Most men would be happy to make themselves useful, especially after years of being told chivalry is chauvinism. So would most women.

But where are the demands for able-bodied women to stand up for men with beer-guts? After all, a well-developed gut is a load roughly equivalent to a full-term baby, even twins, and there's no nine-month miracle cure. How their legs must ache.

Graphic

PHOTO: FREEDOM: Lebanese protesters in Martyrs Square in Beirut. Picture: AFP

Load-Date: June 20, 2007

Where the Evil Empire Is Us and the Veil Liberation

The New York Times

June 3, 2005 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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Byline: By WILLIAM GRIMES

Body

Faith at War

A Journey on the Frontlines of Islam, From Baghdad to Timbuktu

By Yaroslav Trofimov

Illustrated. 312 pages. Henry Holt and Company. \$26.

Immediately after the collapse of the World Trade Center, Yaroslav Trofimov's editor at The Wall Street Journal handed him a big assignment: go forth into the Islamic world and take its temperature.

For the next three years Mr. Trofimov, an American-educated Ukrainian who speaks fluent Arabic and holds an Italian passport, traveled from Cairo to Kandahar, from Tunis to Timbuktu. When coalition forces rolled into Iraq, he put on protective gear and followed in a rented GMC Yukon. He tagged along with American and Afghan soldiers hunting for the Taliban on the Afghan-Pakistani frontier. Everywhere he went, he made a point of talking to ordinary Muslims, not just about the World Trade Center attacks but about their lives, their faith and what many Muslims see, in apocalyptic terms, as a global religious struggle between Islam and the West.

The stylishly written, keenly observed dispatches that make up "Faith at War" deliver mostly bad news. The United States is regarded, across large swaths of the Muslim world, with a mixture of suspicion and hatred that military action in Afghanistan and Iraq has fanned to a white-hot intensity. Moderate Muslim voices are being drowned out by the screaming of fanatics.

This may sound like an old story, but Mr. Trofimov makes it seem fresh. He supplies the particulars, with faces and names. When Raghda Mahroughi, an Egyptian woman, responds to the attacks on the World Trade Center by saying, "I just hope there were a lot of Jews in that building," the sentiment seems doubly shocking because of who she is (a university student) and where she is (in a McDonald's frequented by Cairo's yuppies).

"Often those with the most bloodthirsty ideas were the well-to-do and the privileged who have had some experience with the West -- and not the downtrodden and ignorant 'masses' that are usually depicted as the font of anti-Western fury," Mr. Trofimov writes. "Sometimes those who know us best hate us most."

American support for oppressive regimes ranks high on the list of Muslim grievances. Mr. Trofimov finds a fascinating case study in Tunisia, a secular society in which women are guaranteed equal rights, abortion is legal and ultra-Orthodox Jews enjoy religious freedoms denied to fundamentalist Muslims. "We are much closer to the Italians and the French," a government official tells him.

Where the Evil Empire Is Us and the Veil Liberation

Well, not quite. Zine el-Abadine Ben Ali, Tunisia's prime minister, has imposed secularism with an iron fist, exiling or imprisoning dissidents, while courting American support by taking a soft line on Israel and protecting Tunisia's tiny Jewish community. As in Iran under the shah, liberal opponents of the regime find themselves allied with Islamists, and the veil, paradoxically, has become a symbol of liberation. When he checks into his hotel in Tunis, Mr. Trofimov cannot help noticing that someone on the staff has programmed the television so that the first thing to come on is Al Manar, the Hezbollah channel.

Mr. Trofimov tends to pick up on little things like this. Who knew that Tomahawk missiles smell like a new car? In Afghanistan, Mr. Trofimov's eye for the odd detail leads him to a workshop in Kandahar where street artists, free from Taliban rule, decorate motorized rickshaws with the Afghan version of heavy-metal art: roaring lions, princesses on horseback or Rambo on a rampage, sometimes all three crowded into the same painting.

The details, however colorful, never cohere into a big picture. Mr. Trofimov deals in vivid tableaux, chance encounters and spontaneous conversations. Context can suffer. When he describes a carful of Saudi men who pull off a country highway and stone a colony of baboons for the fun of it, the incident sticks in the mind but does not explain much. Loutish fans throw beer cups at Yankee Stadium. What, if anything, does that say about the United States?

Some themes do emerge. One is the extraordinary success Saudi Arabia has had setting up schools all over the Muslim world to propagate its particular brand of fundamentalist Islam. In Bosnia, to take an alarming example, Saudi-financed "renovations" of Begova Džamija, a 16th-century mosque in Sarajevo, involved scraping down decorative tiles, stripping ornaments and covering the walls with white plaster. . Young Bosnians, sent to Saudi Arabia and inculcated with the puritanical Wahhabi version of Islam, have returned to preach fire and brimstone and radicalize Bosnian Muslims.

Mr. Trofimov's second big subject, developed in the military chapters of the book, is the American effort to export democracy to Iraq and Afghanistan. Here he tips his hand. He is scathing about American foreign policy and tends to sneer at the people who carry it out, military and civilian, who, with few exceptions, appear clueless about the land they have invaded and tone-deaf to local sensitivities. Every day, and in every way, as Mr. Trofimov tells it, America is creating new enemies.

"So, is this liberation or occupation for you?" he often asked Iraqis on the street during the initial stages of the war. Obviously, he had made his mind up even if the Iraqis had not. Before long, he no longer has to ask. "Even if you turn this country into heaven, we don't want it from you," a tribal chief tells Bob Silverman, the American civilian administrator in Tikrit. "Just go away from Iraq and leave us alone. We've had enough of you and can't stand it no more."

Just when the picture seems bleakest, Mr. Trofimov heads to Mali. One of the poorest countries in Africa, Mali is more than 90 percent Muslim, yet democracy flourishes (a feminist ran for mayor of Timbuktu), church and state remain separate, and the local version of Islam is sunny and mild. "Here it is a secular country," the country's top cleric tells Mr. Trofimov. "If you like to drink, you can drink. It doesn't matter to me."

It's a happy thought. After Mr. Trofimov's disheartening tour, readers may feel that they really need that cocktail.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo: Yaroslav Trofimov (Photo by Chrystyna Czajkowsky/Henry Holt)

Where the Evil Empire Is Us and the Veil Liberation

Load-Date: June 3, 2005

End of Document

Musharraf vows to end load-shedding, price-hike

The Nation (AsiaNet)

July 20, 2006 Thursday

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Section: NATIONWIDE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 1814 words

Dateline: ISLAMABAD JUL 20

Body

President General Pervez Musharraf Thursday said the government is determined to overcome power shortage in the country and would add 28850 MW by 2016 through short, medium and long-term strategy. In his radio and television address to the nation, President Musharraf spoke about Pakistan's relations with India and Afghanistan, Lebanon crisis and highlighted the success of the government in improving law and order in FATA, the strategy to impede Talibanisation, restoring the writ of government in Balochistan and improvement in economic situation.

He termed electricity shortage in the country a development related problem as a number of new industries have been set up during the past few years and all new and old industries are working at 100 per cent capacity due to market demand. He said the government has prepared a comprehensive short, medium and long-term strategy to overcome the electricity shortage. Under the short-term strategy, 1100 megawatt of electricity would be added up to December 2007. In the medium-term strategy 8600 MW would be added through gas turbine, wind power projects and hydropower projects in 2008-2011.

About 19150 MW will be added in the national grid through the long-term strategy between 2011 and 2016 by installing 31 hydro and nuclear power projects, he said. He appealed to the nation to face this difficulty for some time. However, he directed the government and WAPDA that whenever there is power shortage load shedding should be in an organized manner.

On Lebanon, President Musharraf appealed to the world to achieve a negotiated settlement of Lebanon crisis and termed Israel's bombing on Lebanon as an "open attack." He also urged the international community to help resolve the lingering Palestinian dispute, which was at the heart of the crisis in the Middle East. "The conflict has escalated and the fear is that Syria or Iran may be dragged in the conflict."

"I appeal to the world to intervene and move towards ceasefire," he said, adding, "Israel was already in conflict with Hamas and *Hizbullah* but now it has openly attacked Lebanon that has serious repercussions." President Musharraf also feared that the escalating violence in the Middle East could have an impact on Pakistan. "It could have an impact on Pakistan. So we need to ensure our own security that can only be achieved by exhibiting national solidarity."

Unveiling the new strategy to tackle "Talibanisation" of Waziristan area, the President said that to achieve peace in the area the Grand Jirga and Maliks would be strengthened and Army would be pulled back gradually. The President asked the foreigners either to leave the area or they will be killed. "If the foreigners want to stay in the area, they must surrender and ensure a peaceful stay there."

Musharraf vows to end load-shedding, price-hike

He also categorically stated that no Pakistani would be allowed to enter Afghanistan for ulterior motives and Talibanisation of Pakistan's area bordering Afghanistan would be thwarted. President Musharraf urged India and Afghanistan not to resort to blame game. "This is the first sign of defeat to level unsubstantiated allegations." The President expressed sympathy and solidarity with families of the victims of Mumbai blasts and assured the Indian government and people of Mumbai that Pakistan would fully cooperate in finding out the real culprits of the blasts.

"We condemn the heinous act. Pakistan itself is a victim of terrorism and extremism. We are successfully fighting the menace and ready to help our neighbours." He expressed his disappointment over Indian attitude towards the ongoing peace process. "This amounts to playing in the hands of terrorists," he added. Talking about Afghanistan, the President said the situation has changed after we succeeded in breaking the network of al-Qaeda. They are now on the run. "A transformation from al-Qaeda to Taliban has taken place. Taliban are operating in Southern Afghanistan and Qandahar under Mulla Umer and that is creating problems for Pakistan."

He said there are some elements connected to Taliban in Waziristan area and our forces are very effectively operating against them. The President said the government took an action against terrorism and the focus was at Al-Qaeda. Six to seven hundred al-Qaeda members were arrested in cities and government took an action against others in mountains and succeeded. Now focus has shifted to Taliban.

General Pervez Musharraf said the government has decided to reinforce the institutions of political agents; maliks and FATA secretariat under the new governor has been reorganized. He said the governor has full support of the government in his strategy for the formation of grand jirga. He categorically stated that no foreign terrorists will be allowed on Pakistani soil and no person will go from Pakistan to Afghanistan for any terrorist activities.

He said we have launched operations against certain elements that are active on our side of the border. President said we are partners in the fight against terrorism. On price hike, the President said the main reason of the price-hike was the gap between demand and supply. He said there has been an upsurge in economic activity, per capita income doubled and with increased resources, people are spending more.

This price-hike must be controlled and the government is taking all actions to check inflation, which has been brought down from double digit to less than eight percent. He said the prices of pulses and sugar have come down considerably, he added. President Musharraf also underlined the efforts of the government that have resulted in bringing the inflation rate down to single digit and added that the government will take steps to provide essential items on controlled prices through the chain of Utility Stores across the country.

The President promised to establish Utility Stores in 6000 union councils and at tehsils' level. All essential food items will be available on these out-sourced stores at subsidized rates and the prices of these items will be publicized in newspapers and on TV regularly with telephone numbers of the price control magistrates to complain about any over charging.

He said the government is extending a subsidy of 104 billion rupees on electricity, fuel, food items and fertilizers as well as provision of assistance to the needy through Bait ul Maal. All these subsidies are aimed at facilitating the masses. He said prices in Pakistan of essential items are still lower than the entire region. He, however, assured the nation that he and the government would take all actions not only to control prices but also bring them down.

President Musharraf said that the new budget is a people friendly with maximum allocation for development works that is Rs 415 billion. The PSDP allocation reflects the economic turnaround and a massive increase in revenue collection that touched 710 billion rupees during last financial year as against 304 billion rupees in 1999, he added.

On poverty and unemployment ratio, President Musharraf referred to the reports of World Bank, Asian Development Bank, UN Poverty Centre in Pakistan that corroborate with the poverty figures of Pakistani government that the poverty has come down from 34 to 24% in the last five years. "The situation is still not good and poverty will go down further every year," he said.

Musharraf vows to end load-shedding, price-hike

The President said that there was sharp decline in unemployment as big sectors like telecom, IT, construction industries are expanding rapidly. Several hundred new industries have been set up while others are now running into two and three shifts thus providing more jobs.

He also talked about the increased production of motorcycles, cars, refrigerators, air-conditioners, tractors and said this was also an indication of economic activity and more job opportunities. Giving break-up of jobs generated by different sectors, the President said, 1.5 million people are employed in IT sector, 8 lakh got direct employment opportunity in government initiated mega development projects while 1.6 million got jobs indirectly.

As such, poverty and joblessness have been brought down and the government has taken care of the salaried people and increased their pay by about fifty percent during the last three to four years. He said the Rozgar Pakistan Programme has been launched which will create 1.9 million self-employment jobs. Under the programme, people would get special credit at low interest rates.

On Balochistan, the President said writ of the government had been restored in most parts of troubled areas in Balochistan and FC and the intelligence agencies did the wonderful job as they successfully dealt with the situation. The President said the situation has improved considerably and in a period of short time normalcy would be fully restored. He said mega projects are being implemented to end the sense of deprivation and bring prosperity to the people of the province.

He said in Balochistan three Sardars out of 77 are anti-development, anti-democracy and they want their own dictatorship in their areas. These Sardars were maintaining private armies to blackmail the government and subjugate their people. He said they had established forty Ferrari camps in different parts of the province for sabotage activities that included mine blasts, gas pipeline blasts and damaging railway lines, pylons and killing foreigners including our Chinese friends.

He said these Sardars had even forced their own sub-tribes to leave their homes and these people are now returning to their homes. He said there was only one clash in Dera Bugti, which was due to firing by the supporters of Akbar Bugti aimed at forcing his people to leave the area. He said out of 9000 population of Dera Bugti, 5000 have returned home including his cousin Ahmdan Bugti. All military commanders of Bugti have surrendered with their arms.

He said the situation has become peaceful and there are no bomb blasts, rocket fire or sabotage of railway lines, electricity pylons. He said the main actor is now on the run. He said even several bomb blasts in Karachi, Lahore and Quetta were the handiwork of the people of Akbar Bugti.

He rejected misperception in the media of human rights violations in Bugti and Marri areas. He said the Government is taking action against those who killed their own people and forced their sub-tribes to leave along with their families including women and children and stay in Punjab and Sindh.

The President asked the people raising hue and cry over violations of human rights that where they were when these sardars threw out almost fifteen thousand people from their homes. In the end, President Musharraf urged the nation to fight the menace of extremism as it is tainting the image of Pakistan and Pakistani nation in the world. "We cannot progress until we leave the path of intolerance. We must promote tolerance and show the world that ours is tolerant society."

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Mideast Mix: New Promise of Democracy and Threat of Instability

The New York Times

March 1, 2005 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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

Length: 1068 words

Byline: By STEVEN R. WEISMAN

Dateline: WASHINGTON, Feb. 28

Body

Less than six weeks after President Bush's Inaugural Address appealing for democratic reforms in the Middle East, the United States is coping with an unaccustomed problem: a region churning with fresh demands for democracy, fresh opportunities and fresh potential for instability.

In Egypt, perhaps the United States' most important ally in the Arab world, President Hosni Mubarak announced over the weekend that there would be contested presidential elections later this year.

In Lebanon, a population long resigned to Syrian dominance is suddenly demanding that Syria remove its forces and take its hands off a political process it has controlled by force and intimidation.

Administration officials say Mr. Bush's calls for democracy in the region have been secondary to the ripple effect of the elections, however imperfect, held by Palestinians and Iraqis in January, and the open, messy but still invigorating political jockeying among those peoples after the balloting.

"You can't dismiss the argument that the themes we're hearing from Washington are helping to cause changes in the Middle East," a senior State Department official said. "But you have to give the main credit to the elections in Palestinian areas and in Iraq. The Iranians, the Syrians and the Iraqis have to be reacting to the elections."

By almost any measure, there is an unusual amount of turbulence throughout the Middle East right now, and administration experts are not sure whether all of it will work in the United States' favor.

Besides the situation in Egypt and Syria, Iran is engaging in increasingly serious negotiations with Britain, France and Germany over possible steps to dismantle what is suspected as a nuclear weapons program. The Bush administration remains undecided over a European request to join in the talks in a more direct way.

Many experts argue that there is not much time to test Iranian intentions. Some European diplomats say that if progress is not made quickly, Iran could walk away from the talks by the summer, resume uranium enrichment and other activities suspected of serving as a cover for making nuclear arms -- and blame the West for its actions.

There are other timelines measured in months that could also pose dangers.

Mideast Mix: New Promise of Democracy and Threat of Instability

In Iraq, which remains very unstable, a suicide bomber on Monday carried out the deadliest attack since the fall of Saddam Hussein, killing at least 122 people. Baghdad is having trouble forging a political consensus on a new government drawing together the victors in the election.

Indeed, American and Arab officials say that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice had to cancel plans to visit Iraq this week, in part because there was no government for her to meet. She did not want to meet with Iraqi politicians, including those from the interim government that still holds power, and send an unintended signal that the United States favored one group or another.

"There's a deadline for writing a constitution by November, and they aren't even ready to sit down and write," an American official said. "What was Condi Rice going to do in Iraq this week? We didn't even know who she was supposed to talk to. If she met with someone, it would be seen in Iraq as an endorsement."

Still another short timeline -- also driven by successful elections, this time by Palestinians -- is compelling the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, to assemble a credible security and political team in Gaza and parts of the West Bank before Israel starts its planned withdrawal of forces and settlers from those areas in July.

Ms. Rice will be in London on Tuesday for a meeting on Palestinian reform, with also hopes of getting several oil-producing Persian Gulf countries to come up with the \$400 million they have promised to support the process.

A measure of the volatility in the region occurred Monday when David F. Satterfield, a deputy assistant secretary of state for the Middle East, arrived in Beirut, Lebanon, only to find that the entire pro-Syrian government had resigned and thousands of people were out in the streets protesting Syrian influence.

Arab officials have attributed the changes in Egypt and Lebanon to internal forces rather than pressure from abroad, despite Washington's sense that it can claim credit for much of the change.

Ms. Rice, traveling to London, praised Mr. Mubarak for instituting a contested presidential election.

"Look, the United States has a clear agenda about political reform and democratization," Ms. Rice said. "It couldn't be clearer."

She said various leaders were beginning to understand that those issues were "going to be a part of our dialogue wherever we are and whenever we engage those countries."

But many experts fear that overdoing the pressure on Syria could backfire, with violent consequences like an assassination comparable to the one two weeks ago of the former Lebanese prime minister, Rafik Hariri.

"If the United States pushes Syria too far, it could end up losing the support of the Europeans or of other Arab countries," said an Arab diplomat, who noted that France had supported a lesser role for Syria in Lebanon but had rejected the American call to punish Hezbollah, the radical Shiite group in Lebanon backed by Syria and Iran.

Whatever happens, administration officials say Mr. Bush, Ms. Rice and their top aides are unlikely to back off now from their insistent demands that the Muslim world, and indeed Russia and China and other less-than-democratic governments, do more to allow for the exercise of freedoms in their midst.

On Monday, for example, it was widely noticed at the State Department that a new acting assistant secretary of state in charge of the Middle East took up her duties on her first day in office: Elizabeth Cheney, daughter of Vice President Dick Cheney and a longtime advocate of reforms, particularly women's rights, in the region.

In the first Bush term, Ms. Cheney was in charge of the Middle East Partnership Initiative, which channeled money to reform efforts. Now she is the principal deputy in the department that oversees the region, and the acting director of the department because there is a vacancy in the No.1 job.

"Liz Cheney has made it clear the importance she attaches to reform in the region," a colleague said. "She's going to play a prominent role in setting benchmarks for the kind of changes that the administration is looking for."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo: Opposition demonstrators waved Lebanese flags in Beirut yesterday during a celebration after the Syrian-backed government resigned. (Photo by Hussein Malla/Associated Press)

Load-Date: March 1, 2005

End of Document

Roger Franklin: Dollars dry up for IRA

The New Zealand Herald

March 19, 2005 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; World

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Body

As Irish-Americans like everyone to know, they love having something to celebrate - one reason why, when New York's sons of Erin marched up Fifth Avenue to mark St Patrick's Day, it was just possible to wander through the crowd and believe that the merrymakers were aware that this year, for the first time in a long time, there was something truly worth toasting.

It wasn't the lapel pins urging strangers to "Kiss Me, I'm Oirish" that brought a hopeful smile. And certainly not the spirit of a tribal get-together that manifests itself, year after year, in the plastic ectoplasm of souvenir dealers' hearts and shamrocks.

Not the green beer, either, nor even the red-haired toddlers, all freckles and snub noses, done up as leprechauns - although as the upcoming generation of Irish-Americans, those kids perhaps stand to gain the most from the watershed change of heart that the past few months have witnessed.

Finally, after at least a century and a half of revering half-truths and starry-eyed lies about brave rebels and perfidious Albion, Irish-Americans may just be prepared to acknowledge that the murderous realities of the land their forefathers fled demand a little more insight than can be gleaned from romantic tunes about the men behind the wire.

And more importantly, to admitting the role Americans have played in making sure Belfast's body count continued to grow.

Actually, the most encouraging indication of a break with the past was to be found not in New York, but in an empty chair in Senator Teddy Kennedy's office in Boston, a few hundred kilometres to the north. That was where, up until this year, visiting Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams could count on holding court as an honoured guest.

But not this week. This time Senator Ted slammed the door in Adams' face, told him to take a hike and not to return until the IRA, of which Sinn Fein is the political arm, honoured its 1998 promise to lay down the guns.

It is almost unthinkable that it could have happened, that the Democrat elder who represents the largest and most assertive Irish-American constituency in the country, should side with bitter enemy George W. Bush, who cancelled Adams' customary invitation to the White House.

But happen it did, and the consequences of both men's decisions could help to liberate Northern Ireland from its addiction to violence - and Irish-Americans from the curse and corruption of their own sympathetic myths, for it has long been a basic truth that Irish Catholics fire the bullets Americans pay for.

Roger Franklin: Dollars dry up for IRA

The classic example: at the turn of the last century, the world's first practical submarine was designed and built in New York by a former Christian Brother from Galway, John Phillip Holland, who wanted it shipped across the Atlantic and unleashed against the Royal Navy.

The vessel never left the States because of feuding among the emigre leaders, who fell out over control of the nickel-and-dime donations of "gullible scullery maids", as one contemporary commentator put it. But the audacity of the ambition that inspired Holland's "Fenian Ram" still testifies to America's enduring role as the IRA's most lucrative source of financial and moral support.

They still raise money today at Irish bars and shindigs, although only a portion of it actually reaches its destination, according to the FBI.

The G-men should know, since for almost 20 years their Boston office turned a blind eye to the scams of Irish mob boss, serial killer and confidential informant "Whitey" Bulger.

As a series of court cases and congressional hearings have revealed, South Boston's now-fugitive crime tsar would collect millions, load a few cases of old guns on a trawler and send them off to Ireland - but only after telling the coastguard where to intercept it. The donations Bulger didn't spend vanished into his own pocket.

A lot of those American dollars do get through, of course. But now, thanks to Kennedy's political bravery in rejecting Adams, the killers' cash flow may become just a little harder to sustain.

As New York's pro-Adams Irish Echo lamented in an editorial, "American officialdom and significant sections of Irish-America, outraged at recent developments, have been abandoning the republican movement."

A Pittsburg newspaper explained why: Irish-Americans, some at any rate, are finally recognising the IRA as "a Hibernian Hezbollah run by godfathers in green".

Chief among those "recent developments" was the January slaying in a Belfast bar of Robert McCartney, and the stink over the cover-up that his sisters and fiancée lay at the feet of the IRA.

The "people power" campaign they launched at home hasn't brought the killers to justice, but it achieved something almost as significant by banishing Gerry Adams from the inner circle of American political influence.

Instead of seeing Adams, both Bush and Kennedy met instead with the McCartney women, whose presence "in Washington on this St Patrick's Day", as the Massachusetts senator noted, "sends a very powerful signal that it's time for the IRA to fully decommission, end all criminal activity and cease to exist as a paramilitary organisation."

St Patrick's Day in New York can often end in a hangover, so while the signs are hopeful, it's still too early to bet that American sympathies will evaporate entirely.

At an Irish fraternal dinner, for example, the head of the NYPD patrolmen's union, Patrick Lynch, fawned over Adams, the guest of honour.

What he said of the Ulster cops trying to solve the McCartney murder was little short of obscene: "I don't consider them police officers. They are soldiers who are trying to keep our people down."

This year, though, his remarks drew only muted applause.

Later, when Irish-American rock band Black 47 did a St Patrick's Day gig at a downtown club, the crowd sang lustily along with songs about rebel glory, IRA martyrs and the purity of the "fanatic heart". Nobody rattled the cup for the IRA, however.

From the big signs of change in Boston and Washington to smaller ones in a New York club, there is at last reason to hope that the venerable American inclination to give butchers the benefit of the doubt is finally and mercifully subsiding.

Roger Franklin: Dollars dry up for IRA

And on St Patrick's Day, that was definitely worth a toast.

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End of Document

Israel attacks Beirut airport

Guardian.com

July 13, 2006

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theguardian

Length: 1669 words

Highlight: Welcome to the Wrap, Guardian Unlimited's digest of the best of the day's papers

Body

BREAKING NEWS: Israel announced it was imposing an air and sea blockade on Lebanon today, as fighter planes bombed Beirut's international airport in Israel's biggest military campaign against the country since the 1982 invasion

LEVY ARREST TURNS SPOTLIGHT ON BLAIR

The papers sniff blood this morning - Lord Levy's, of course, but also Tony Blair's. The Daily Mail is certain that the PM will shortly be hauled in by detectives investigating the "cash-for-peerages" affair.

"Police rules require those arrested to be fingerprinted and provide a DNA sample, although Scotland Yard refused to confirm that [Lord Levy] had been subjected to this indignity," reports the paper, with relish.

Labour's chief fundraiser and Middle East envoy was released last night without charge. "He vigorously denies any wrongdoing," his spokesman said.

"I am sure I speak for millions when I say that it is high time that the fuzz moved in on the Blairite high command, and they might as well start with his tennis partner," opines Boris Johnson.

"What a fall, what hubris," says the Mail, which no longer hesitates to nickname him Lord Cashpoint. A source tells the paper that the peer "knows where the bodies are buried" and will not hesitate to bring down others with him.

David Blunkett led a government fightback yesterday, suggesting that the police were trying to intimidate MPs. The Independent poo-poops that notion. "Let no one be in any doubt about how close [Lord Levy and Mr Blair] are ... Much though he would like to, Mr Blair cannot distance himself from this affair. If Lord Levy is eventually charged with selling honours, there will inevitably be questions about whose authority he was acting on. ... Whether or not charges are to follow, however, we already know enough about the Labour loans affair to conclude that it was a sleazy and disreputable business. Why else would these transactions be kept secret, not just from the general public but from the Labour party treasurer?"

The Guardian's Jonathan Freedland says Lord Levy should not become the fall guy if the affair escalates. "In the routine descriptions of him as a 'flamboyant north London businessman' many in Britain's Jewish community have long detected old-fashioned prejudice ... Levy has been a convenient personification of what is, in fact, a wider phenomenon: a New Labour weakness for corporate power. Whether it was the willingness to take Bernie

Israel attacks Beirut airport

Ecclestone's cash or the sweet deals granted in the name of the public finance initiative, this Labour government has displayed a wide-eyed eagerness to cosy up to big money that has no precedent. We've seen it again in John Prescott's desperation to make nice with the US casino tycoon Philip Anschutz. This is a defect of New Labour itself; it is lazy to make Levy the scapegoat for it."

* Honours scandal reaches No 10

* Jonathan Freedland

* Mail: Police quiz Blair next

* Telegraph: Boris Johnson

ISRAEL BOMBS BEIRUT AIRPORT AS BATTLE WIDENS

"It's war, says Israel," splashes the Times - a verdict that was pretty much confirmed when the Wrap arrived at the office this morning to find that Israeli rockets had struck a runway at Beirut airport and the Palestinian foreign ministry in Gaza. (Apologies for the consequent delay in writing the Wrap.) Israel has since imposed an air and sea blockade on Lebanon.

Hizbullah guerillas captured two Israeli soldiers yesterday and killed eight more, setting off a dramatic escalation of the tension in the region. "Ehud Olmert, the prime minister, his generals and cabinet ministers emerged from an emergency session last night promising a 'severe response' to the worst, and most complex, crisis facing the new Israeli government," reports the Times. "Israel held Lebanon responsible for the plight of the abducted soldiers." The overnight strikes are the most serious since Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982.

* Israel attacks Beirut airport

* Times: How Israel was pulled back into Lebanon

NATWEST WITNESS HAD MADE EARLIER SUICIDE BID

In what the FT calls a "tragic twist" to the furore surrounding the extradition of the "Nat West three", a banker who was due to give evidence in their trial was found dead in woods near Chingford, east London, yesterday. "Police sources said that there was no evidence of foul play and detectives said that he had attempted suicide before," reports the Times - but the paper says Neil Coulbeck had been "hounded" by FBI investigators.

Meanwhile, the "three" are due to fly to the United States today where they face months or even years on remand awaiting trial unless granted bail. "There is not a lot of point taking a big suitcase because it will just get lost in transit," one of them tells the Telegraph. "And I will have to change into the regulation boiler suit at the other end."

The Telegraph has led calls for Tony Blair to intervene in the case and prevent their extradition. The Mail breaks ranks with an article by Edward Heathcoat Amory: "WHY I HAVE NO SYMPATHY FOR THESE THREE SHARKS ... Rarely has more influence been deployed in such an unworthy cause ... The truth is they were sharp, well-paid merchant bankers ... alleged to have persuaded Greenwich NatWest to sell its stake in a Cayman Islands investment company at a knockdown price to a small, independent company controlled by [Enron's finance director, Andrew Fastow]. Shortly afterwards, the three men left NatWest. The minute they were out the door, they bought shares in Fastow's company which now controlled the NatWest assets. Shortly after that, Fastow sold the business to his own firm, Enron, for more than ten times what NatWest had been paid. The three Britons each netted USD2.3m which they argued was perfectly legitimate. Fastow filled his boots as well."

* FT: Witness dies as trio face extradition

* Telegraph: 'Three' begin journey

FERTILITY ACT OPENS IVF DOOR TO LESBIANS

Israel attacks Beirut airport

"IVF: no father will be required," says the Telegraph on its front page, with less disapproval than one might expect. The news that lesbians and single women will gain the right to obtain fertility treatment when the Fertilisation and Embryology Act is updated is, the Times suggests, long overdue.

"In a world where a father's presence cannot be guaranteed, it may seem discriminatory to bar single or lesbian women from fertility treatment," a researcher in medical ethics tells the paper. "But the deeper moral question remains: should fatherlessness be something a mother deliberately chooses? This is difficult to answer, which may suggest that trying to embed an answer in fertility law is futile."

The revised act will also ban parents from deliberately choosing to have a boy or a girl and will set out the circumstances in which screening for medical conditions would be acceptable.

* Times: Fathers are out of the picture

ZIDANE'S EXCUSE: I'M A MAN

Zinedine Zidane did not actually say "Je ne regrette rien" yesterday - he said "Je ne peux pas regretter mon geste" - but the papers can't resist splashing the phrase across their back pages.

The French footballer refused to divulge exactly what Marco Materazzi said to him to provoke the infamous head-butt. But he did say the Italian had not called him a terrorist.

"They were things that are very serious. The words were very personal and they concerned my mother and my sister You hear them once and you feel bad. You hear it twice. Then you hear it a third time ... I'm a man, and I'm telling you that I would rather have been punched in the face than have heard those words. But I heard them, and I reacted." Nonetheless, he added, the reaction was unforgivable and set a bad example to children.

Wayne Rooney, wearing a bemused but benign expression, is pictured on the front of the Sun. "WAZZA HAZZA WOBBLA ... Gloomy Wayne Rooney mopes on a boat - as Man United insist World Cup winker Cristiano Ronaldo will STAY as his Old Trafford team-mate." His fiancée Coleen McLoughlin places a loving hand on his forehead.

* No regrets from Zidane

* Sun: Wazza hazza wobble

BITING INSECTS AND DRIBBLING NOVELISTS

"Britain is in the grip of an army ...," opens the Daily Mail, "of biting insects. ... Mosquitoes are leading the attack." It emerges that mosquitoes prefer type O blood from humans, which explains a great deal about the Wrap's holidays. "Also making the most of the good weather are ants, ticks and horseflies.

"The horsefly lies in the shade, waiting for prey to pass by. Active during daylight and particularly during hot weather, horseflies slash their way through the skin with mouth-parts shaped like miniature knives. Only the females bite, licking up the blood as it seeps from the wound" Feeling unwell yet?

The Times turns its attention to the Bulwer-Lytton fiction contest, which challenges writers to produce the worst opening line for a novel. Jim Guigli won: "Detective Bart Lasiter was in his office studying the light from his one small window falling on his super burrito when the door swung open to reveal a woman whose body said 'you've had your last burrito for a while', whose face said angels did exist, and whose eyes said she could make you dig your own grave and lick the shovel clean."

A runner-up was Bill McIver: "A single sparkling tear fell from Little Mary's cheek onto the sidewalk, then slid into the storm drain, there to join in its course the mighty waters of the Los Angeles River and, eventually, Long Beach Harbour, with its state-of-the-art container-freight processing facilities."

* Literary geniuses with a dash of the wrong stuff

Israel attacks Beirut airport

COMING UP ON GUARDIAN UNLIMITED TODAY

Latest news on the escalating crisis in Lebanon at guardian.co.uk/israel

The senior policeman leading inquiries into the cash-for-honours affair will brief MPs on the progress of the investigation.

For the first time since the invasion of Iraq, Britain today handed back to the Iraqis responsibility for security in one of the country's 18 provinces.

International development secretary Hilary Benn will publish a White Paper setting out the priorities of the government's aid policy for the next five years.

Load-Date: July 13, 2006

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Mideast Parley Takes Ugly Turn At Columbia U.

New York Sun (Archive)

February 4, 2005 Friday

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Section: FRONT PAGE; Pg. 1

Length: 1114 words

Byline: By SOL STERN and FRED SIEGEL, Special to the SunSol Stern is writing "Israel without Apology" for Encounter Books. Fred Siegel is the author of the forthcoming "Prince of the City: Giuliani, New York, and the Genius of American Life," also from Encounter Books.

Body

You might think that Columbia University would be on its best academic behavior on the issue of the Middle East conflict these days. After all, several professors in the Department of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures, known as MEALAC, are credibly accused of anti-Semitism and intimidating pro-Israel students. The university's president, Lee Bollinger, has appointed a committee to look into the charges. But even with the media spotlight on, Columbia apparently can't help itself.

Last Monday night we attended a university panel on the Middle East conflict titled "One State or Two? Alternative Proposals for Middle East Peace." Even the panel's title was a giveaway that we were in for more anti-Israel bias on campus. The "one state" solution is a euphemism for the destruction of the Jewish state - a trope of the most extreme rejectionist elements within the Palestinian movement and their allies in Syria and Iran. Terrorist groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah want to create an Islamic Republic in place of Israel. A few splinter Marxist groups such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, founded by George Habash, offer the Jews a solution that's far more "progressive." They murder innocents merely to replace Israel with a "secular democratic" Palestine.

The scene at Columbia, with Spartacists handing out literature outside the packed auditorium and proponents of Palestinian military victory in the vast majority, was wildly at odds with the hopeful development on the ground, where Messrs. Sharon and Abbas are now scheduled to meet. One of the panelists was Mark Cohen, a Princeton historian of medieval Islam. He gave a measured scholarly presentation on the subject of Arab Muslim anti-Semitism, insisting that attacks on Jews in the Koran had little to do with hostility to Jews. It's a debatable proposition. But professor Cohen never even engaged the issue at hand. He largely served as a prop for the ranting to follow.

Rashid Khalidi, a Columbia professor whose recent book argues that Yasser Arafat was right to reject the best peace deal he had ever been offered, opening the way to four years of bloodshed, presented a tendentious argument for a one-state solution that strained to stay within the bounds of reasoned discourse.

Then Joseph Massad took the floor, and the floodgates of hatred opened wide. Mr. Massad is one of the MEALAC professors accused of demanding of one Israeli student, "How many Palestinians did you kill today?" At the forum, he used the phrase "racist Israeli state" more than two dozen times. He used seemingly universalist language of anti-racism to drive a fascist argument. Mr. Massad is so extreme that he argued that Arafat was in effect an Israeli collaborator for even talking about compromise.

Mideast Parley Takes Ugly Turn At Columbia U.

Whatever can be said of this rant, its "academic" content was hard to discern. But to judge by the applause he received, Mr. Massad was the star of the evening. Obviously, Mr. Massad, an acolyte of the dear departed George Habash, isn't worried about President Bollinger's panel, which includes three professors who have signed petitions demanding that all universities divest from Israel.

The final act of hatred came from the Israeli quisling "historian" Ilan Pappé, who has stated openly that his so-called scholarly work is an attempt to create a counter narrative to official Zionist historiography and to undermine the international legitimacy of the state of Israel. He bizarrely insisted that the destruction of Israel would pave the way for enhanced rights for women, and the feminist students in the audience cheered.

Instead of providing an alternative to hatred and extremism from both sides, this panel was a hate-fest masquerading as academic discourse. And this was no aberration attributable only to one misguided student group. In addition to Qanun, a Columbia Law School student group, the panel was cosponsored by the university chaplain, the Student Senate, and two of Columbia's most prestigious academic affiliates: the Middle East Institute, headed by professor Khalidi, and the School of International and Public Affairs. SIPA's dean, Lisa Anderson, was appointed by Mr. Bollinger to the committee looking into the charges against professor Massad - whose dissertation adviser she was.

Coming away from Monday night's hate panel and then looking at this tangled web of conflicts of interest within the university, we realized that the issue of misconduct in the classroom by one or two professors, important though it is, is dwarfed by a more fundamental question: How did a great institution of higher learning allow itself to be transformed into a platform for vicious political propaganda and hate speech directed against one country, Israel?

Surely one crucial moment in this transformation was Columbia's decision to raise \$4 million - including a contribution from the United Arab Emirates - to create the Edward Said endowed chair in Arab studies, and then to give the prize to professor Khalidi. We don't doubt that Mr. Khalidi has academic credentials. Compared to professors Massad and Pappé, he is a model of decorum and moderation. But when Columbia academic officials made this choice they knew they were getting a Palestinian political activist. From 1976 to 1982, Mr. Khalidi was a director in Beirut of the official Palestinian press agency, WAFA. Later he served on the PLO "guidance committee" at the Madrid peace conference.

In bringing professor Khalidi to Morningside Heights from the University of Chicago, Columbia also got itself a twofer of Palestinian activism and advocacy. Mr. Khalidi's wife, Mona, who also served in Beirut as chief editor of the English section of the WAFA press agency, was hired as dean of foreign students at Columbia's SIPA, working under Dean Anderson. In Chicago, the Khalidis founded the Arab American Action Network, and Mona Khalidi served as its president. A big farewell dinner was held in their honor by AAAN with a commemorative book filled with testimonials from their friends and political allies. These included the left wing anti-war group Not In My Name, the Electronic Intifada, and the ex-Weatherman domestic terrorists Bernadine Dohrn and Bill Ayers. (There were also testimonials from then-state Senator Barack Obama and the mayor of Chicago.)

The message sent by Columbia University officials by this choice was that they were determined to honor the memory of Edward Said by continuing to have radical Palestinian activism on campus. That's what they now have in spades. The question is whether it's now possible within the university's public space to even make an argument for the only democratic country in the Middle East.

Load-Date: February 4, 2005

Killing glorified

Ottawa Citizen

July 31, 2006 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A9

Length: 185 words

Byline: Albert M. Jabara, The Ottawa Citizen

Body

Re: First you cut Hezbollah off, then you kill it, July 29.

I have no problem with freedom of speech or with columnist David Warren's opinions about Hezbollah.

However, I do have a problem with the Citizen allowing Mr. Warren to glorify the destruction of more than 70 per cent of Lebanon's infrastructure.

I have no doubt that Mr. Warren has already seen fragmented Lebanese civilian bodies, mostly children, women and elders, constantly flashed on TV screens. Yet Mr. Warren seems to lack all six human senses since he is not moved by the civilian death toll throughout Lebanon. Mr. Warren brings decisive and targeted shame to all Canadians.

As a human being, I suffer for all losses of life, regardless of creed, race or colour. I am, however, surprised that Jews and Arabs still have not realized that, by the end of every war, both sides will have suffered destruction and civilian casualties and the enemies of the Middle East will have added more scores to their bulletin boards.

I am certain Mr. Warren does not represent all Canadians with his warped views on the killing of civilians.

Albert M. Jabara,

Ottawa

Load-Date: July 31, 2006

Stay in touch

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

July 19, 2006 Wednesday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; Stay in Touch; Pg. 16

Length: 1191 words

Byline: Damien Murphy and Lisa Pryor

Body

Verdict is in: we're pretty, but vacuous

"SYDNEY is like its women, beautiful, sunny, but materialistic, superficial and empty - step away from the sparkling quay and, within metres, the magic has gone. Just like its people."

Harsh but fair, perhaps. That is the view of a man calling himself Julian, contributing yesterday to a debate about whether Sydney really is rude, self-obsessed and vacuous. The debate on www.smh.com.au was also joined by an Irishman calling himself Gary who had equally harsh things to say.

"I visited from Dublin recently, and just found that a lot of people strut about like they're in Milan," he says.

"Many of the nightclubs were filled with egotistical celebrity wannabes, who would gladly shove in front of you at the bar or give you a dirty stare for glancing at their \$200 shirt."

Of course, not everyone agrees. "Mandy" defended Sydneysiders, saying they were simply sick of docile tourists blocking city streets, holding up bus drivers and generally acting dopey.

"Look at a map before you leave your hotel room. Get out your wallet to pay before the bus arrives. These are all just plain commonsense things to do. We're not rude at all. You're just bloody stupid!!!"

An own goal for Mandy.

VINTAGE WHINE

On the topic of bitching: Why, oh why are whingers not given the credit they deserve? We are sick to death of people who mock the writing of letters of complaint, a pastime that keeps retirees and newspaper letters pages busy.

Thankfully, a New York artist has seen fit to give complainants their own pantheon. Reuters reports that Matthew Bakkom has created a tabloid newspaper called The New York Museum of Complaint, which is being distributed around the city's parks. On its pages can be found fine examples of whining, dating back to 1751.

Exhibit 1: A letter from the president of the Citizens' Progressive League, circa 1900, complaining how New Yorkers are just so damn showy.

Stay in touch

"The only thing purely 'American' that I can find in New York City, after many years' search, is the abnormally developed spirit of money-getting."

Exhibit 2: A 1935 letter from a lover of the city's demimondaines, demanding law reform so that "girls in the burlesque shows in New York would be allowed to display their charms without more interference of the police."

MOVING CANDIDATE

The urge to be a local that affects politicians and their voters has claimed another victim: the Pittwater electorate Liberal hopeful Rob Stokes sold his Seaforth home in the electorate of Manly on Saturday and on Monday declared his Pittwater candidacy.

As a "tourist", Paul Nicolaou last year beat Stokes to Liberal preselection and went down to the independent Alex McTaggart in the byelection that followed John Brogden's resignation. Deluded Liberals like to think Nicolaou's defeat was because he came from Lane Cove, not because some in the party hierarchy trashed Brogden.

Stokes appears cut from the same cloth that Liberal strategists believe goes down well on the Northern Beaches: he's a lifesaver and an active churchgoer.

Labouring under the twin burdens of a deep religious commitment and a shallow political commitment, Stokes was also torn between God and Mammon on Saturday, and was quoted in his local newspaper saying that if he did not sell the house, he would take it as a sign not to stand.

DA PREZ ON DA MIKE

Was George Bush letting his inner cowboy run free? Maybe he thought he was the lead rapper in a hip-hop group called ToneDubya performing at the G8 summit meeting in Russia.

Hard to know which voice the US President was using when a private exchange (pictured left) with the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, was picked up by open microphone.

Bush: Yo, Blair. How are you doing?

Blair: I'm just ...

Bush: You're leaving?

Blair: No, no, no, not yet. On this trade thingy ... [inaudible].

Chewing on a bread roll, Bush moved on to the Middle East: "See, the irony is that what they need to do is get Syria to get Hezbollah to stop doing this shit, and it's over."

Running the world? It's a piece of cake.

MASTER CRAFTSMAN

Tim Patch, of the Tweed Coast and the self-styled world's first penile artist, is the star turn at next week's 10th-anniversary Sydney Sexpo.

Patch first attracted attention for his unusual brushwork at an exhibition in Perth last May. For Sydney, he has turkey slapped up a painting of John Howard and Peter Costello to help publicise next week's Sexpo at the Horden Pavilion. Patch has also been working hard on portraits of Clover Moore and Fred Nile to ensure maximum coverage.

Hope he remembers to wash his hands after work.

CITY BREATHES SWEETLY

Stay in touch

Another day, another survey. In an era when there are prizes for all, Brisbane has proved itself the best at having the worst breath in the country.

The chewing gum company Wrigley carried out random breath tests on 2300 Australians in five capital cities and found Melbourne had the sweetest breath, followed by Adelaide, Sydney, Perth and Brisbane. A breakdown of the findings also found that 61 per cent of Brisbane men had bad breath. And 24 per cent of men overall had an excellent breath rating, compared with 22 per cent of women.

And the pitch? Wrigley said the survey confirmed fresh breath was vital to social intercourse and 77 per cent of Australians chewed gum to breathe life into their intercourse.

SCREEN TIME

Collette Dinnigan won't be showing on the Paris spring runways in October, but she is about to be all over Australian television screens.

The Herald's fashion writer, Patty Huntington, reports that Dinnigan recently filmed a TV commercial in Sydney for American Express, with two upwardly mobile Australian models, Tallulah Morton, 14, and Alexandra Agoston-O'Connor, 18, in Dinnigan's trademark embellished evening wear.

Dinnigan is only the second Australian, after the actor Anthony LaPaglia, to feature in an American Express campaign. Dinnigan, who has just announced she won't show in Paris, has opted for a New York showroom instead.

Hayes ties a new knot

ONE door closes, another opens. Last week Darren Hayes, the former Savage Garden frontman, parted ways with his Australian label, Sony BMG. This week he has announced he has married his British boyfriend, Richard Cullen.

Hayes, who wed his university sweetheart, Colby Taylor, in 1995 and separated in 1999, has pirouetted around the question of gaydom for a while.

In May, several Australian gay publications pondered the question in interviews with the singer. He even stayed mum about the marriage on the Ten Network's Rove Live last month.

"I very rarely make comments about my private life," Hayes said on his website. "On June 19th, 2006, I married my boyfriend of two years, Richard, in a civil partnership ceremony in London. I can honestly say it was the happiest day of my life."

Observant concertgoers could have seen a gold ring on Hayes's wedding finger when he performed at the Opera House on July 4 and 5.

The singer indirectly dissed the Howard Government's opposition to same-sex marriage, saying: "I feel lucky to live in an era where my relationship can be considered legally legitimate and I commend the UK Government for embracing this very basic civil liberty."

Load-Date: July 17, 2007

Evacuees: Scots who made it home describe scenes of horror and families torn apart

Scotland on Sunday

July 23, 2006, Sunday

1 Edition

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Section: Pg. 15

Length: 1135 words

Byline: RICHARD GRAY

Body

WITH the drone of every plane overhead, nursery school teacher Joumana Itani cowered involuntarily, fearful that the next falling bomb would hit her house.

Outside in upper Beirut she could see the choking black smoke rising up from the burning buildings and fuel stores. Although two miles from the worst of the destruction, a bitter, metallic taste hung in the air.

Just a few days before, Itani, 26, from Coupar Angus, Perthshire, had been meeting with the parents and children who would attend her nursery school class in the Lebanese capital next term. She was looking forward to flying back to Scotland to see her mother Christine over the summer holidays.

But by early last week, the normally bustling and vibrant Beirut streets were eerily quiet. Itani had become one of thousands of British citizens who found themselves holed up in basements and shelters around Lebanon after Israel began bombarding the country twelve days ago in a bid to wipe out **Hezbollah** militants. For Itani, the rapid escalation of fighting that followed was terrifying.

"As the week went on it got worse," she said. "I was supposed to be flying home on the Sunday, July 16, but then the airport got bombed so I couldn't get out.

"One of the worst things was that, because of the extensiveness of the bombing, the streets were quiet and there were no planes going in and out of the airport.

"It meant that whenever I heard a plane, I thought I was going to be bombed. There was incredible tension and people were just scared to be out."

Itani, whose father Hisham, 57, is Lebanese, started working in Lebanon as a nursery nurse a year and a half ago after being offered a job while out visiting relations for a holiday.

Her mother and father had fled Beirut with their children during the civil war in 1978, but over the years the family had regularly gone back to visit.

Itani said: "It is such a beautiful country and a wonderful place to live. It has a very socialising culture as the people are so friendly there. If I had the opportunity and it was peaceful I would go back tomorrow."

Evacuees: Scots who made it home describe scenes of horror and families torn apart

But within the course of a week, Itani has seen the culture and country she loved torn apart by wave after wave of bombs and missiles.

Both her father and her brother Nouredine, 32, were also in Beirut when the bombing started.

Speaking from her home in Coupar Angus last night, Itani described the devastation that had been caused by the Israeli onslaught.

"You could hear the bombs falling, see the smoke and feel the ground shaking. My aunt's sister's house has been completely destroyed. Fortunately she managed to get out with her two-month-old baby.

"It is indiscriminate and unbelievable. The news broadcasts there are showing some truly horrible scenes of buildings destroyed and bodies of women, children and men. There was one picture of a child being held up with their intestines spilling out."

Afraid of venturing out of the relative safety of the neighbourhood where she lived, Itani made only short trips to nearby shops in a bid to find food.

With the transport infrastructure in Lebanon in tatters, prices of even simple food such as bread and milk have tripled.

Itani spent most of the past week frantically trying to get through to the British embassy in Beirut for word of how she could escape.

More than 25,000 foreign nationals have been evacuated from Lebanon, with 2,800 Britons taken on Royal Navy warships to Cyprus.

Yesterday, the last day of evacuations of British citizens, there were believed to be another 2,200 hoping to leave.

Some 22,000 Britons were in Lebanon when the bombing began, about 10,000 with dual nationality.

But Itani made the agonising decision to leave her father and brother behind, when they decided to stay and help look after their relations there.

Itani said: "It was extremely difficult to get through to the embassy - they didn't have enough people on the phones and the lines were constantly busy. I was registered with the embassy but when I asked my mum to check with the foreign office they said they didn't have any record of me.

"When I managed to get through they said if I could make it to the port then I could get on a boat on Wednesday. We were told to bring as much as we could carry so I took my laptop and backpack.

"You just didn't know what was happening."

On board HMS Gloucester, the sailors took great care of the traumatised evacuees. Some even played with exhausted children to keep them occupied during the journey to Cyprus.

"People were talking about what they had been through. A lot of them were tourists who had arrived just as the fighting started. They couldn't believe they were having to be evacuated.

"I can't praise the sailors enough. They gave up their bunks for us and entertained us. They made the journey absolutely amazing."

Itani arrived back in Coupar Angus late on Friday night after a gruelling 40-hour journey and little sleep over the past week. Yesterday, in her father's absence, she opened the clothing shop her family own in the town.

But she fears it will be a long time before she recovers from the nightmare of the past fortnight and still fears for the safety of her father, brother and their relatives in Lebanon.

Evacuees: Scots who made it home describe scenes of horror and families torn apart

She said: "There are going to be a lot of people suffering from post-traumatic stress in Lebanon. Although I had minimal exposure to the horror there, I am suffering from it and I'm going to see a counsellor next week.

"Aeroplanes are going overhead and I'm cowering in the corner thinking, 'Oh my God, I'm going to be bombed', even though I know I am safe.

"My dad has got brothers, uncles and aunts and cousins there so he has stayed to look after everyone. But I am very worried for them and we haven't been able to get through on the phone.

"I don't want another generation of children in that country to grow up not knowing how to play. The people of my age missed out on their childhood as they were children of the war. It was too dangerous for them to play on the streets. I don't want that to happen again."

Nursing education consultant Morag McCormick, who was helping to train Palestinian nurses in Lebanon, was also evacuated from Beirut last week, arriving home on Thursday night.

Now safe with her husband Robin, 66, at their home in Edinburgh's Newington area, her thoughts have turned to the Lebanese friends and colleagues she left behind.

"One person I knew was getting married," she said. "There were people finishing university, there were exams going on. Someone else had a brother coming back from working abroad and was bringing his new wife to meet the family.

"The bombing felt like it was really close. The shelves in my apartment rattled every time there was a bang and there was this terrible metallic taste on the lips.

"When I think about the people I knew over there, it is saddening. There were families being torn apart."

Load-Date: July 24, 2006

Be grateful to those who sacrificed for freedom in WWII

St. Petersburg Times (Florida)

May 22, 2005 Sunday

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Section: PERSPECTIVE; Pg. 2P; Newspaper

Length: 1182 words

Series: YOUR LETTERS

Body

Re: Noble myths of war, by Geoffrey Wheatcroft, May 15.

I am a World War II veteran. Geoffrey Wheatcroft sounds somewhat like many children born after World War II, with a liberal college education, who now pontificate with great selective misinformation.

Most of those children fail to appreciate the honor or nobility of those willing to give their all for freedom. Yes, we made mistakes. Our Sherman tanks, submarines and other war materiel were inferior. Many of our generals and admirals tried to run the war like it was World War I, and our GIs paid for it all.

Had Adolf Hitler and the Germans waited and continued the development of missile systems and atomic bombs instead of invading Poland, they could have overwhelmed us. Germany was far ahead of us while we were sitting in our "peace-at-any-price" position.

Please don't give me your sob-sister story about bombing Germany or, for that matter, the atom bomb for Japan. What we did was child's play compared to what their troops did when they viciously slaughtered millions of helpless men, women and children all over the world.

I offer Geoffrey Wheatcroft this suggestion: Find a private place, get down on your knees and be truly thankful for the Americans who willingly gave their all so you can live in freedom.

I have not agreed with any of the wars that followed mine because I never saw the threat we faced in World War II. God bless each and every man or woman who came to our country's calling. We have no business being the world's police. If we "must" go to war, go to war to win, no matter what or how - or don't go!

Al Brown, St. Petersburg

Methadone use and abuse

I want to sincerely thank the St. Petersburg Times for its informative and well-researched article on drug overdoses and deaths due to methadone (Methadone overdoses in Florida: "Safe" drug a leading killer, May 15). Lisa Greene's objective reporting may well save lives. The fact that methadone is being prescribed more and more for pain, often by physicians who know little about the pharmacology of the drug, is indeed frightening.

Be grateful to those who sacrificed for freedom in WWII

I have worked hard over recent years, both nationally and in Florida, to get this word out - obviously, with little effect. Doctors who prescribe methadone for pain are to be commended for their efforts but must do more. Substance-abuse evaluations and drug screening should also be a part of treatment. I was at Gov. Jeb Bush's meeting on prescription abuse when he vowed to implement a registry for narcotic prescriptions. Unfortunately, the governor and state drug czar Jim McDonough have been unsuccessful to date in their efforts.

Methadone continues to be a valuable tool in fighting opiate dependence. As it takes lives when it is abused, it saves and restores lives when taken as prescribed. I only hope that the people who are responsibly treated with and benefiting from methadone are not further stigmatized.

Gary Wenner, vice president of methadone treatment services, Operation PAR, St. Petersburg

Drug needs greater regulation

Re: "Safe" drug a leading killer.

I am a licensed psychologist who has evaluated thousands of drug addicts for the criminal justice system and for disability. For nearly 20 years methadone users have come into my office for evaluations who were intoxicated and/or continuing to abuse drugs along with the methadone. Several years ago I alerted the office of the so-called "drug czar" about a very obvious problem. All I received back was a form letter defending the use of methadone, and saying that its use was backed by leading scientists.

One of my initial responses was that the scientists probably never saw an office patient "on the nod" in their entire life, and were probably looking at data from research studies. Nonetheless, I evaluated a patient just the other day to assist in his criminal case. This man's descent into breaking into his own parent's home to obtain goods to pawn was aided and abetted by methadone. When I told the man my beliefs he said that his mother would be glad to hear my views, as that is exactly what she thought.

Methadone is a scam. The problem will not improve until the state recognizes it as a problem, and has greater regulation of its use. Ultimately, it should be done away with, with research efforts directed to coming up with something better.

Michael S. Greenberg, Ph.D., licensed psychologist, Clearwater

Others hurt by flawed checks

Re: Faulty felon searches, May 15.

This editorial reveals much about the Times' perspective - rather unintentionally I suspect.

As an example, our National Instant Check System used to approve in-state firearm transfers has long inflicted the same sort of errors of identification upon legitimate purchasers of legal weapons as those listed in the editorial, such as false positives, duplicate names and bad data.

Despite the not-insubstantial difficulty, i.e., delays, rejections, etc., inflicted on buyers and sellers of legal firearms, I cannot remember ever seeing a Times editorial decrying the situation.

In contrast, during the past 12 months there have been numerous Times reports, opinion pieces and even lead editorials on the topic of incorrect data that potentially denies the rights of citizens legally seeking to cast their votes.

Since the perception regarding voter rights seems to focus on potentially disenfranchised African-Americans, who in recent elections have voted Democrat on a near 9-1 basis, perhaps it comes down to whose ox is being gored.

Be grateful to those who sacrificed for freedom in WWII

Jim Parker, Tampa

Headline heaviness

Headlines from the May 15 Times:

"Where is a sex offender to live?"

" 'Safe' drug a leading killer."

"Hezbollah grows in stature in Lebanon."

"Sugar returns as supermarket demon."

Gosh, this really made me feel wonderful! Then I felt even better when I turned to Section P to determine where to send this letter. Headlines there:

"Noble myths of war."

"Arafat, Inc."

"Klansmen+ sumo wrestlers = Freakonomics."

Isn't there any good news?

Walter Mitchell, Dunedin

Honesty in the face of illness

Re: The killer within, May 15.

I would like to thank Barry Bradley for his excruciatingly honest account of his illness. It's a scary proposition when a lay person has to self-diagnose. But physicians are not God. They are, in fact, practicing medicine. As Bradley said, no two people are alike and therefore no blanket detection or diagnosis is possible in medicine. Therefore, when we believe there is something wrong with us, we are our own best offense.

Bradley took his honesty to a plateau not usually aired in newspapers when he shared his obsession with his disease and how it has taken over every waking moment. His openness about his continuing to smoke also shed light on the addiction to one of the most powerful drugs, cigarettes. I'm rooting for his ability to quit.

What impressed me the most was the fact that he took full responsibility for his condition and didn't try to blame it on anyone else. This is most refreshing in today's world.

I hope young and old alike will read and heed Barry Bradley's words and take them to heart. My prayers are with him and his family.

Lynda Lippman-Lockhart, St. Petersburg

Load-Date: May 22, 2005

Letters to the Editor

Lincoln Journal Star (Nebraska)

May 19, 2005 Thursday

City Edition

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Section: B; Pg. 5

Length: 1183 words

Dateline: Lincoln, NE

Body

WEB ACCESS TROUBLING

Last Thursday I spent an hour (3 to 4 p.m.) at the Eiseley Branch Library. It's a lovely library with a hard-working and helpful staff, yet I left quite troubled.

While I've been to the library on several occasions, I used the Internet computer lab for the first time. The lab is a large room separated from the main hallway by a wall of windows looking in on the computer screens which line several long tables inside. Clearly posted on the door to the lab and atop every computer are signs stating that Internet users must be over 17 years of age or have parental consent and must be signed in. I signed in shortly after 3 and was assigned a computer in the middle of the back row.

Around 3:30 the lab began filling up, and I was aware of several children filtering in. Soon after, I glanced up from my work and onto a screen of graphic pornography two rows up and to the left. The boy on the Web page (about 12 or 13 years old) was just then calling over his friend to view the site with him. I felt ill and discreetly stepped out into the hall and over to the resource desk to confirm what I feared. The boys did have parental consent and so were free to use the unfiltered Internet access as they saw fit. I returned to the lab to gather my things and left to work, offline, in a different area of the library.

I understand the arguments on both sides of the filtered/unfiltered debate over Internet access in the Lincoln libraries. Yet, put yourself in the scene I just described. Is this what we want?

Kristin George, Weston

NO THREAT TO RELIGION

I was very saddened by Walt Hamilton's recent Community Column. I am constantly amazed at the lack of understanding of such a simple concept. "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Public schools, as an extension of the state, may not require students to engage in religious prayer. Students have the right to pray anytime, in school or out, but they may not coerce other students (or interrupt class). Valedictorians, in their commencement addresses, have the constitutional right of free speech to talk about their God, but they may not coerce others to pray.

Letters to the Editor

It might interest Hamilton to know that Jehovah's Witnesses are prohibited by their faith to salute the U.S. flag, which is considered a graven image and, as a result, were being expelled from schools that required it. The American Civil Liberties Union defended their religious freedom and stopped the discriminatory practice. The ACLU has, in fact, defended freedom of religion on many occasions.

I fail to see any threat to religion in public places. I see billboards everywhere with religious messages. I see religious services on television and hear religious talk shows on the radio. Local churches have been having Easter sunrise services at Indian Cave State Park. I have seen prayer vigils in front of City Hall. People may stand on street corners and pray. So far as I know, no person has been arrested for closing their eyes and bowing their heads in prayer or for making the sign of the cross.

While the state is restricted from placing religious monuments on state property, every resident or church may place the Ten Commandments or large crosses or other religious symbols on their own property. And why don't they do that instead of insisting that the state do it, unless they are really wanting state-sponsored religion which is against the Constitution?

Jan Chism Wright, Falls City

ISRAEL SEEKS ONLY PEACE

Fifteen-year journalism teacher Gregory L. Keller's recent interpretation of the Israeli/Palestinian turmoil calls for a response. It is to be hoped Keller's expressions in the classroom are more objective.

The modern state of Israel was established by the United Nations in 1948 subsequent to World War II and the Holocaust. Israel occupies less than 1/1,000th of the combined area of surrounding Arab nations, all of whom are unfriendly and wish to deny Israel's right to exist. Israel lives in a bad neighborhood.

Since its inception in 1948, Israel has known no peace, having been attacked and forced into at least seven wars and many skirmishes. Israel has not been the cause of Palestinian hardship (admittedly severe); tragically, the responsibility lies with the Palestinian leadership of Arafat and his cohorts. Consistently Israel offered "land for peace" just as it did when it gave Egypt the Negev (complete with an airfield, infrastructure, a military installation) in return for a peace agreement.

Former Israeli Prime Minister Barak offered more than 98 percent of the land Arafat "demanded" during negotiations. Arafat immediately rejected the offer, made no counteroffer, and promptly stormed out of the room, never to return. It was then obvious Arafat did not want peace; he wanted all of Israel as he had promised the Palestinians several times on Arab television.

Upon Arafat's passing and new Palestinian leadership, there is renewed hope for peace. The terrorist entities of Hamas and Hezbollah must cease training and encouraging suicide bombers who have killed, wounded and maimed thousands of Israelis in buses, shopping centers and crowded markets. The wall is to protect Israel's people. The first obligation of a nation is to protect its population. Is not the United States also working to protect its borders? Though Palestinians must pass through a checkpoint, they yet enter Israel daily.

Peace can be assured if Ariel Sharon meets with a sincere "peace partner." Israel desires peace on moral and financial grounds. It has no land aggrandizement desires.

It desires only to leave peacefully with its neighbors.

Yale Gotsdiner, Lincoln

START MAKING SENSE

I contacted Sen. Chuck Hagel about my opposition to Arctic drilling before the big vote took place. I told him, if he would have read my letter, that we should be telling people to carpool. But really, how absurd! Let's tell people to get to know their neighbors, find out where they work, and talk over some free-trade coffee on our way to work.

Letters to the Editor

I ended my letter with, "Please do not send me a generic letter telling me that you appreciate my thoughts on this matter but â?i " I told him that this is a waste of paper and government resources.

Yesterday, I received my generic letter from Sen. Hagel telling me that drilling in the Arctic is "A victory for common sense." Well, I'm the first to admit that I have no common sense, but for a senator to refer to my sense in a diminutive manner was a bit hard for me to handle.

Here's the point: I took the time to write Hagel a letter, and not only does he, or someone else working for him, not read my letter, but he insults me as well.

There is a huge education campaign taking place on the ills of smoking. Maybe we could do a common-sense campaign on carpooling, taking the bus or riding a bike.

But why stop there? I hear through the grapevine that a similar campaign may be needed to end something that no one wants to talk about - men's violence against women. Oh, but that would be absurd. I guess I just have no common sense.

Aaron Peeks, Lincoln

Load-Date: May 20, 2005

NEWS SUMMARY

The New York Times
March 9, 2005 Wednesday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 3; Metropolitan Desk; Pg. 2

Length: 1177 words

Body

INTERNATIONAL A3-14

Pro-Syrian Party in Beirut Holds a Huge Protest

Hundreds of thousands of Lebanese poured into central Beirut in a show of strength by the militant Muslim Shiite party **Hezbollah**, exposing fault lines of class and ideology in the struggle over withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon. A1

President Bush stepped up American pressure on Syria to withdraw from Lebanon and warned authoritarian governments throughout the Middle East that they stand before a powerful, fast-moving wave of democracy. A10

U.S. Lacks Intelligence on Iran

A commission due to report to President Bush this month will describe American intelligence on Iran as inadequate to allow firm judgments about that country's illicit weapons programs, according to people who have been briefed on the panel's work. A1

Chechen Rebel Leader Killed

Russian special forces killed the leader of Chechnya's separatists, Aslan Maskhadov, left, in a raid that gave the Kremlin a rare victory in a bloody war that has killed tens of thousands and spawned a wave of terrorist attacks across Russia in recent years. A3

Leader of Kosovo Surrenders

Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj of Kosovo unexpectedly agreed to surrender to the United Nations war crimes tribunal in The Hague, which said it had indicted him for actions as a guerrilla commander fighting Serbian forces during the 1998-99 war. Mr. Haradinaj's decision to step down and answer war crimes charges came as a shock in Kosovo, where he became prime minister in December. A14

Military Challenged on Incident

The Italian foreign minister publicly challenged the United States military's account of how American soldiers came to fire on a car taking a freed Italian hostage to the Baghdad airport. Hours later, the American command in Baghdad announced that it was opening a high-level investigation into the incident. A14

NEWS SUMMARY

Dominican Jail Fire Inquiry

The Dominican government has appointed a commission to investigate a deadly fire that killed 136 prisoners at a provincial jail east of Santo Domingo. A4

Bolton Confirmation Hurdles

Republicans and Democrats on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee cautioned against any expectation of a quick confirmation of John R. Bolton, an outspoken critic of the United Nations, as ambassador to that organization, but they did not suggest his nomination was in jeopardy. A6

Congress Rejects Resignation

Bolivia's Congress rejected President Carlos Mesa's offer to resign, giving him a new start after fierce protests had paralyzed the country and prompted him to tender his resignation. A14

NATIONAL A16-22

Clinton to Undergo Surgery For Fluid and Scar Tissue

Former President Bill Clinton will undergo surgery to remove fluid and scar tissue from his chest cavity, some six months after he had a quadruple bypass operation, Mr. Clinton and his doctors said. A1

DeLay Linked to Fund-Raising

Documents subpoenaed from an indicted fund-raiser for Tom DeLay suggest that he was more actively involved than previously known in gathering corporate donations for a political committee that is the focus of a grand-jury investigation in his home state, Texas. A1

G.O.P. Plans Maneuver on Oil

After years of watching Democrats block President Bush's plan to allow oil drilling in an Alaskan wildlife refuge, Senate Republicans say a legislative maneuver may allow them to push it through. A16

F.B.I. Scraps Computer Project

The Federal Bureau of Investigation declared an official end to its failed \$170 million effort to overhaul the agency's computer software and said it would take at least three and a half years to develop a new system. A16

Accuser's Kin Cross-Examined

In his most determined effort so far to undermine charges that Michael Jackson sexually abused a teenage boy at his ranch, the lead defense lawyer tried to poke holes in testimony by the boy's younger brother. A20

Bush Shift in Death-Row Cases

The Bush administration has shifted its position in a Supreme Court case with international significance, ordering state courts to consider complaints by 51 Mexican nationals held on death row that they were denied access to Mexican officials. A21

Lawyer Asked to Pass Message

A lawyer for Matthew Hale, the white supremacist convicted last year of plotting to kill a federal judge whose husband and mother were slain last week, said Mr. Hale's mother called him a few months ago and asked him to pass on an encoded message to one of Mr. Hale's supporters. A22

NEW YORK/REGION B1-8

U.S. Inquiry Blames City For Fatal Ferry Crash

A federal investigation into the fatal crash of a Staten Island ferry in 2003 issued a damning assessment of the City Department of Transportation, saying its oversight of the system was compromised by inadequate training and poor enforcement of basic safety rules. B1

NEWS SUMMARY

A Harsh Spotlight

A dispute between Christopher J. Christie, the United States attorney for New Jersey, and John A. Kaye, the prosecutor of Monmouth County, N.J., has cast a harsh spotlight on the career of Mr. Kaye. B1

Fewer Apply for Shelter

A new city policy to deny federal housing vouchers to homeless families is having its intended effect, city officials said, reducing the number of families applying for emergency shelter by 250 to 300 a month. B4

EDUCATION B9

SPORTSWEDNESDAY D1-6

ARTS E1-10

Morris Lapidus Work Destroyed

Heeding urgent pleas from preservation advocates, the city's Landmarks Preservation Commission agreed to hold a hearing on the future of the 1949 Paterson Silks retail building, designed by the architect Morris Lapidus, at Union Square. But it was too late. Hours earlier, the building's most distinctive feature, a double-height, glass-walled tower had fallen victim to the wrecking ball. E1

DINING OUT F1-12

OBITUARIES A23

George Atkinson

A businessman who popularized home-viewing of Hollywood films by opening the first video rental store in 1979, he was 69. A23

BUSINESS DAY C1-16

Bankruptcy Overhaul Near

The Senate assured final passage of the first major overhaul of the nation's bankruptcy laws in 27 years, clearing the remaining political obstacles to a measure that the nation's credit and retail industries have sought for years. A1

Silicon Valley Sweatshops

Electronic Arts, the video game maker, has become the focal point of raging debate over whether technology companies are exploiting workers by demanding long hours while skimping on overtime and benefits. C1

Concern Over Commodities

A closely watched index of commodities rose to a 24-year high as the prices of crude oil, home heating oil and copper neared their record highs. The stock market slumped and Treasury prices fell, sending yields higher. C1

Gucci Replaces Designer

Gucci announced that it was replacing its designer of women's apparel, Alessandra Facchinetti, after only her second collection. C1

Business Digest C1

EDITORIAL A24-25

NEWS SUMMARY

Editorials: The world according to Bolton; terror suspects' right to bear arms; virtues of optical scan voting; Kosovo's new chance.

Columns: Nicholas D. Kristof.

Crossword E6
TV Listings E9
Public Lives B2
Weather D7

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo

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End of Document

Two Views of Democracy for Iraqi Voters: Bullets and Ballots - Correction Appended

The New York Times
January 28, 2005 Friday
Late Edition - Final

Correction Appended

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Section: Section A; Column 4; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1; THE CONFLICT IN IRAQ: ELECTION DAY

Length: 1017 words

Byline: By JAMES GLANZ

Dateline: BASRA, Iraq, Jan. 27

Body

A convoy of flag-bedecked sedans and pickup trucks, packed with cheering campaigners, nosed its way through the this southern Iraqi city on Thursday, accompanied by a pop-music-style refrain, a paean to Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, the country's most important Shiite cleric.

Campaigning in much of Iraq is a furtive, life-threatening affair, best done on the quiet, if at all. Not so in the south, where the party identified with Ayatollah Sistani, symbolized by a burning candle and called the United Iraqi Coalition List, is one of dozens stumping openly and sometimes raucously.

With candidates and party workers still spray-painting slogans, handing out literature, debating on the radio and shouting through speakers on the last day before the campaigns are supposed to shut down, it was almost possible to forget that this election is taking place in a country still torn by war.

"Thanks to God, the security situation in Basra is good, and better than the other provinces," said Ali Resan, a government worker who was spraying green paint onto a rock wall. Mr. Resan, who favors another party, the National Brotherhood, in local elections, gestured with pride to members of Hezbollah -- an Iraqi offshoot of the radical Lebanese Shiite group -- who were painting their own slogans on the same wall a few feet away. The juxtaposition "confirms the meaning of freedom and democracy," Mr. Resan said.

There is a sense among many parties that the possibility of a high voter turnout in the south could give it disproportionate sway in Sunday's elections. Basra is Iraq's second largest city, and the province as a whole has about 1.8 million people. Taken together, the seven provinces that make up the comparatively peaceful south have about 7.7 million people. Iraq's estimated total population is just under 28 million.

The security situation in the south is far from perfect -- on Thursday, militants fired mortar shells at four provincial schools designated as polling stations. And the chief of the National Brotherhood party, Majid al-Timimi, survived an assassination attempt a week ago, Mr. Resan said. Basra Province alone suffered more than 30 insurgent attacks in the last month, according to data provided by a private security company that is operating in Iraq.

Two Views of Democracy for Iraqi Voters: Bullets and Ballots

"Generally speaking, it's a good situation," said Abdul Sahib A. al-Battat, the regional chief for Iraq's Independent Electoral Commission. "But at the same time, I don't want to say it's ideal."

Still, Iraqis in the predominantly Shiite south, a neglected region in the best of times under Saddam Hussein and the focus of the horrific Iran-Iraq war in the 1980's, do not seem fazed by a few attacks a week -- or the sounds of gunfire that echo every night in the streets. So the biggest barrier in the south is often not fear, but bewilderment over just what makes a successful campaign. Anwar Aljebor, of the government-sponsored Radio Al Nahrain, said that she initially had few takers after inviting candidates to speak on "Case for Discussion," a late-morning program. "But when they understood the power of the media," Ms. Aljebor said, "one by one they started to arrive."

Since then, Ms. Aljebor said, she has had on her program candidates from 20 of the 41 parties on the ballot for local elections, and has broadcast interviews with many of the others. Like anywhere else, the candidates varied widely in their ability to work the medium, she said.

"Some are good and some are very confusing," she said. "Some are very shy, and they don't express themselves perfectly."

Of all the parties making their bids in the south, the clear front-runner in terms of organization, visibility and sheer hustle is that associated in most people's minds with Ayatollah Sistani, known by the No.169, with its distinctive burning-candle logo and slick posters. Signs supporting the party are everywhere, and the party has the formidable backing of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, a countrywide powerhouse that functions locally almost like the old political machines in Chicago, New York and Boston.

To get out the vote and promote its party, the council has organized symposiums at mosques, soccer tournaments, special gatherings for women and neighborhood rallies, said Salah al-Battat, head of the council's Basra branch. Men on street corners hand out literature, ads appear on radio and television and in newspapers, and the news media are invited to the organization's headquarters for interviews.

To students, the organization hands out black pens with "SCIRI List 169" written on the side; more influential citizens receive a sleek oval case with a pen-calculator combination inside, again emblazoned with party names. And, very much in parallel with the old city machines, the council does not neglect the less educated.

"You will see a lot of logos on the voting menu," says one bit of literature the size of an index card, showing a box that has been checked. "Put this mark in front of the candle."

Asked whether there is any of the time-honored trickery of urban campaigning taking place among parties, Mr. Battat was philosophical. He said that while his campaign workers thought it wrong to tear down competitors' posters or cover them with their own, he had heard that such things sometimes occurred. The signature events for the party may be the loudspeaker motorcades. "Vote 169!" barked Abdul Hamood, the owner of a small electrical shop, into a microphone hooked to a speaker sticking out the side of his car. "It's the best list," he said. "It includes the candle!"

But all the council's clout is no guarantee of success.

As campaign workers handed out fliers at one of Basra's busiest corners, Jeenan Abood, in a black abaya and accompanied by her young son, took a copy and promised to read it carefully. Then she was asked whom she would support in the election.

"Ayad Allawi!" she said, referring to the prime minister whose party is competing with the council. "Because he's firm, and Iraqis really demand somebody strong at the polls."

Correction

Because of an editing error, an article yesterday about election preparations in the southern Iraqi city of Basra quoted incorrectly from a comment by Anwar Aljebor, who works for the government-sponsored Radio Al Nahrain and has had increasing success in booking local candidates for a morning program. In assessing their media skills, she said: "Some are good and some are very confusing. Some are very shy, and they don't express perfectly" -not "express themselves perfectly."

A caption with the continuation of the article misstated the day the picture was taken. It was Wednesday, not on the last day of campaigning, which was Thursday.

Correction-Date: January 29, 2005

Graphic

Photos: Campaigners in Basra used flags and loudspeakers to woo voters. (Photo by Shawn Baldwin for The New York Times)(pg. A1)

Workers for the Nation Party list handed out fliers in Basra on the last official day of campaigning before Sunday's elections. Southern Iraq was mostly free of campaign violence. (Photo by Shawn Baldwin for The New York Times)(pg. A11)

Load-Date: January 28, 2005

LETTERS

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Byline: JACK FRANCIS, ROGER CARTER, SHERM GALLAY, BRANDT ROSS, MIKE ANDREWS, LENNY PLAYER, LESLIE BROWN, LEE R. HAVEN, DORIS BENSON, JUAN MATUTE, BOB IRVIN, STEPHEN DEVORE, STEPHEN P. DOTY, JAMES L. REINEBOLD JR., CATHERINE BOONE SHEALY

For the Journal-Constitution

Body

War on terror: Responses to Cynthia Tucker's column "Facing torture, U.S. still can't lay down ideals," @issue, July 16

Keep them at Guantanamo until the war is over

I agree that we are a nation of laws and should remain committed to high standards of behavior. I, too, am disturbed by our agents putting people in foreign jails. However, I believe there are two approaches to a solution in the prisoner issue.

One approach is that immediately following Sept. 11, 2001, the Congress should have enacted a declaration of war against al-Qaida and all terrorists in general. Following that, all captured enemies would have been prisoners of war and thus could be permanently detained until the war's end, or paroled or exchanged.

The other approach, to which I do not subscribe, is that terrorists represent no state, carry no flag and wear no uniform; therefore, they may be executed as spies.

I do not see why the Uniform Code of Military Justice applies, since detainees are not U.S. service personnel. Actually, I don't see why they should be tried at all. Putting them into the federal court system affords them rights to which they are not entitled. But there should be a procedure for parole of a prisoner to his country of origin, if that country agrees to accept him and he can prove he is not a threat to U.S. forces.

In short, make sure they're not mistreated and keep them at Guantanamo until the war's over.

JACK FRANCIS, Conyers

LETTERS

New law makes life less secure for Americans

Cynthia Tucker applauds the law Congress passed several months ago, which forbids interrogators from subjecting any terrorist-prisoner to "cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment," without exception. Sounds good, but how about an extreme (all terrorists are extreme) case of a ticking time bomb that could kill millions? For instance, a nuclear bomb located somewhere in the midst of the 4 million folks in metro Atlanta. According to Tucker's Law, even "degrading treatment" could not be used to make the terrorist reveal the bomb location.

So, here's a question for Tucker. Is embarrassing treatment a form of degrading treatment? Can the American Civil Liberties Union find enough liberal judges to outlaw even the use of discouraging words and Whoopee cushions? The necessity of asking such a frivolous question shows how far left the pendulum has swung in democracy's worldwide war against Islamofascists.

Security for me and mine and millions of other families is degraded by the law Tucker is so proud of. And the knowledge that American interrogators' relative inaction against terrorists is required by law would be of little comfort after a time-bomb explosion.

ROGER CARTER, Woodstock

World sees little difference between U.S., extremists

I thank Cynthia Tucker for her well-thought-out and timely opinion. If only the Bush administration understood what true morality is. It is all about how one treats others. Al-Qaida and like-thinking extremists would love to destroy the non-Islamic nations, especially the United States, but they know they can't bring them down militarily, so they are trying to destroy them morally. They can only destroy us if they can get us thinking and acting as they do, with little regard for democratic principles and concern for all our fellow human beings.

The Bush administration seems to think that the demands for physical security override our sense of morality and rightness. If we fall into that trap, then the extremists who hate us and are striving for our demise have won their war. We are no longer a moral compass for the rest of the world.

In its zeal, the Bush administration has done more to damage the United States than the extremists ever could have. They managed to turn the world debate from the dangers posed by the extremists to dangers posed by the United States. This national nightmare won't end until we can again demonstrate to the world that we are not "just like them except at the opposite end of the spectrum."

STEPHEN P. DOTY, Woodstock

Administration's stance doesn't get a fair shake

Cynthia Tucker's column is another example of misinformation and anti-Bush bias.

First, no one in the Bush administration is calling for "torture tactics" when interrogating lawful enemy combatants or in their treatment as prisoners of war. This administration has always sought the enforcement of Geneva Convention standards for uniformed enemy fighters. It recognizes the need to protect our soldiers from mistreatment at the hands of our enemies. Trouble is, we continue to act according to international standards while our enemies continue to mutilate and abuse our soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines.

Members of recognized enemy forces or organizations --- both as a movement and through some sort of identifiable field uniform or insignia --- have always been afforded internationally accepted standards of treatment. It is purely asinine to imply that any mistreatment by U.S. military personnel is (1) authorized by the president or senior military officers and civilian officials or (2) "accepted" as necessary in the war on terrorism.

The standards for treatment of "illegal enemy combatants" are quite different. Illegal enemy combatants are fighters found on the battlefield who do not belong to a recognized enemy force. Neither the insurgents in Iraq nor the Taliban and al-Qaida in Afghanistan qualify for prisoner of war standards outlined in the Geneva Convention.

LETTERS

Second, U.S. Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) was never a prisoner of the Viet Cong --- who operated in Vietnam much like the insurgents in Iraq and Hezbollah in Lebanon. McCain was shot down over North Vietnam and held prisoner by that country --- a nation that failed to treat prisoners of war as international standards require. The proof of mistreatment the senator and his fellow prisoners suffered is documented in word and picture. Did Tucker protest their treatment when the facts were revealed? I didn't think so.

JAMES L. REINEBOLD JR.

Reinebold, who lives in Marietta, is a retired U.S. Army lieutenant colonel.

Politics, prejudice always creep into writings

So, what's new? Is Cynthia Tucker condemning the president again?

The president has changed his rules about terrorist captives. On June 30, he changed them to Supreme Court rulings without a whimper. He had been using the policies found agreeable to the attorney general. The president never condoned torture. The military never condoned torture. Any who forgot are now in prison or awaiting trial.

Now we have Tucker writing about "the Bush administration's efforts to condone torture and kangaroo courts." She sums it up by irresponsibly suggesting that the Supreme Court stopped laws permitting rampant criminal behavior by our military and our president. "Without selling our souls" was the way she put it.

I am waiting for journalists to write honestly about our country and our president without "selling their souls" to politics and prejudice at every turn. Tucker has not developed that sterling quality.

CATHERINE BOONE SHEALY, Atlanta

Need to show restraint in treatment of prisoners

In my view U.S. Sens. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) are both go-to-war enthusiasts. They never hesitate to support President Bush's aggressive use of military force. Yes, we should follow the Geneva Conventions, but going to war in Iraq is a far greater travesty than waterboarding and cold showers.

One thing I'm sure Graham and McCain gladly support is nonjudicial execution. With our smart bombs and unfailing sense of rectitude we can go about blowing up buildings that we suspect house our enemies. Any innocents killed or maimed in these actions are simply expendable. My guess is that before we nailed Abu Musab al-Zarqawi for real, we blew up quite a few "safe houses" we suspected he was hiding in. When in doubt, take it out.

McCain knows all about torture --- no question there. But, I've never heard him mention any doubts in public about the slaughter of millions of Vietnamese at U.S. hands --- for reasons that are almost as murky as Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. I doubt that Graham would harbor such feelings either.

By putting a few cost-free restraints on harsh treatment of prisoners we can convince ourselves of the nobility of the wars we start and the destruction we cause.

SHERM GALLAY, Lee, N.Y.

United States' safety should always take priority

I seriously question Cynthia Tucker's rhetoric about "keeping this nation safe without selling our souls." It is easy to pontificate about being "ashamed to discover some of the tactics" the U.S. government has used.

How about this scenario? Your family, including many children, has been taken hostage by terrorists. They threaten to rape, torture and murder them. One of the terrorists is captured and knows where they are being held.

Who do you want interrogating this terrorist? Jack Bauer (the dauntless hero of Fox television's "24") or an American Civil Liberties Union attorney?

LETTERS

BRANDT ROSS, Atlanta

Too many ads drag down NASCAR coverage

All anyone has to do to find out why Nielsen television ratings are slipping for NASCAR ("Atlantans tuning out NASCAR," Sports, July 16) is ask any NASCAR fan. Simply put, it's the commercials. Who has the patience to sit and watch a four-hour sporting event on TV, with two hours of that spent watching ads?

NASCAR is the only sport that cuts in during a live broadcast to show the ads. For this reason, I have resorted to recording most of the races and fast-forwarding through the garbage.

Since NASCAR sold broadcast and cable rights to NBC and Fox, it seems that NASCAR just sits idly by and does nothing.

MIKE ANDREWS, Sharpsburg

Critical letter fails to consider history

I was aroused from general apathy by a recent letter ("True allegiance to their native Africa?" July 16). The writer made this hilarious observation: "Seldom does a person simply say they are from Africa. Yet, millions of dark-skinned individuals with no distinguishable accent (other than colloquial), whose ancestors have lived here for generations, identify themselves as 'African-American.'"

What made the letter humorous is the presumptuous, knowing tone the writer conveyed. The irony is that a profound ignorance emanated from the view he chose to publicly share. This view would seem to eschew slavery and its global effect, U.S. history and the relatively short period of equality for all Americans.

LENNY PLAYER, Sandy Springs

Middle East: Leave Israel alone and 'problem' ends

To those Arab spokesmen who keep talking about the Israeli "problem":

If there were no rockets being fired into Israel, there would be no reason for the Israelis to blow up launching sites. If there were no suicide bombers being sent to murder innocent civilians in coffee shops, there would be no reason to search everyone at checkpoints.

If there were no city buses being blown up, killing men, women and children indiscriminately, there would be no need to imprison those who planned the attacks. If there had not been an attack on Israeli soil that killed several soldiers and resulted in the kidnapping of two others, there would be no attack on Hezbollah in Lebanon.

When they speak of the Israeli "problem," the apologists for the Arab murderers and terrorists seem to forget the continuing actions of their brothers and sisters against peace, which result in justifiable retaliation from a country that just wants to be left alone.

LESLIE BROWN, Alpharetta

Israel's existence an affront in itself

Columnist Charles Krauthammer keeps saying certain Islamic nations don't want Israel to exist ("To exist, Israel forced to fight," @issue, July 14). So, if Israel were placed in, say, Florida, Canada or any place but where an Islamic (or Arab) nation existed for centuries, the Islamic nations would be miffed about Israelis' existence?

I'd take a stab and say that the Islamic nations' anger stems from the way Israel was "created," displacing thousands of their brethren while having the remaining populace live under a harsh occupation. I mean, if it smells like imperialism ...

LETTERS

Another query. Say Israel finds out about some Islamic types or Arabs in, say, Florida, or in Canada, or in any other supposedly sovereign entity, developing a plot to attack Israel or Jews. Is the Israeli military free to bomb the infrastructure and civilians of that state or country? I mean, if it smells like acquiescing, or partnering, to imperialism ...

LEE R. HAVEN, Stone Mountain

For both sides, war can't be only focus

When, where and how will this all end? Every day more and more casualties --- both civilian and military. Adults have had the ability to make the choice of military or not. Children have not had this option and are therefore at the mercy of the adults.

In every war there are "incidental deaths." But in this case each side blames the other. I recently saw a picture of a dead Palestinian child and my heart broke. I would have reacted the same way if had been an Israeli child. The future is dying. Soon there will be nothing left except bitter old men who think war is the only answer. I hate to think what the future holds for someone younger than me. Do you want your future governed by someone who shoots first and asks questions later? This is true for both sides.

DORIS BENSON, Decatur

Ralph Reed: Voters make smart decision

During Ralph Reed's futile effort to become the Republican nominee for Georgia lieutenant governor, he continually asserted that he did not know that all of the Indian tribes' money that was passed on to him was from gambling. That was a pretty lame excuse. Where did he think the money came from --- beads and blankets sold by the roadside?

If he is as tone-deaf on the state of American Indian economics as he claimed to be, he is not capable of being an effective legislative leader. This error on his part and several other items were reason enough for me to cross over to vote on the Republican ballot against this sham. Vermin and critters are best eliminated before they have a chance to take hold.

JUAN MATUTE, Peachtree City

Evangelicals didn't buy what he sold

In the wake of Ralph Reed's defeat in the Republican primary, many people are asking, "What does this mean for evangelical Christians?"

It means they have opened their eyes. Many evangelicals (including me) were appalled by Reed's activities. Many (not including me) were also surprised.

In the end, a lot of them, maybe a majority, listened to their hearts and to the plain facts, rather than to Reed's "just trust me" pitch. Make no mistake: It was the evangelicals who defeated Reed.

Will other evangelicals win elections? Yes.

Will Reed be back? I don't think so. A majority of Georgians have now formed an opinion of him as a sleazy, Washington-lobbyist-style hypocrite. Thankfully, that doesn't sell in Georgia. I predict that Reed will return to K Street in Washington, where that sort of "flexibility" is often valued.

BOB IRVIN, Atlanta

Give gay, lesbian voters some credit

LETTERS

Casey Cagle's campaign has expressed surprise at the margin of their victory over former Christian Coalition President Ralph Reed in the Georgia GOP lieutenant governor's contest. Cagle should know that many of Georgia's gay and lesbian voters, particularly underwhelmed by either Mark Taylor or Cathy Cox, selected a Republican ballot for the specific purpose of voting for Cagle to help send Reed packing.

Mission accomplished!

STEPHEN DEVORE, Atlanta

Load-Date: July 23, 2006

End of Document

Letters - The shame of 'the Chosen People'

Irish News

July 27, 2006 Thursday

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Section: Pg. 20

Length: 89 words

Body

For an entire week the Israeli army has waged a 'war' against the people of Lebanon using an excuse of ridding the world of terrorists.

The killing of innocents is a terrible mistake.

Backed up by the Americans and western leaders, the 'righteous' are inflicting awful pain and sorrows on fellow men (**women** and children).

It is precisely that type of unrestrained power that **Hezbollah** and other 'hopeless' resistance groups from the start of time have organised to oppose. The mighty would do well to take note.

WILLIAM McGEEHAN, Loughanure.

Load-Date: July 27, 2006

Keeping world's events in focus

Nottingham Evening Post

July 20, 2006 Thursday

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Section: Pg. 10

Length: 1298 words

Body

During a 30-year career Woodthorpe film maker Stephen Foster worked many times in Lebanon and Israel, countries thrust back into world headlines by renewed conflict. He spoke to ANDY SMART about his life behind the lens

The sniper had cameraman Stephen Foster and the rest of the film crew pinned down on a mountain road in southern Lebanon.

For more than an hour accurate rifle fire zipped around their ears as they sheltered, waiting for help.

It was a situation that should never have happened - but the kind of danger Stephen Foster became accustomed to in a 30-year career that took him to some of the most hostile places on earth.

Stephen, a former Bramcote Hills Grammar School pupil, was part of a film crew recording events for the BBC news programme Panorama, in the aftermath of the 1983 suicide attacks on the US Marine barracks in Beirut, which killed 241 American service personnel, and the US Embassy.

The team had linked up with Muslim Druze militiamen in the Chouf mountains who were shelling a Christian village on the opposite side of the valley.

"We got news the Red Cross were coming to evacuate women, children and the elderly from the village and we asked to go across and film it," Stephen said.

"The Druze would only allow Red Cross people to cross, but they agreed, which slightly surprised us, but they wouldn't let us take a car so we had to walk along a mountain road through two checkpoints, the Druze at one end, Christians at the other.

"We spent a day filming in the village ... there were some very emotional scenes."

The trouble began when the team prepared to return to the Druze side of the valley. They reported to the Christian checkpoint which was then supposed to contact the Druze guards for the go-ahead to cross.

"We had got about 200 to 300 yards along the road when someone started shooting. One of the team, Malcolm Bartram, who was ex-military, was the first to realise it was incoming fire and we got down at the side of the road with our backs against the mountain.

"Whoever had radioed from the checkpoint ... the message hadn't reached this sniper who kept us pinned down for about two hours.

Keeping world's events in focus

"Red Cross vehicles kept flashing by at high speed, but we managed to flag one down and he agreed to go to the checkpoint and tell them to stop firing.

"He came back to tell us they were going to stop but by then Malcolm had been shot in the foot. That meant we were now victims and the Red Cross could pick us up."

Having worked in Lebanon and Israel many times, he views the current conflict with a degree of sadness, especially for the innocent people caught up in the hatred.

"I have worked in Gaza and I have seen the effects. The people of southern Lebanon have to live a difficult life, partly due to Hezbollah and partly due to Israel.

"I think the West has a responsibility, but it goes back a long way. The borders that were made in the early part of the last century are coming back to haunt us."

Relaxing in the conservatory of his beautifully restored house in Woodthorpe, Stephen, a tall, slim man who considers his words carefully, like an editor working on a script, tells me that was probably the hairiest experience of a career that was never dull.

Degrees in fine art, films and photography steered him down his chosen path and in the 1970s he joined a Kimberley-based company called Eurofilms which did work for BBC programmes such as Panorama and Newsnight.

From that base he established a reputation in the industry as a cameraman who could capture the right shots and get the job done.

Since those early days, he and his camera have filmed from Coronation Street to the shanty towns of South Africa, from a school in Kettering to the war-ravaged villages of the Congo. He has filmed condemned men on Death Row in America and followed the trail of the "Disappeared Ones" in Chile.

"It is not a career everyone would choose, but I wouldn't change it," said Stephen, despite admitting he has never been totally comfortable with conflict and the consequences he has seen, often at very close quarters.

"It's what I do. I enjoy the people I work with and I enjoy filming, but anyone who enjoys conflict has to be a very strange person.

"Nevertheless, filming in those situations concentrates the mind. In a way it makes the films quite poignant."

It is that intimacy which interests father-of-three Stephen. Capturing the faces and feelings of ordinary people caught up in extraordinary events is where he has found job satisfaction.

And nowhere, he says, was it more forcefully brought home to him than Bosnia, a country which affected him deeply and, more than a decade later, the emotion is still just as strong.

"The Bosnia situation was dreadful. I just could not understand why it happened.

"We were following the story of Dusan 'Dusko' Tadic, the first man to be tried for war crimes. He came from a village called Kozarec which, before the war, was a mixed village, mainly Muslim."

Kozarec had come to the attention of director Belinda Giles through some old home movies, shot on Super 8, of weddings and funerals in the village before the war.

"They showed everyone having a good time together, it looked an idyllic life, everyone got on well.

"And then something snapped.

"The Serbs moved out and some of them then acted as spotters for the Yugoslav army's artillery which began shelling the village.

"What happened? Bosnia is a beautiful country and I am very interested in trying to understand what makes people do what they did."

On May 7, 1997, Serbian Dusan Tadic became the first person convicted of war crimes in the conflict between the Bosnian Muslims and the former Yugoslavia. Tadic was found guilty of 11 charges. He was acquitted of murder in the deaths of 13 Muslims.

Witnesses had accused him of beating, mutilating and killing Bosnian Muslims in 1992 at two Serbian-run concentration camps. Rape charges had been dropped due to witness fear of testifying.

His crimes almost defied description, they were so horrific. In one incident he reportedly emptied the contents of a fire extinguisher into a victim's mouth following a brutal beating.

For his crimes, Tadic was sentenced on July 14, 1997, to 20 years' imprisonment.

One of the projects Stephen, 60, and semi-retired, intends to pursue now he has more time, is to get down on paper his thoughts and memories of Bosnia. He says it will be "a labour of love".

"I am just trying to understand all that happened."

Bosnia was one of those shattering events which, no matter how professional and dispassionate he tried to be, Stephen found himself emotionally involved.

The 1992 Boipatong massacre of 50 innocent victims at the height of the Apartheid struggle in South Africa was another case in point.

"We followed one large family which lived in the shanty town when the Zulu Inkhata attacked. This was black on black violence which made it all the more tragic.

"They had been a large family and only the father and two of his children were left. He had lost his wife and other children.

"We filmed him going to church and I remember very clearly a point in the service where there was a collection and children went up and put a few pennies in the collecting tray ... but his children did not have any pennies.

"That was a pathetic scene, very upsetting ... it is the futility that gets to you."

Fortunately for Stephen's peace of mind, there has been some light among the shade, human interest stories that did not involve the darkest deeds of which man is capable.

He remembers with fondness a Channel 4 drama called Sputniks Bleeps and Mr Perry about a Kettering schoolteacher who tracked the first Russian satellites and used his findings to teach science to his pupils.

"He used to telephone NASA and tell them 'the Russians have launched another one'.

"That was a nice little film."

Load-Date: October 29, 2006

Gunmen Kill Dozens at Shiite Market in Iraq

The New York Times

July 18, 2006 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 12

Length: 1264 words

Byline: By EDWARD WONG; Qais Mizher, Mona Mahmoud and Omar al-Neami contributed reporting for this article.

Dateline: BAGHDAD, Iraq, July 17

Body

Dozens of gunmen suspected of being Sunni Arabs went on a rampage through a mostly Shiite market area in the town of Mahmudiya on Monday, killing at least 48 civilians and wounding scores, police officials said.

Many of the attackers, who fired assault rifles, heavy machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades, wore the uniforms of the Iraqi security forces.

"You can't tell your friend from your enemy," an Iraqi Army officer said as Iraqi troops moved in.

The daylight killings in Mahmudiya, 20 miles south of Baghdad, increased fears among Iraqis that the country might be sliding into full-scale civil war, and prompted a crucial Shiite bloc to storm out of Parliament, protesting the lack of security in the country.

The attack and other violence on Monday brought to nearly 100 the number of civilians killed in two days in the country, making it one of the deadliest periods since the appointment of the current government in May.

The latest deaths underscored the government's inability to tamp down spiraling cycles of sectarian violence that, more and more, are characterized by execution-style reprisal killings.

An obscure guerrilla group, the Supporters of the Sunni People, posted an Internet message saying it had carried out the attack to avenge a massacre of Sunni Arab civilians by Shiite militiamen in Baghdad on July 9.

The killings have widened the political fault lines in the Shiite-led government of Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki. The legislators who walked out of Parliament on Monday were followers of the radical Shiite cleric Moktada al-Sadr, whose militia, the Mahdi Army, has been engaged in increasingly frequent battles with American-led forces.

Many Iraqi officials, citing Mr. Sadr's wide following, believe that his participation in the political process is indispensable to achieving stability in Iraq.

Iraqi forces and American soldiers appeared helpless to stop the bloodshed in Mahmudiya, arriving after the gunmen had already killed dozens, witnesses said.

Gunmen Kill Dozens at Shiite Market in Iraq

The town, a center of Sunni-Shiite conflict, falls under the watch of the First Battalion of the 502nd Infantry, 101st Airborne Division, the same unit from which five soldiers and a recently discharged soldier have been implicated in connection with the rape of an Iraqi girl in March and the murder of her younger sister and their parents.

"It's become obvious that the occupation forces are responsible for the devastation taking place in our country," a senior legislator from the Sadr bloc, Bahaa al-Aaraji, said at a news conference in Baghdad.

He said the Sadr bloc, which holds at least 30 of 275 legislative seats, was not permanently boycotting the Parliament, but had walked out of Monday's session out of fury at both the killings and recent American and British attacks on Mr. Sadr's followers.

Mr. Sadr, who led two rebellions against the Americans in 2004, released a statement on Friday saying Iraqis would not "sit by with folded hands" while Israel attacked Lebanon, home to Hezbollah, the militant Shiite group.

That suggested the possibility of more attacks by his militia against the Americans, Israel's staunchest ally, and the consequent widening of the firestorm in the Middle East.

The assault in the Mahmudiya market took place around 9 a.m., when the streets were packed with shoppers and men going to cafes and teahouses.

First came explosions from mortars or grenades, according to witnesses and the town's mayor, Mouayid Fadhil, though some security officials issued early reports of a car bomb. Then dozens of gunmen rolled up in cars and began walking through the market, shooting people. At least eight cars burst into flames. Bodies lay strewn across the street and slumped in shops and restaurants.

Gunmen went into one house and shot dead six people, including two women, said a witness, Maithem Muhammad Harar.

Mr. Harar, 25, a Shiite, said he was walking to the market to join his father at a cafe when the attack began. His father was shot in the stomach, he said. The father lay unconscious in a hospital bed in Baghdad on Monday afternoon, blood staining his white robe and an intravenous drip running into one arm.

"I couldn't do anything," Mr. Harar said quietly, staring down at his white-bearded father, who is 60. "We couldn't save anyone until after the gunmen had left." The attack on Monday resembled one in the Jihad neighborhood of Baghdad on July 9, when Shiite militiamen killed up to 50 Sunni civilians by dragging people from cars and homes and shooting many in the head.

Until recently, such mass killings of civilians had been relatively rare in the Iraq war. The latest episodes have raised fears among many Iraqis that the current civil strife may erupt into full-blown bloodshed with rounds of revenge killings.

Mahmudiya residents said the killers were Sunni Arabs bent on vengeance. The town has become an arena of sectarian combat, with Sunni fighters battling Shiite militiamen believed to be members of Mr. Sadr's private army. Mr. Harar said an office of Mr. Sadr's organization and the local headquarters of the Islamic Dawa Party, a ruling Shiite political group, are both near the market.

Another resident, Hamid Mohsen, 45, a Sunni laborer, said by telephone that the market was filled with members of the Mahdi Army. Sunnis had the right to slaughter them, Mr. Mohsen said, because the "Mahdi Army launched a sectarian war in the city after the American forces turned over the security portfolio to the Iraqi forces."

He said word had spread in the area of a particularly gruesome killing last weekend involving the Mahdi Army. On Saturday, he said, militiamen abducted a 14-year-old Sunni boy named Omar and brought him to a remote compound. The fighters buried Omar up to his neck, then killed him by taking shots at his head, he said.

Mr. Fadhil, the town's mayor, said: "The attackers infiltrated the city at night from their dens outside of Mahmudiya. We were able to capture three who were injured, and an investigation is under way."

Gunmen Kill Dozens at Shiite Market in Iraq

Last month, insurgents ambushed three American soldiers in the nearby town of Yusufiya. One was killed immediately and two were abducted. The kidnappers mutilated them, beheading one, and left their bodies along a road booby-trapped with bombs.

A group linked to Al Qaeda put out a video of the mutilations and said the killings were in revenge for the rape of the Iraqi girl from Mahmudiya. The soldiers charged in that investigation were from the same unit of the 502nd Infantry as the Yusufiya victims.

In Baghdad, Mr. Aaraji, the Sadr bloc legislator, expressed frustration over the inability of the Americans to protect Iraqis, and lashed out at the American-led forces for their aggression toward the Sadr group.

He pointed to a British military assault on Sunday in the southern oil city of Basra. An official of Mr. Sadr's organization in Basra said later by telephone that British troops had raided the nearby town of Al Garma and arrested a Sadr follower, Sajad Badr al-Sukany.

Violence also flared in Baghdad on Monday, as gunmen shot into a car of civilians, killing two and wounding two. Insurgents killed three civilians and wounded three others during an ambush on a police convoy, the Interior Ministry said. Gunmen shot dead a man who organized trips for Shiite pilgrims to shrines in Iran.

The American military said a soldier was killed by small-arms fire in western Baghdad, another soldier died in a bombing south of the capital, and a third soldier was killed by "enemy action" in western Iraq.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo: Iraqis gathered yesterday after a mortar struck a building in Baghdad's Karada district. Debris that fell caused minor injuries, officials said. (Photo by Joao Silva for The New York Times)

Load-Date: July 18, 2006

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Olmert Rejects Ultimatum On Soldier by Palestinians

The New York Times

July 4, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 9

Length: 1354 words

Byline: By IAN FISHER; Michael Slackman contributed reporting from Damascus for this article.

Dateline: GAZA, Tuesday, July 4

Body

The Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, rejected an ultimatum on Monday that had been set by Palestinian militants, who suggested they would kill a captured Israeli soldier unless Israel began to release 1,500 Palestinian prisoners.

"The government of Israel will not yield to the extortion of the Palestinian Authority and the Hamas government, which are led by murderous terrorist organizations," Mr. Olmert said in a statement. "We will not conduct any negotiations on a prisoner release."

The Palestinian statement, issued by the three militant groups holding the soldier, Cpl. Gilad Shalit, 19, gave Israel until Tuesday morning local time -- 11 p.m. Eastern time on Monday -- to begin releasing prisoners.

As the deadline expired, calls to the military wing of Hamas and the Popular Resistance Committees, the two main groups holding the corporal, were not answered. A spokesman for the Islamic Army, the least important of the group and previously unknown, told Reuters: "Discussion is closed." The spokesman, Abu al-Muthana, said: "Whether he will be killed or not killed, we will not disclose any information about the fate of the soldier."

He said he expected a joint statement later on Tuesday, but his comments hinted that the fate of the corporal will simply remain unclear, the way some previous Israeli abductees were treated by Hezbollah.

Earlier on Tuesday, Israeli tanks began moving in greater numbers into the Beit Hanoun neighborhood of northern Gaza, appearing to broaden smaller-scale military operations on Monday. Witnesses said an airstrike killed at least one person and wounded several others. Israeli aircraft also bombed an empty building at the Islamic University in Gaza.

In Ramallah, in the West Bank, Israeli forces entered a police station, seizing three Palestinians suspected of involvement in killing a Jewish settler last week, the Israeli Army said, Reuters reported.

As Israeli forces moved into northern Gaza and with indirect negotiations apparently at a standstill, the week-old crisis threatened to spill over Israel's border into Syria.

In Damascus, Syria said it had had nothing to do with the soldier's capture and could play no role in obtaining his freedom.

Olmert Rejects Ultimatum On Soldier by Palestinians

After the ultimatum was issued, the Israeli defense minister, Amir Peretz, said he would hold to account Syria's president, Bashar al-Assad, who has allowed Hamas's political leader, Khaled Meshal, to live in Syria and is believed to have significant influence over him.

"The Hamas's terror headquarters operates in Syria and is headed by Khaled Meshal," Mr. Peretz told leaders of the Labor Party, which he heads. "I suggest that Bashar al-Assad, who is trying to conduct himself blindly, open his eyes, because he bears the responsibility."

He added: "We will know how to strike those who are involved."

Last week, Israeli warplanes buzzed Mr. Assad's summer home in Latakia, and they have struck in the past at what the Israelis said were terrorist targets in Syria.

In Damascus on Monday, the foreign minister, Walid Muallem, said that while Syria had influence with Hamas, it did not have any hand in the capture of the Israeli, and would be unable to demand his release. Instead, Mr. Muallem said, the only solution would be an end to the Israeli military operation, followed by talks between Israel and Hamas. He said Israel would have to be willing to offer a fair deal, like releasing prisoners who are women or under 18.

"Now, for a solution, the aggression has to stop in order to allow room for diplomacy," Mr. Muallem said in an interview. "To solve the issue, it is not correct that the key is in Damascus. The key is in Gaza."

Mr. Meshal, whom Israel blamed for planning the capture of the soldier, has lived and worked in Damascus for years. And while Mr. Muallem said Mr. Meshal did not have any role in the military attack -- a fact disputed by at least one Palestinian faction leader in Damascus -- he said Syria would never force him to leave.

The ultimatum by the Palestinians said that if Israel did not begin releasing prisoners, Israel would "bear full responsibility for the future consequences."

"If they don't fulfill our demands, we will close the kidnapped soldier's file," a spokesman for one of the groups, the Popular Resistance Committees, told reporters in Gaza.

Asked if that meant the soldier would be killed, the spokesman said: "We will close the file. We have no comment beyond that."

Three militant groups have said they took part in the soldier's capture on June 25: the Popular Resistance Committees; the military wing of Hamas, the Islamist group that leads the Palestinian government; and an apparently new group, the Islamic Army.

Since the soldier's capture, Israeli forces have imposed a slow squeeze on Gaza to try to secure the soldier's release, crossing the borders in the north and the south, firing some 1,500 artillery rounds from land and sea, and carrying out nightly air raids. If the soldier is killed, that campaign is likely to intensify quickly and violently. One Israeli cabinet member was quoted as saying, "Our operations will be far, far worse." In his statement, Mr. Olmert said he held the Palestinian Authority fully responsible for the soldier's safety.

The Israelis have previously suggested that the lives of Hamas leaders, who took over the government after winning elections in January, are at risk.

On Sunday, Israel underscored that possibility by bombing the offices of the Hamas prime minister, Ismail Haniya, which were empty at the time. Israeli officials said the raid was intended to warn Hamas that it risked losing power in Gaza, not to speak of the lives of its officials, unless it worked to free the corporal.

One major question -- the subject of much speculation in the Israeli news media -- remains whether Israel would accept any compromise despite Mr. Olmert's strong stand. The Army chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Dan Halutz, after visiting Corporal Shalit's family in northern Israel on Monday, said such a decision would be up to the political leadership, in conjunction with the military.

Olmert Rejects Ultimatum On Soldier by Palestinians

Nearly every night since entering Gaza on Wednesday, Israeli forces have tried to raise the stakes. On Monday morning, Israeli aircraft bombed an office of Fatah, the party that Hamas pushed from power, then troops moved in small numbers across the border in the north.

An Israeli military spokeswoman characterized it as a small, "very specific operation" aimed at searching for "tunnels and explosives" used by militants in attacks on Israel. For months, militants have been firing homemade Qassam rockets from northern Gaza into Israel.

Beit Hanoun has been hard hit by the artillery barrages, and residents said a small number of Israeli soldiers crossed the border about 6 a.m.

Omar al-Masri, 23, said he was returning from his job as a security guard when he spoke with family members who said Israeli soldiers had taken over four Palestinian houses and herded about 40 people -- including his wife and two children -- into a room in one of them.

"They told me, 'Don't come home, it's dangerous for you,' " Mr. Masri said.

He said family members told him there were about 80 Israeli soldiers in all, some in uniform and others disguised as Palestinian militants. He said they came on foot, leaving their vehicles several hundred yards away. Reporters were able to walk near one of the houses that neighbors said had been taken over by Israeli soldiers. There was no sign of them, nor anyone else. The area was completely deserted.

The Israeli military spokeswoman, who spoke as is the practice on the condition of anonymity, said Israeli forces were believed to have killed two militants in northern Gaza on Monday.

She said that in one case, two gunmen approached Israeli soldiers there, who opened fire, possibly killing one of the gunmen. In a second incident, Israeli aircraft hit what she said was a group carrying an antitank missile near the fence that separates Israel from Gaza. She said the military believed that one of the men had been killed.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo: Protesters marched Sunday in a Palestinian neighborhood in Damascus, Syria, in opposition of recent Israeli attacks aimed at militants in Gaza. (Photo by Shawn Baldwin for The New York Times)

Load-Date: July 4, 2006

**A BATTLE IN BRITAIN;
AFTER THE JULY 7 ATTACKS, BRITISH STOICISM WAS MUCH ADMIRER.
DAVID PRYCE-JONES LOOKS, HOWEVER, AT THE COMBUSTIBLE
TENSIONS BETWEEN MUSLIMS AND WORKING-CLASS WHITES**

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

July 17, 2005 Sunday

FIVE STAR EDITION

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Section: EDITORIAL,

Length: 1278 words

Dateline: LONDON

Body

The British, according to a familiar stereotype, are slow to react. Their immediate steadfastness in response to the July 7 terrorist attacks in London has certainly been remarkable, not to say magnificent. At present count, at least 54 people were killed and many were injured, more than 100 of them seriously, even critically. Yet, by nightfall on the day of the bombings, the city was going about its business more or less normally.

But there is reason to fear that Great Britain may not really be returned to normal life -- that its social fabric may not be as intact as it appears, at least in one crucial regard.

The attacks of July 7 threaten to push beyond the breaking point already strained relations between Britain's large Muslim population and the working-class whites with whom it shares many of the nation's impoverished industrial centers.

These Muslims are struggling with how to assimilate while retaining essential elements of their cultural and religious heritage. Many of them are easily convinced by the arguments of radical Islamist preachers. (In fact, the police now suspect that four Muslim men, all born in Britain and inspired by, if not directly linked to, al-Qaida, carried out the bombings.) Meanwhile, the Muslim community's white, working-class neighbors are suspicious and resentful of the newer arrivals living among them.

This juxtaposition creates vast potential for radicalism -- and violence -- on both sides.

Unfortunately, misguided British government policies that simultaneously make the country a haven for Muslim extremism while stoking white, working-class resentment with their perceived favoring of the larger Muslim community only exacerbate this problem.

In the United States, after the Sept. 11 attacks, there were few anti-Muslim incidents. But, on the day after the London carnage, the inevitable anti-Muslim backlash began. Among a number of confused incidents, a mosque in Leeds is believed to have been firebombed.

A BATTLE IN BRITAIN ; AFTER THE JULY 7 ATTACKS, BRITISH STOICISM WAS MUCH ADMIRER. DAVID PRYCE-JONES LOOKS, HOWEVER, AT THE COMBUSTIBLE TENSIONS BETWEEN MUSLIMS

This suits the Islamists perfectly, allowing them to draw more to their ranks as jihad becomes a reality, and it won't stop until the government reverses course.

The British people know that they are the targets of Islamist hate. They also know that Britain offers refuge for all sorts of Islamist organizations. Hamas, Hezbollah and Hizb Ut Tahrir are tacitly allowed to spread their pro-terrorism gospel, even though the former two are officially banned.

These groups have found a secure base and hinterland in which to implant themselves. In Britain, they see a population of more than 1.5 million Muslims, the majority from Pakistan and Bangladesh, on the whole pious people, primarily out to better themselves. The natural instinct of these immigrants, almost certainly, is to assimilate with English society, or, if that seems too demanding, at least to integrate.

The younger generation, born and educated in Britain, proficient in English, would generally subscribe to assimilation, or at least integration. But discomfort remains.

In particular, a code of conduct enshrining the inferiority of women is a barrier between Muslims and the British, one likely to remain insuperable for another generation or two. Until this issue is resolved, most young Muslims remain unsure whether their primary allegiance is to Britain and its values or to some country of family origin with quite different values.

The Islamists invite the potentially alienated to reject Britain and all its works, and to adopt instead the identity of jihad and the hate that goes with it.

There is something on the order of 1,200 mosques in the country. All serve as community centers, and only a few are in the hands of extremist imams. The most notorious imams -- Abu Hamza and Abu Qatada, both charged with crimes in Britain and abroad -- have finally been taken into custody. They and their ilk act as recruiting officers for jihad.

One follower, a young social worker in Luton by the name of Abdul Haq, recently told the Evening Standard something menacing and prophetic: "As far as I'm concerned, when they bomb London, the bigger the better. I know it's going to happen because Sheik bin Laden said so. Like Bali, like Turkey, like Madrid -- I pray for it, I look forward to the day."

Monitoring such threats, the intelligence services have been issuing regular warnings that a terrorist attack was a certainty, and the only point of doubt was when and how it would happen.

/ Under Islamist influence, the level of violence has been rising slowly but surely. As of March, 732 people have been arrested under the Terrorism Act, and, of these, 259 were charged with criminal offenses, though only 21 have been convicted.

Those recruited to Islamism are not the poor and disinherited, but, on the contrary, those whose intelligence and social advancement allow them to submit to the luxury of an identity crisis.

The response of those in public positions has been mostly feeble or inappropriate.

The Muslims and the locals in the half-ruined industrial towns of the Midlands are on a level footing when it comes to unemployment, welfare and education, but government policy is perceived in some quarters as favoring Muslims in measures like building community centers and sports facilities, and forcing books on Islam (but not on any other religion) into schools. In fact, there are now seven state-run schools exclusively for Muslims.

These schools are attended by fewer than 2,000 students (and some Protestant and Catholic schools have long received state funding), but their creation has aroused resentment and concern. David Bell, the chief inspector of schools, recently worried that "young people are being educated in faith-based schools, with little appreciation of their wider responsibilities and obligations to British society."

A BATTLE IN BRITAIN ; AFTER THE JULY 7 ATTACKS, BRITISH STOICISM WAS MUCH ADMIRER. DAVID PRYCE-JONES LOOKS, HOWEVER, AT THE COMBUSTIBLE TENSIONS BETWEEN MUSLIMS

/ Inexorably, those who privilege Muslims on the one hand, and Islamists on the other hand, are combining to shift public opinion toward the counterresponse of violence, which is to say fascism.

Wedded to their parliamentary democracy, the British have always rejected foreign political imports like communism and fascism. No fascist party member has ever won a seat at Westminster, and today's fascists, the British National Party (BNP), fare no better.

Under the impact of rising Islamism, however, and invigorated by the well-meant but foolish patronizing of Muslims by the authorities, the BNP has now acquired a few seats on local municipalities.

In the last European elections, the BNP received over 808,200 votes, an astonishing protest vote, as well as a portent. Some of these new fascists are capable of argument, but most of them resort to the fist, the boot and the petrol bomb.

Nobody has been killed so far in the BNP-inspired race riots in cities with substantial Muslim populations, such as Burnley, Oldham, Derby, Tipton, and Bradford, but mosques and shops and Muslim properties have been vandalized. They are creating a sense (one that played a role in the recent general election) that the country has lost control of its borders and that immigrants, whether legal or illegal, are becoming "an enemy within."

British Muslims are caught between a rock and a hard place. The number who throw their lot in with the Islamists might be infinitesimally small, but even that is enough to arouse much fury and contempt for them at the street level.

In order to be free and equal citizens, they need better leadership and a more realistic government.

In time, this will happen. In another familiar stereotype, the British public will ultimately go in for fair play.

But the time before that day arrives has been made longer still by the terrorist outrage in London.

Notes

David Pryce-Jones, a senior editor at National Review, wrote this for The New Republic. His most recent book is "The Closed Circle: An Interpretation of the Arabs."

Graphic

PHOTO: Christopher Furlong/Getty Images: Members of the Leeds Muslim Community stand in Millennium Square on Thursday to mark the two-minute tribute to the victims of the London bombings.

Load-Date: July 20, 2005

Double-up in Middle East game

Australian Financial Review

October 22, 2005 Saturday

First Edition

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Section: PERSPECTIVE; International News; Pg. 27

Length: 1325 words

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

Body

There are other festering problems in the region that will command George Bush's attention.

When US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee this week, she received a subset of questions that point to what is an increasing preoccupation in Washington.

This is the extent to which the US is now involved on the ground in the Middle East in ways that go beyond the calculations of an administration that had anaesthetised itself with heady expectations of a quick victory in Iraq followed by a rose-petal transformation of Iraqi society.

The question now is not so much when the US might begin to stand down its forces in Iraq but whether its broader goals of bringing democracy to the entire Middle East mean that an expanded mission will draw it inevitably into a wider and much more protracted military role as it manages what it has wrought.

This is not so much mission creep as mission hop - potentially. The US is facing an extremely challenging situation in Iraq but it can't ignore other festering Middle East problems, all of which require careful management and, in bad case scenarios, might add to America's military burden.

These include an unstable situation in Syria; a bold challenge from Iran which, along with its Shiite co-religionists in Iraq, is emerging as the main beneficiary of the US removal of Saddam Hussein, apart from the Kurds; the Israel-Palestine conflict where a road map for peace has all but died; instability in Lebanon where the pro-Iranian Shiite ***Hezbollah***, or "party of God", is the most potent force; and dangers of Iraq instability spreading to the Gulf and beyond to places like Egypt.

It is not beyond comprehension that the Middle East map will look quite different when - and if - things settle down, just as it did after the defeat of the Ottoman Turks in World War I.

Prince Saud al-Faisal, the veteran Saudi Foreign Minister, warned on a visit to Washington of the potential disintegration of Iraq into separate Sunni, Shiite and Kurdish entities that would risk bringing "other countries in the region into the conflict".

President George Bush appeared to be preparing Americans for a longer commitment with his important speech two weeks ago to the National Endowment for Democracy in which he likened the struggle to the Cold War, saying "this is a difficult and long-term project, yet there's no alternative".

Double-up in Middle East game

He accused al-Qaeda and its radical adherents across the Muslim world of being intent on establishing an Islamic caliphate "from Spain to Indonesia".

Bush has bet his presidency and legacy on his view that Iraq is the "central front" in the war on terrorism - a justification for continued American sacrifices in lives and treasure while ignoring the uncomfortable detail that this was far from the main pretext for going to war.

His decision to couch the US struggle in historical terms as a war against the rebirth of an Islamic caliphate has the effect of defining a war whose dimensions are almost certainly beyond an overstretched US ability to manage. This position also creates a potential awkwardness for a country like Australia whose position might be likened to that of an investor in a limited liability company of relatively modest intentions which then decides to take on a lot more risk.

This is potentially a highly significant moment in an evolving Middle East story, unless Bush's words are simply a marketing exercise and have no meaning.

Asked by senator Richard Lugar, the Foreign Relations Committee chairman, to explain what a broadening out of US goals might involve, Secretary of State Rice explained: "We have one vision of what the Middle East is going to look like. It's going to be a Middle East that is modernising, progressive; where women's rights are assured; where Islam finds its place alongside democracy; where there are stable and democratic governments where liberty is no longer denied to the people. And there is no doubt that is a long-term generational struggle."

She added: "We, indeed, have to win in Iraq, which becomes one of the pillars of a democratic, stable, prosperous Middle East in which the freedom deficit is not a cause for the rise of extremism."

These are, of course, desirable, lofty goals but are they realistic and what sacrifices might be required to achieve this version of utopia when it is not clear that America is even capable of ensuring that the lights stay on in Baghdad, a point made by the courtly Lugar when he asked Rice what benchmarks she might nominate for success in Iraq.

So, in seeking ways to justify an increasingly unpopular war the gambling Bush is effectively doubling up, which is one way to lose your shirt if the cards are against you. Bush's reassertion of his determination not to leave Iraq until "complete victory" is achieved has established a notional benchmark, but what does this really mean? How do you define "complete victory" - an end to the insurgency, a formal surrender by the al-Qaeda leadership in Iraq or simply when a US administration declares victory and ships out, leaving warring militias to tear each other apart?

Clearly, Bush has talked himself into a mindset that would make acceptance of a nuanced end to the American adventure in Iraq quite difficult to justify.

The New York Times this week quoted a senior Bush aide as explaining why the president had decided in his national endowment address to talk about a grander Middle East design.

"The president was concerned that we hadn't described Iraq to the American people for what it is - a struggle of ideologies that isn't going to end with one election, or one constitution, or even a string of elections," the official said.

In seeking to describe a grander purpose, Bush is clearly trying to find a formula that will overwhelm criticism that is becoming more persistent from the Democrats and members of his own party. He is, in effect, trying to buy time in the hope that political progress in Iraq overwhelms the security challenge.

Whatever Bush might say publicly, he must know that the solution does not lie in a military victory, since this is not in the cards, but in a political accommodation among disparate forces. Force-feeding that process is proving hugely challenging.

And it is not as though this White House, having dealt itself into the Middle East game as no other administration has done before, can ignore other elements of the picture.

Double-up in Middle East game

Syria represents an immediate challenge, not just because Washington is at loggerheads with Damascus over its belief that the Syrians have been giving aid and comfort to Iraqi insurgents, but because of debate within the administration about whether the Bashar al-Assad regime should itself be subjected to "regime change" or simply "behaviour change" which is the White House's preferred form of words in recent days.

Pressures on Syria are set to increase, with the report of the UN investigator, Detlev Mehlis, a German prosecutor, who has found there was high-level Syrian and Lebanese involvement in the assassination in Beirut on February 14 of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri.

Mehlis's grim finding will increase pressure for a ratcheting up of sanctions, already in place, against the Damascus regime plus demands for action against the culprits. But the US and its allies also face the dilemma that undue pressure on Assad might risk an implosion in Syria with consequences for surrounding neighbourhoods, not least Lebanon which is in danger of sliding back into conflict.

The US also cannot ignore Iran which is insisting on pressing ahead with a uranium enrichment program and seems, if anything, to have been emboldened by the US presence - and difficulties - in Iraq. This is the reverse of what Bush administration hawks had in mind when they made the case for war.

This outcome belongs in a lengthening list of unintended consequences, including a continuing re-definition of America's Middle East policy itself.

Graphic

PHOTO: Hundreds of thousands of Lebanese demonstrating over the killing of former prime minister Rafik Hariri earlier this year. They were demanding an end to nearly three decades of Syrian military domination. Photo AFP

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End of Document

Time to bring Iran in from cold: The west should start treating Iran like the superpower that it is - and allow it to possess nuclear weapons

The Gazette (Montreal)
September 18, 2005 Sunday
Final Edition

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Section: INSIGHT; Pg. D8

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Byline: BRUCE ANDERSON, The Spectator

Body

From Washington to Tel Aviv, there are expressions of alarm and despondency, especially in Brussels. It looks as if European diplomacy has failed. The Iranians seem determined to press ahead with their nuclear weapons program. To judge by the newspapers, one would assume that this has come as a shock. But anyone involved with Iran policy who claims to be shocked is only pretending.

It is hard to think of a foreign-policy question on which there has been a greater divergence between the public version of events and the policy-makers' private thoughts. Over the past few months, I have discussed Iran in Washington, Paris, London and Tel Aviv. All my interlocutors were dismayed at the dangerous and destabilizing consequences of Iran becoming a nuclear power. Yet none of them could come up with a solution. They saw no harm in the Europeans trying to negotiate. But no one had any faith in the possibility of success.

Until the recent Iranian elections, some American neoconservatives thought that there were grounds for optimism. They believed that because of public alienation the regime was on the point of collapse. A couple of years ago I listened to former Pentagon adviser Richard Perle explaining why there was no point in talking to Mohammad Khatami, then Iranian president. He was like one of those now-forgotten final-phase Communist leaders in Eastern Europe, trying to persuade the West that he was a legitimate reformer when he was about to be swept into history's dustbin.

In Iran, it has not quite worked out like that. Not that Perle was alone. Hardly anyone predicted the outcome of the recent elections, and almost every commentator overestimated the strength of the Iranian liberal opposition. It appears to have been much smaller and much more Tehran-based than we had thought, or hoped.

There was a further problem. Suppose that the theocracy had imploded and been replaced by a more amenable regime. Iranian liberalism has no equivalent of Ayatollah Khomeini. In the absence of such a charismatic leader, the new, almost certainly weak, government would have been striving to consolidate its hold on public opinion. In such circumstances, is it likely that it would have abandoned the nuclear weapons program? Admittedly, one would rather that its leaders had their fingers on the nuclear trigger, instead of some mullah with a sublime faith in paradise. But Iran would still have been moving toward nuclear status.

If one spends five seconds trying to look at the world through Iranian eyes, it is easy to see why. Iranians know that they live in a dangerous neighbourhood. If the Chinese, Indians and Pakistanis have nuclear weapons, why not

Time to bring Iran in from cold: The west should start treating Iran like the superpower that it is - and allow it to possess nuclear weapons

them? They are more democratic than Pakistan, while their human-rights record is much better than China's. Then there are Russia, the United States - and Israel. As an intellectual exercise, try to find a justification which one in 100,000 Iranians might accept for Israel having nuclear weapons, but not Iran.

Iran is an ancient civilization. Its people have an exalted conception of their destiny. Like the Chinese, they complain that in recent times the rest of the world has not paid them the respect that they are due. The resulting insecurity makes them quick to take offence and to feel threatened. The nuclear degrading will encourage both reactions.

So what can the West do? Let us begin by dismissing any military fantasies. the United States could attack Iran, on one condition: If the Iranians were to behave so atrociously that 90 per cent of the American public demanded war and conscription, instantly. Short of that, the U.S. has neither the soldiers, the political will nor the geopolitical insanity for an invasion of Iran. That would mean the end of the Western Alliance, while the Middle East would go up in flames, as would Pakistan, not to mention the oil price and the world economy. Anyone who thinks that President George W. Bush would act in such a way must believe him to be the Michael Moore version, after several lobotomies.

Lesser military options are equally implausible. In 1981, the Israelis destroyed the Iraqi nuclear reactor, Osirak, and thank goodness for their chutzpah. But it was an easy target, standing out in the desert like Ozymandias's statue before its fall. There is no Osirak equivalent. We probably cannot be sure where all the vital equipment is located, and some of it will be in hardened silos which could not be destroyed by conventional weapons. A pre-emptive nuclear strike on Iran? We are back in Michael Moore-land.

That leaves sanctions. At one level, they would work, as they did in Iraq. The Iranian economy would suffer. The problem of poverty, already severe, would intensify. But would this undermine support for the mullahs? There are good reasons for skepticism. The mullahs would be able to appeal to nationalism and anti-Americanism. Their efforts would be reinforced by the Shia ethos, which encourages adherents to embrace suffering and martyrdom. Religion, national pride, xenophobia: it is a potent blend. The liberal minority would no doubt remain impervious. Would it cease to be impotent?

The mullahs would not be impotent. We would have done our worst. As sanctions sank their teeth, Iran would retaliate. More support for Hezbollah, more trouble-making in Iraq, stirring it up in some of the smaller Gulf states just across the road, hitting at Western interests wherever the opportunity presented itself; treat Iran as a pariah, and it will behave like one.

At this juncture, we should seek guidance from two of the golden rules of foreign policy. The first is to see the world as it is, not as we would wish it to be. The second, that if a course of action has no prospect of success, there is no point in persevering with it.

If we were to change tack, we would start with one advantage. Iran is not a fruitcake-ocracy like North Korea. It is a complex society. Its government's actions, though often unwelcome, are neither irrational nor unpredictable. Above all, it should be possible to talk to the Iranians. They are sophisticated. If we showed some willingness to understand their point of view, they might reciprocate by accepting that not all our disputes with them arise from black hatred.

They want to be taken seriously as a regional superpower. As they are one - with a population of almost 80 million - that should not overtax us. They seek reassurance that they are not about to be attacked: equally easy. They already have been helpful to the West over drug-smuggling through Afghanistan; they do not like drugs. We should build on that to encourage other forms of co-operation. We should also maximize trading links, on the assumption that growth would assist Iran's evolution while stagnation would retard it.

That leads to one short-term difficulty. We appear to be locked into the sanctions route. But when the Pakistanis were naughty boys over nukes, they were merely made to stand in the corner for 10 minutes. We needed them as allies, so expediency ruled. Let us be equally expedient with Iran.

Time to bring Iran in from cold: The west should start treating Iran like the superpower that it is - and allow it to possess nuclear weapons

Does this mean that in 10 years' time Iran will no longer be troublesome? That depends on what is meant by trouble; there is bound to be some. But we can be certain on one point. Within 10 years Iran will be a nuclear power. So do we want it stewing in poverty, isolation and hatred, or would we prefer it to be part of a framework of diplomacy and entente?

That question answers itself.

Graphic

Colour Photo: VAHID SALEMI, AP; Iranian women, one holding up the Quran, rallies in support of their country's nuclear program.

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End of Document

Keeping world's events in focus

Nottingham Evening Post

July 20, 2006 Thursday

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Section: Pg. 10

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Body

During a 30-year career Woodthorpe film maker Stephen Foster worked many times in Lebanon and Israel, countries thrust back into world headlines by renewed conflict. He spoke to ANDY SMART about his life behind the lens

The sniper had cameraman Stephen Foster and the rest of the film crew pinned down on a mountain road in southern Lebanon.

For more than an hour accurate rifle fire zipped around their ears as they sheltered, waiting for help.

It was a situation that should never have happened - but the kind of danger Stephen Foster became accustomed to in a 30-year career that took him to some of the most hostile places on earth.

Stephen, a former Bramcote Hills Grammar School pupil, was part of a film crew recording events for the BBC news programme Panorama, in the aftermath of the 1983 suicide attacks on the US Marine barracks in Beirut, which killed 241 American service personnel, and the US Embassy.

The team had linked up with Muslim Druze militiamen in the Chouf mountains who were shelling a Christian village on the opposite side of the valley.

"We got news the Red Cross were coming to evacuate women, children and the elderly from the village and we asked to go across and film it," Stephen said.

"The Druze would only allow Red Cross people to cross, but they agreed, which slightly surprised us, but they wouldn't let us take a car so we had to walk along a mountain road through two checkpoints, the Druze at one end, Christians at the other.

"We spent a day filming in the village ... there were some very emotional scenes."

The trouble began when the team prepared to return to the Druze side of the valley. They reported to the Christian checkpoint which was then supposed to contact the Druze guards for the go-ahead to cross.

"We had got about 200 to 300 yards along the road when someone started shooting. One of the team, Malcolm Bartram, who was ex-military, was the first to realise it was incoming fire and we got down at the side of the road with our backs against the mountain.

"Whoever had radioed from the checkpoint ... the message hadn't reached this sniper who kept us pinned down for about two hours.

Keeping world's events in focus

"Red Cross vehicles kept flashing by at high speed, but we managed to flag one down and he agreed to go to the checkpoint and tell them to stop firing.

"He came back to tell us they were going to stop but by then Malcolm had been shot in the foot. That meant we were now victims and the Red Cross could pick us up."

Having worked in Lebanon and Israel many times, he views the current conflict with a degree of sadness, especially for the innocent people caught up in the hatred.

"I have worked in Gaza and I have seen the effects. The people of southern Lebanon have to live a difficult life, partly due to Hezbollah and partly due to Israel.

"I think the West has a responsibility, but it goes back a long way. The borders that were made in the early part of the last century are coming back to haunt us."

Relaxing in the conservatory of his beautifully restored house in Woodthorpe, Stephen, a tall, slim man who considers his words carefully, like an editor working on a script, tells me that was probably the hairiest experience of a career that was never dull.

Degrees in fine art, films and photography steered him down his chosen path and in the 1970s he joined a Kimberley-based company called Eurofilms which did work for BBC programmes such as Panorama and Newsnight.

From that base he established a reputation in the industry as a cameraman who could capture the right shots and get the job done.

Since those early days, he and his camera have filmed from Coronation Street to the shanty towns of South Africa, from a school in Kettering to the war-ravaged villages of the Congo. He has filmed condemned men on Death Row in America and followed the trail of the "Disappeared Ones" in Chile.

"It is not a career everyone would choose, but I wouldn't change it," said Stephen, despite admitting he has never been totally comfortable with conflict and the consequences he has seen, often at very close quarters.

"It's what I do. I enjoy the people I work with and I enjoy filming, but anyone who enjoys conflict has to be a very strange person.

"Nevertheless, filming in those situations concentrates the mind. In a way it makes the films quite poignant."

It is that intimacy which interests father-of-three Stephen. Capturing the faces and feelings of ordinary people caught up in extraordinary events is where he has found job satisfaction.

And nowhere, he says, was it more forcefully brought home to him than Bosnia, a country which affected him deeply and, more than a decade later, the emotion is still just as strong.

"The Bosnia situation was dreadful. I just could not understand why it happened.

"We were following the story of Dusan 'Dusko' Tadic, the first man to be tried for war crimes. He came from a village called Kozarec which, before the war, was a mixed village, mainly Muslim."

Kozarec had come to the attention of director Belinda Giles through some old home movies, shot on Super 8, of weddings and funerals in the village before the war.

"They showed everyone having a good time together, it looked an idyllic life, everyone got on well.

"And then something snapped.

"The Serbs moved out and some of them then acted as spotters for the Yugoslav army's artillery which began shelling the village.

"What happened? Bosnia is a beautiful country and I am very interested in trying to understand what makes people do what they did."

On May 7, 1997, Serbian Dusan Tadic became the first person convicted of war crimes in the conflict between the Bosnian Muslims and the former Yugoslavia. Tadic was found guilty of 11 charges. He was acquitted of murder in the deaths of 13 Muslims.

Witnesses had accused him of beating, mutilating and killing Bosnian Muslims in 1992 at two Serbian-run concentration camps. Rape charges had been dropped due to witness fear of testifying.

His crimes almost defied description, they were so horrific. In one incident he reportedly emptied the contents of a fire extinguisher into a victim's mouth following a brutal beating.

For his crimes, Tadic was sentenced on July 14, 1997, to 20 years' imprisonment.

One of the projects Stephen, 60, and semi-retired, intends to pursue now he has more time, is to get down on paper his thoughts and memories of Bosnia. He says it will be "a labour of love".

"I am just trying to understand all that happened."

Bosnia was one of those shattering events which, no matter how professional and dispassionate he tried to be, Stephen found himself emotionally involved.

The 1992 Boipatong massacre of 50 innocent victims at the height of the Apartheid struggle in South Africa was another case in point.

"We followed one large family which lived in the shanty town when the Zulu Inkhata attacked. This was black on black violence which made it all the more tragic.

"They had been a large family and only the father and two of his children were left. He had lost his wife and other children.

"We filmed him going to church and I remember very clearly a point in the service where there was a collection and children went up and put a few pennies in the collecting tray ... but his children did not have any pennies.

"That was a pathetic scene, very upsetting ... it is the futility that gets to you."

Fortunately for Stephen's peace of mind, there has been some light among the shade, human interest stories that did not involve the darkest deeds of which man is capable.

He remembers with fondness a Channel 4 drama called Sputniks Bleeps and Mr Perry about a Kettering schoolteacher who tracked the first Russian satellites and used his findings to teach science to his pupils.

"He used to telephone NASA and tell them 'the Russians have launched another one'.

"That was a nice little film."

Load-Date: July 22, 2006

I'M IN THE DESERT!;
RETURNING TO THE SYRIA OF HIS CHILDHOOD SUMMERS WAS TO BE A
TRIP DOWN

The Independent (London)

November 9, 2005, Wednesday

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Section: First Edition; FEATURES

Length: 1209 words

Byline: DOM JOLY

Highlight: Heat and dust: (clockwise from this page) in Apamea; Krak Des Chevaliers; and the ruins at Baalbeck and Palmyra

Body

Here's a dream scenario: someone rings you up out of the blue and asks whether you'd fancy going on a trip anywhere in the world for free. As you check the caller ID to see if it's a friend taking the piss, the person announces that you'll obviously be paid to do it. You can take a friend, oh and there'll be a camera crew coming along with you to record the trip for posterity and Sky One.

Unbelievably, it caused me some consternation. Some people might be worried about how they'd appear with a camera crew documenting their every tantrum and nose-pick. Not me. I gave up any idea of retaining dignity on TV the moment I donned my first squirrel outfit. My problem was more of a practical nature: where to go? Should I cruise the French Riviera in a Bentley? Maybe I should sail to an island in the South Seas?

I'd heard that Harry Enfield had also been offered one of these trips so I rang him up to find out what particular paradise destination he'd chosen, just so that we wouldn't clash. His unusual choice to retrace the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union forced me rethink my options. Maybe I should be doing something with a bit more worth? So I opted for a camping trip in the Axis of Evil. I grew up in the Lebanon and, at least twice a year, my family would set off on extraordinary road trips east into Syria " now prime Axis of Evil territory. My parents divorced in 1987 and I left Lebanon with my mother, never to return. Now I was going to go back and revisit my childhood haunts.

My friend Pete agreed to accompany me. He's an artist, living in the middle of Newfoundland with his wife and daughters. With temperatures at home starting to hit the minus 20s, he was over like a shot at the merest mention of some sunshine.

Three days later we were in Beirut. Beirut is an extraordinary mix of the old and the new. The old Holiday Inn still towers over the city, pock- marked with shell holes from the 1975-76 civil war. Right next to it is the fully refurbished Phoenicia Hotel where I used to go as a kid to get my hair cut. Two hundred metres down the road are the remains of the St George Hotel, a Sixties hot spot for the glitterati. It survived the civil war, but was shattered by the enormous car bomb in February that killed the ex-prime minister, Rafik Hariri.

After sampling some of the Lebanese capital's legendary nightlife, we drove out of Beirut over the Chouf mountains, through pine forests and past hillside Druze villages, just one of the myriad armed factions that have

I'M IN THE DESERT!; RETURNING TO THE SYRIA OF HIS CHILDHOOD SUMMERS WAS TO BE A TRIP DOWN

waged war in Lebanon in the last 30 years. Our destination was the Bekaa valley, home of Hezbollah and, weirdly, the Lebanese wine industry. We got hideously drunk at a wine-tasting before moving on to Baalbeck, home of the most famous ruins in Lebanon. We wandered around the breathtaking remains of the Temples of Jupiter and Bacchus completely alone, save for one Japanese tourist who couldn't seem to stop laughing, so we assumed that he'd sampled the Bekaa valley's other main cash crop, hashish.

We didn't stay long, we were nervous about getting into Syria as the political situation was getting tense with the impending release of the Mehlis Report on the assassination of Hariri, in which it was widely assumed that the Syrians would be implicated. The border is a tricky one to cross at the best of times, let alone when accompanied by a camera crew. Fortunately for us, the Syrian Embassy in London had been more than helpful, and told us that the Ministry of Tourism had sent a man to the border to help with the formalities of getting through. As we drove into the Syrian part of the border, there he was. His name was Sham, and we nicknamed him 'Jimmy' after Jimmy Pursey, the lead singer of punk outfit Sham 69. Jimmy was indeed very helpful and we sailed through the border. We were about to say thank you and drive off when he dropped his bombshell. He was going to be accompanying us on our entire trip as a 'guide'. We thanked him for the kind offer but insisted that we didn't need one. Unfortunately, it wasn't an offer.

Jimmy and I did not hit it off. He immediately started to tell us where we'd be staying that night and what we were going to see. I tried to explain to him that I'd been to Syria many times and had a very clear idea of where we were going and where we would be staying. He had this really annoying habit of nodding in agreement and then ignoring everything that I'd just said. So started a series of weird drives where we'd try to lose him by driving incredibly fast. Then, just as we would be celebrating, he'd turn up and we never knew how he did it until we realised that the driver we'd hired for our crew vehicle was also in on the game and they were constantly calling each other on their mobiles.

Jimmy also had an annoying habit of taking what he called 'memory photos' " which must translate from the Arabic 'intelligence dossier photos'. Everywhere we went he snapped away. Say it was a restaurant " he would photograph the exterior, get a close-up of the name, get an interior and then insist that he get a photo of us at the table. We developed a sophisticated counter-espionage technique and told him that in England it was traditional to raise your glass when a photo is taken at a meal. Every night he would be forced to e-mail yet more photos of six people sitting at a table with wine glasses strategically placed in front of their faces. This became a standing joke and became even more bizarre when, at the end of the trip, Jamie, our cameraman, asked Jimmy to show him his snaps. Jimmy was not keen to do this but finally flicked through the memory card very quickly. Not so quickly that Jamie didn't spot the three snaps of several naked women in some sort of Jacuzzi. Jimmy was clearly having a better trip than we'd suspected.

Our trip continued and we clambered over the magnificent Crusader castle of Krak Des Chevaliers and wandered down the totally empty Roman boulevards of Apamea with no one but Jimmy following behind us like some love-struck puppy. It was quite extraordinary: in any other country, sites like this would be teeming with tourists and coaches and fast-food outlets.

Our final destination was Palmyra, an extraordinary ruined Roman town slap-bang in the middle of the Syrian desert. For poor Jimmy, the final straw was when we announced we were heading off into the desert proper to try to find the caves I used to explore as a kid. The plan, if we found them, was to camp there. Jimmy went nuts. We finally had the big confrontation that this sort of television requires; he even put his hand over the camera lens and told us to turn it off: documentary gold. Apparently the problem was that he had to report our whereabouts every evening to Damascus, and 'the middle of the desert' was not going to be good enough.

As a desperate bid to restrain us, Jimmy told us that it wasn't safe, that there were wolves and evil dwarves in the desert, but he could see that we were going to go anyway. We left him in Palmyra a broken man, and headed off into the middle of nowhere. All in all, it was a rather excellent adventure. And here's a tip for anyone planning subversive activity in the Axis of Evil: camp.

I'M IN THE DESERT!; RETURNING TO THE SYRIA OF HIS CHILDHOOD SUMMERS WAS TO BE A TRIP
DOWN

Dom Joly's Excellent Adventure is on Sky One tomorrow at 9pm

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End of Document

Keeping world's events in focus

Nottingham Evening Post

July 20, 2006 Thursday

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Section: Pg. 10

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Keeping world's events in focus

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And nowhere, he says, was it more forcefully brought home to him than Bosnia, a country which affected him deeply and, more than a decade later, the emotion is still just as strong.

"The Bosnia situation was dreadful. I just could not understand why it happened.

"We were following the story of Dusan 'Dusko' Tadic, the first man to be tried for war crimes. He came from a village called Kozarec which, before the war, was a mixed village, mainly Muslim."

Kozarec had come to the attention of director Belinda Giles through some old home movies, shot on Super 8, of weddings and funerals in the village before the war.

"They showed everyone having a good time together, it looked an idyllic life, everyone got on well.

"And then something snapped.

"The Serbs moved out and some of them then acted as spotters for the Yugoslav army's artillery which began shelling the village.

"What happened? Bosnia is a beautiful country and I am very interested in trying to understand what makes people do what they did."

On May 7, 1997, Serbian Dusan Tadic became the first person convicted of war crimes in the conflict between the Bosnian Muslims and the former Yugoslavia. Tadic was found guilty of 11 charges. He was acquitted of murder in the deaths of 13 Muslims.

Witnesses had accused him of beating, mutilating and killing Bosnian Muslims in 1992 at two Serbian-run concentration camps. Rape charges had been dropped due to witness fear of testifying.

His crimes almost defied description, they were so horrific. In one incident he reportedly emptied the contents of a fire extinguisher into a victim's mouth following a brutal beating.

For his crimes, Tadic was sentenced on July 14, 1997, to 20 years' imprisonment.

One of the projects Stephen, 60, and semi-retired, intends to pursue now he has more time, is to get down on paper his thoughts and memories of Bosnia. He says it will be "a labour of love".

"I am just trying to understand all that happened."

Bosnia was one of those shattering events which, no matter how professional and dispassionate he tried to be, Stephen found himself emotionally involved.

The 1992 Boipatong massacre of 50 innocent victims at the height of the Apartheid struggle in South Africa was another case in point.

"We followed one large family which lived in the shanty town when the Zulu Inkhata attacked. This was black on black violence which made it all the more tragic.

"They had been a large family and only the father and two of his children were left. He had lost his wife and other children.

"We filmed him going to church and I remember very clearly a point in the service where there was a collection and children went up and put a few pennies in the collecting tray ... but his children did not have any pennies.

"That was a pathetic scene, very upsetting ... it is the futility that gets to you."

Fortunately for Stephen's peace of mind, there has been some light among the shade, human interest stories that did not involve the darkest deeds of which man is capable.

He remembers with fondness a Channel 4 drama called Sputniks Bleeps and Mr Perry about a Kettering schoolteacher who tracked the first Russian satellites and used his findings to teach science to his pupils.

"He used to telephone NASA and tell them 'the Russians have launched another one'.

"That was a nice little film."

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The good, the bag and the beautiful; FASHION

Australian Financial Review

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Byline: David Meagher

Body

David Meagher looks at this year's It handbags and why \$150,000 won't be too much to pay for the right model.

Next year, when the French luxury goods company Hermes opens its new flagship store in Sydney - most likely to be around October - it will no doubt throw an A-list-studded party to celebrate the occasion. The real star of that soiree, however, will not be a celebrity in the traditional sense, but a highly sought after crocodile-skin Birkin bag with diamond fittings, flown in just for the opening.

While it might seem premature to talk about a handbag that won't be in the country for the better part of a year, the potential clientele for such a bag are accustomed to waiting. The waiting list for a standard Birkin bag - one without diamond-encrusted fittings - is six to nine months, depending on the availability of the skin chosen. Prices for the standard Birkin begin at \$8600 and go up to \$56,000, depending on the size of the bag and the type of skin.

The good news is that the crocodile and diamond number being flown in for the opening has not been allocated to someone on the waiting list and will be available to buy. The bad news is that it will cost in the vicinity of \$150,000, but is a bargain when you consider the waiting list for a crocodile-skin Birkin can be in years rather than months. And, according to Hermes, these bags can exceed several hundred thousand dollars, depending on the clasp/lock features.

In a fashion world where the latest must-have handbag earns the status of the It bag of the season as soon as the celebrity du jour totes one, the Hermes Birkin bag, named after the actress Jane Birkin, and the company's Kelly bag, named after the actress Grace Kelly, are the ne plus ultra of all It bags.

It bags are not just the most fashionable handbag of the season, they possess a certain type of coolness that makes them highly covetable and ensures that people will pay for the privilege of owning one. The Birkin, for example, is just as popular with Martha Stewart and society matrons as it is with young starlets such as Lindsay Lohan and with rappers' wives.

Such bags are also an increasingly necessary cash cow for luxury fashion houses. When Louis Vuitton introduced its Murakami bag - a reinvention of the brand's classic monogram print by the Japanese artist Takashi Murakami - demand was so great that the first orders never hit the shop floor: they were all presold. The Murakami bag helped Louis Vuitton's parent company, LVMH, defy the market at a tough time for retail spending. Sales of the bag reached \$US345 million, or roughly 10 per cent of the brand's revenue. The bag was so popular that a similarly styled coloured version of the monogram print remains a staple in the Louis Vuitton range.

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If an It bag can be a hit bag and a stayer in the popularity stakes as well, then a designer has struck fashion gold. Chanel's signature quilted shoulder bag, known as the 2.55 after the date it was designed (February 1955) celebrated its 50th year of production this year. The bag has been reinterpreted over the years in such fabrics as denim and tweed and it has remained popular with fashionable women since it first appeared.

Exclusivity has a lot to do with It bag status. Such is the demand for Hermes Birkin bags, designed in 1984, that the waiting list in the United States is reportedly closed for the time being. Orders are placed only twice a year with the French factory and numbers have increased substantially in the last few years, according to Hermes Australia. To allay the impatience of some customers, Hermes tries to steer clients in the direction of less iconic bags, such as the new mini Kelly bags or the shoulder Birkins, for which orders can be more readily filled.

The Fendi Spy bag, which starts at \$2695, has a waiting list in Australia of six months. And if you wanted a Christian Dior Detective bag then you needed to be quick. Only a few of the large, structured bags made it to the Australian market and the demand for the bag - for which a crocodile version costs in excess of \$40,000 - far outweighed supply. A new, tweaked version of the Detective is in the pipeline for 2006.

The economic importance of handbags and accessories to fashion houses is relatively new. Not so long ago it was considered somewhat gauche for a designer to send models down a catwalk swinging handbags - it was a crass commercial distraction from the clothes. Look at a Paris or Milan fashion parade today and there will be as many handbags as there are outfits. In fact, for Louis Vuitton's summer collection show in 2004, the brand's designer, Marc Jacobs, sent 50 individual bags down the runway, one for each of the collection's 50 outfits.

In 2004, the chief executive of Christian Dior, Sidney Toledano, told the UK's Telegraph magazine that, "in 1994, only 3 per cent of Dior's business was in bags, shoes and leather goods. Today it is 50 per cent".

The importance of the accessories business for the bottom line may be one of the reasons that Gucci recently promoted its accessories designer, Frida Giannini, to the position of ready-to-wear designer. Giannini scored a big hit in the handbag wars last year, when she was accessories designer, with her Flora range of bags, which were based on a scarf print that was designed for Grace Kelly in 1966.

THAT PHONEY BRAND NAME COULD COST YOU MORE THAN YOU BARGAINED FOR

Before you think about getting around the waiting list - or the price - by buying a fake It bag, think about this: US customs and Interpol last year warned consumers that counterfeit merchandise was being used to fund terrorist groups.

Ronald Noble, Interpol secretary-general, told the US House Committee on International Relations in 2003 that legal authorities were "seeing the connection in areas between terrorist financing and intellectual property crime [IPC]".

Even if you're not concerned about those connections, you should be aware that a fake bag could end up costing you a lot more than the real thing. Passing through French customs, for example, with a counterfeit bag in your possession could cost you a maximum fine of EUR300,000 (\$470,500) and up to three years in jail (or EUR500,000 and five years' jail if it is considered you are importing the goods for sale).

According to Noble's report, intellectual property crime, which includes everything from counterfeit handbags to fake DVDs, pharmaceuticals and car parts, is now dominated by criminal organisations because of the relatively low risk and comparatively high profit. Most terrorist groups, he says, do not take responsibility for the development and control of counterfeit production and distribution; rather they benefit indirectly from funds remitted to them from sympathisers and militants involved in IPC. The report specifically mentions groups such as the IRA, Hezbollah and al-Qaeda.

Intellectual property specialist Tan Loke Khoo, speaking at last year's International Herald Tribune luxury conference in Hong Kong, described the business of counterfeit goods as "flattery of the worst kind".

The good, the bag and the beautiful FASHION

Louis Vuitton Australia chief executive Philip Corne says support from Australian customs and the federal police in helping fight this crime has increased in recent years "because they recognise where the money is going".

Louis Vuitton is one of the most knocked-off brands in the world. It has 40 full-time lawyers and 250 freelance investigators and will spend EUR15 million fighting counterfeiting this year.

Graphic

TWO PHOTOS: Clockwise from top: Chanel quilted shoulder bag, Hermes Kelly bag, Louis Vuitton, Hermes Birkin, and another from Louis Vuitton in centre. Clockwise from top; two Gucci Flora bags, two Fendi Spy bags and a coloured Louis Vuitton monogram bag.

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End of Document

Spreading the Word: Who's Who in the Arab Media

The New York Times

February 6, 2005 Sunday

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Byline: By HASSAN M. FATTAH

Body

HOW does the word spread?

In his State of the Union speech on Wednesday, President Bush made it clear that thanks to the Iraqi elections, the Middle East had officially changed and that democracy was on the agenda.

Well, not quite. Just as it must convey its message to American voters, the Bush administration still has to get through to the average Arab. That means communicating through the Arab news media, which has a place in the Arab living room, and which will filter and interpret the story, as it does with regional developments.

Most debate in the Arab world remains behind closed doors, but Arab satellite channels and newspapers have managed to bring some of it into the open. With a \$100 satellite setup, the average Arab citizen can now tune into at least three satellites, each carrying hundreds of channels. Most are simply official government channels that made the leap from broadcast to satellite, or entertainment channels that beam music videos and reruns of old Arab and Western shows. But a growing number are so-called independent news channels. Because they can originate anywhere, they are difficult to censor.

Ultimately, most seek to become pan-Arab in scope, though few do it well. And even the successful pan-Arab channels admit that their real focus is Saudi Arabia, the biggest and wealthiest consumer market in the region, where the advertising dollars are.

Then, of course, there's the Internet, with hundreds of Web sites offering everything from gossip to music. Most Arabs turn to the net for chatting and e-mailing, but a whole slew of news sites also seek to attract the Arab reader.

If you want to reach Arabs, here are some of the outlets you have to reach.

Satellite Television

AL JAZEERA -- Financed in large part by the Qatar government, the controversial channel has been banned from operating in numerous Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia, of which it has been highly critical.

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Politics is the lifeblood of this station. There is a lot of interactive programming with viewers phoning in, though the shows tend to be sensational and tend to encourage heated arguments more than thoughtful debate. Here, Western soldiers are called "occupiers" and suicide bombers "martyrs."

Al Jazeera's journalists have always fashioned themselves as defenders of Arab identity, but increasingly, the network also casts itself as a champion of Islamic values. It is planning to launch an English-language channel this year, ostensibly to reach Western audiences but more importantly to reach English-speaking Muslims in Asia and in the West.

AL ARABIYA -- The independent channel is the second-largest news satellite station in the Arab world, owned by the Middle East Broadcasting Center, one of the largest Arab media companies. The center is itself owned in large part by Prince Walid bin Talal, a Saudi billionaire.

Unsurprisingly, Al Arabiya is supportive of the Saudi government and is intended to be a less shrill competitor to Al Jazeera. Begun just weeks before the invasion of Iraq, it has higher production values and more tolerance toward the United States, referring to American troops in Iraq as part of "multinational forces."

AL ALAM -- The Iranian government sponsors this increasingly popular channel, which according to its Web site seeks to "build bridges among the Muslim world" and to offer an "answer to the Western cultural invasion" by covering Arab affairs. With news bureaus in Tehran, Beirut and Baghdad, it offers a raucous critique of the Iraq war, American policy and the Arab regimes. As rumors of an American attack on Iran grow, the station has taken an ever harder anti-American line.

AL EKHABARIYA -- Intended for a Saudi audience, this station is more a poor imitation of a local cable news outlet like Time Warner's NY1 than a pan-Arab broadcaster. It was begun early last year by the Saudi Ministry of Information as an alternative to Al Jazeera. It offers news and talk shows 24 hours a day in a dry tone that often sounds more like a lecture at a Saudi ministry.

AL HURRA -- This United States-backed news channel began broadcasting last spring, and has struggled to build a following. In many ways, Al Hurra tries to copy the format of news and talk shows on Al Arabiya and Al Jazeera. It offers high production values and Arab broadcasters dressed and coiffed like Westerners, but it is often dismissed as American propaganda.

RELIGIOUS CHANNELS -- Al Fajr, Al Anwar, Iqraa TV, Al Majd, Koran TV and Al Manar broadcast mainly out of Saudi Arabia and Lebanon and are primarily financed by governments and Islamic foundations. They focus on religious education and interpretation of the Koran, but they throw in a bit of politics. The first five are Sunni, and highly influential in places like Saudi Arabia and the Palestinian territories; Al Manar is broadcast by Hezbollah out of southern Lebanon. Most provide forums for callers to ask imams and scholars questions about marriage and family, prayer and whether American troops are legitimate targets for jihad. (Many have said yes.)

ROTANA, ZEN TV, LBC -- These highly profitable music channels are for young adults and teenagers, who make up about 60 percent of the population. These channels mix Arab popular music and Western pop and hip-hop. While mainline Arab singers like Amr Diab are featured, so is Usher, an American R.&B. singer, and so are provocatively dressed women.

Newspapers

Like most of the world, Arabs watch television more than they read newspapers. Most papers tend to be local, with small circulations and limited advertising. Unlike satellite channels, these papers can be blocked at a government's

Spreading the Word: Who's Who in the Arab Media

will, and often are. (To minimize problems, several pan-Arab newspapers publish out of Europe.) Still, their articles can be heavily influential.

AL SHARQ AL AWSAT -- The pan-Arab daily is one of the oldest and most influential in the region. Published by a private company, the Saudi Media Research Group, from offices in London and distributed in most Arab countries, the paper supports the Saudi government, and news on Saudi Arabia is featured prominently on the Page One. Even so, the paper maintains a measured tone; its green-tinted front page helps it stand out on newsstands.

AL HAYAT -- This decidedly Arab nationalist paper, the main rival to Al Sharq Al Awsat, is also published out of London; it is owned by Khalid bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz, a Saudi prince, and is distributed in most Arab countries. Most of its editors are Lebanese, and it is very popular in Lebanon. It is more critical of the Saudi government than its rival.

OKAZ -- Okaz is Saudi Arabia's most prominent daily. Although it is not a government-owned newspaper, the paper is largely regarded as a government mouthpiece and tends to set the daily agenda for the Saudi media.

AL AHRAM -- This Egyptian government-backed daily is regarded as the paper of record for Egypt, where it is sold. Its circulation may exceed that of all the pan-Arab papers combined. The paper has generally been supportive of democratic reforms, but wants the United States to mind its own business.

AL GHAD -- This new, independent newspaper is making waves in Jordan, taking on the established government-owned papers. Al Ghad is trying to cater to Jordan's young elite by writing about controversial issues -- like education and democratic reform -- of interest to Arab baby boomers. The paper strives for a balanced editorial page. For instance, it has published letters from the Israeli ambassador to Jordan, something other Arab newspapers are very rarely willing to do.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos: Today, there is greater diversity in the Arab news media. Far left, a Palestinian man reads about the Iraqi election

left, patrons at a Cairo coffee shop watch Al Arabiya's coverage. (Photo by Suhaib Salem/Reuters)

(Photo by Muhammed Muheisen/Associated Press)

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Taking notes on terror

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National Edition

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Byline: Michael Burrows, National Post

Body

While working in an intelligence liaison capacity in the late-1990s sometime after al-Qaeda blew up the U.S. embassies in Nairobi and Dar es-Salaam and before the realized nightmare of 9/11, I attended a course entitled "Understanding Islamic Fundamentalist Terror." The course wasn't for domestic consumption, but for a group of well-scrubbed male and female FBI agents who had flown in from various field offices scattered throughout the United States. It was the first course of its kind designed to familiarize representatives of a foreign intelligence body with the threat of Islamic terror. The course was the visionary brainchild of Israel's domestic security service, the Israel Security Agency (ISA) -- better known as "Shabach," the Hebrew acronym for Sherut Bitachon Clalli or General Security Service.

Co-operation between nations, it was argued, was necessary to combat the ever increasing threat of Islamic fundamentalist terror, and it has become the general consensus of all enlightened and democratic nations that no one intelligence service can defeat terrorism alone and unaided.

The reason I was attending this particular seminar was to simultaneously translate a lecture that was to be presented by a former member of a terror cell of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), whom I'll refer to as "Ahmad." Ahmad was not a prisoner, but a man who had decided that he had experienced enough of the dark side and could not in good conscience remain there.

Not much is written about PIJ. It lacks the well-oiled PR and media-savvy capability of most Palestinian organizations. Unlike HAMAS and the other Palestinian terror groups -- both secular and otherwise -- PIJ is very unambiguous about its stated aim, which is the creation of an Islamic Palestinian state and the destruction of Israel through attacks against Israeli military and civilian targets inside Israel and the Palestinian territories. Also unlike HAMAS, PIJ has no social or political role in the PA. Politics have no meaning to the followers of an Islamic nihilist ideology. PIJ is a small outfit based in Damascus and its financial backing comes from both Syria and Iran. It also maintains offices in Beirut, Tehran and Khartoum. PIJ is the pit-bull terrier of hard-core Islamic terror.

When Ahmad was ushered into the room, he was met with silence and even a little apprehension. He is a bull of a man and had a very imposing and palpable physical presence. I am not the easily intimidated type, but Ahmad was, simply stated, scary. Even these veteran FBI agents -- used to dealing with hard-core mobsters and their own home-grown Islamic terrorists -- were somewhat awestruck.

Taking notes on terror

For about an hour I sat shoulder-to-shoulder facing the crowded room with a man who under other circumstances would see me blown to bits or beheaded in front of a cheap camcorder without a second thought. I wanted to do justice to Ahmad's lecture and translated his words as if they were my own. I found myself not only describing the selection, training and preparation of a suicide bomber, but also described in his words (but my own voice) how PIJ terrorists view us through their eyes. It was a terrible insight that I will never forget and a lesson to those who seek to offer a moral relativity to the actions of suicide terrorists.

For the record, PIJ mostly recruits from the university crowd and its followers are, for the most part, the educated product of the middle-class. A terrorist must possess more grey matter than desperation in his arsenal if he wants to be truly successful.

Ahmad avoided speaking in the first person and related how a young and impressionable Palestinian already subsisting on a diet of incitement, bigotry and violent rhetoric was easy prey for PIJ's talent-spotters. He conveyed all the aspects of life as a committed Islamist; from married life to how compartmentalized terrorist cells operate and select their targets. Attacks are directed by the leadership from the relative safety of their headquarters in Damascus, and the target is left to the discretion of the field commander. Cell commanders are often berated by the external leadership for not being "active" enough or conducting spectacular enough attacks. This is really a tribute to the diligent efforts of the ISA.

Ahmad spoke about how PIJ perfected the art of conducting double suicide attacks whereby the first suicide bomber approaches the target and detonates himself, and in the ensuing mayhem, the second detonates near the able-bodied and first-responders trying to attend to the maimed and wounded. Such an attack occurred on Jan. 22, 1995, when two consecutive bombs exploded at the Beit Lid junction near Netanya, killing 19 Israelis and wounding 69 others. In March of 1996, PIJ suicide bombers attacked the Dizengoff shopping mall during the Purim holiday when it was crowded with costume-attired children. In that attack, some 20 people were killed and over 75 injured. PIJ, Ahmad explained was, "hard-core."

Ahmad did not offer a view that followers of political correctness and multiculturalism-at-all-costs would consider consistent with their take on the roots of Islamic extremist terrorism. He declared unapologetically, "In our view, non-Muslims are insects, and it is quite within our rights as Muslims to rape, steal from, punish and kill non-Muslims as we deem fit." He described an insular existence that was motivated by a religious ideology so intolerant of anything not of itself, that no crime was too great in removing it from their vision of the world. The odd thing was, when he explained it, all you could understand on a certain level was how it all made sense.

PIJ's take on the world offered an exculpability greater than anything Noam Chomsky or his acolytes could dream up. Ahmad explained that they didn't need our ideological arguments to justify their Jihad. They are uninterested in our perceived culpability for their "plight" as many would have you otherwise believe. We are weak, meaningless targets for elimination regardless of how port or starboard we perceive ourselves to be on the political spectrum. To be a true PIJ (or HAMAS terrorist for that matter), you must first embrace the culture of non-Muslim xenophobia.

After the lecture there was a Q & A session, but it was short and desultory. Not because Ahmad's lecture failed to resonate, but due to the shock of the listeners. It was not the kind of thing you just walk away from unaffected. I had been given a unique opportunity that I shall never forget. I believe the same was true for the FBI agents who attended the course. I'm sure this experience influenced the thinking at the National Security Division of the FBI, the body tasked with combatting terrorism, and I credit them with recognizing early on the threat of Islamic terror and sincerely trying to combat it within the inadequate protocols and legislation that were in place prior to 9/11. I worked on several occasions with Ken Williams, the author of the now-famous memo written in July of 2001 that theorized followers of Osama Bin Laden were trying to infiltrate the U.S. civil aviation system. I believe that he was indicative of the quality of personnel at the FBI's field offices. Sadly, FBI headquarters was too many steps behind their field personnel.

Ahmad's lecture taught us that terrorism cannot be eradicated by hugs and goodwill or even explained by this grievance or that. It doesn't know, nor want to know, what steps we can offer to help their so-called plight. While it

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can be argued that the West has made many foreign policy blunders, placing the blame for radical extremist terrorism solely and squarely on our shoulders is an exercise in self-delusion.

So many years later, I can't help but reach the conclusion that while the content of Ahmad's lecture was important for us in the counterterrorism business, the most relevant consumer was really the world's Muslim communities. How long will they tolerate PIJ, HAMAS, Hezbollah, al-Qaeda et al. being the spokespersons for their religion? I have an idea how Ahmad would answer the question and, in a way, by having the courage to turn his back on violent thought and deed, he already has.

Graphic

Graphic/Diagram: Gary Clement; Charicature of a terrorist giving a lecture.

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What Set Loose the Voice of the People

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Byline: By DEXTER FILKINS

Dateline: BEIRUT, Lebanon

Body

IN memory, the two scenes are linked by their silence. Last week in downtown Beirut, Lebanese by the hundreds filed past the tomb of Rafik Hariri, the fallen national leader, each pausing to offer some unspoken tribute. The only audible sound was a murmured prayer for the dead.

In Baghdad two months before, Iraqis in similar numbers had waited in line outside a high school to cast their ballots. Mortar shells were exploding in the distance, yet hardly anyone uttered a sound.

Amid such overwhelming displays of popular will, it seemed that words were hardly necessary.

Only weeks apart and a few hundred miles away, the popular demonstrations in Lebanon and Iraq offer themselves up for such comparisons. Their proximity suggests a connection, possibly one of cause and effect, like the revolutions that swept Eastern Europe in 1989. As went Berlin, Prague and Bucharest; so goes Baghdad, Beirut and Cairo.

President Bush has asserted as much, arguing that the toppling of Saddam Hussein and the holding of elections in Iraq set loose the democratic idea and sent the tyrannies reeling. From a distance, Lebanon looks like a domino.

Up close, though, it seems like something far more complex. For a correspondent who has spent much of the past two years inside Iraq, arriving in the seaside capital of Beirut is a bracing and abrupt experience. For all the glories of election day, Iraq is still a grim and deadly place, where the traumas of the past 30 years are imprinted in the permanent frowns of ordinary Iraqis. Lebanon, by contrast, seems Iraq's sunny, breezy cousin, where young men arrive at demonstrations wearing blazers and hair gel, and the women high heels and navel rings. When the protest is finished, they drive off together in their BMW's.

How could Iraq have inspired this?

Chibli Mallat, a Beirut lawyer and opposition leader, has an answer. He believes that for years, Iraq stood as both a positive and malevolent symbol to others in the Middle East. Saddam Hussein's survival following the Persian Gulf war in 1991, Mr. Mallat said, froze the status quo in the region for more than a decade. The Iraqi dictator's prolific human rights abuses had the perverse effect of making every other unelected leader in the Middle East look tame by comparison. The result, he said, was political stasis.

What Set Loose the Voice of the People

"Saddam's survival created an atmosphere where people literally got away with murder," Mr. Mallat said. "His removal became a precondition for change in the region."

When the Americans finally returned to topple Mr. Hussein two years ago, and, more important, when millions of Iraqis risked their lives to cast ballots in January, the country emerged as a symbol for change across the region.

"Suddenly, there was a demand for democracy," Mr. Mallat said.

MR. MALLAT'S view, compelling though it is, is a minority one in Lebanon. Most Lebanese will tell you that Iraq had nothing to do with the popular upheaval now gripping the country, and not just because they opposed the American invasion of their Arab neighbor. Unlike Iraq, Lebanon has been a functioning democracy since 1990, when the civil war, which killed 100,000 people, finally came to an end. Lebanon's press is vibrant, with newspapers and television stations largely free to criticize the government in Arabic, English and French. While Iraq still requires billions of dollars to repair its crumbling public works, Lebanon, thanks in no small way to Mr. Hariri's efforts, has largely rebuilt itself.

Indeed, it is no accident that the main slogan of the Lebanese opposition is not "Democracy," but "Sovereignty, Independence and Freedom." The goal is to expel Syrian forces, who have been in Lebanon for 30 years.

At least to an outsider, the main difference between Iraq and Lebanon seems not just Iraq's inexperience with democracy, but its all too dreadful experience with terror. In Iraq, political discourse often seems stunted, if less by a lack of practice than by the lingering shadow of Mr. Hussein. In Lebanon, with some exceptions -- like the subject of Syria and its Lebanese client, President Emile Lahoud -- most citizens are well accustomed to speaking their minds. In the last few weeks, most of the remaining taboos have fallen away.

"We want the truth," said Naila Shukry, a biology student at Arab University in Beirut. "Someone has murdered our leader, and we want to know who is responsible."

The more extensive experience with democracy has allowed the Lebanese to develop a discourse that seems far more nuanced and sophisticated than the one practiced by their counterparts in Iraq, where people are still testing the rudiments of debate. In Iraq, elections began the democratic process; here, it has already been many years in the making.

When Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of the militant Hezbollah organization, addressed a rally of his supporters in downtown Beirut earlier this month, he stood in front of a Lebanese flag rather than the group's trademark banner, green and yellow with a fist and a Kalashnikov rifle. The change, seen on television, prompted a good deal of chatter in Lebanon's political classes about Mr. Nasrallah's intentions. Whatever he meant, such a political moment is inconceivable in Iraq today.

"Here we already have a democracy," said Mustafa Salha, a 40-year-old worker in a plastic factory who had come to visit Mr. Hariri's tomb. "Iraq didn't have anything to do with that."

Indeed, the goal of those taking to the streets in Lebanon has not so much been the beginning of democracy, but rather a better democracy than what they already have. The way to get that, most Lebanese seem to agree, is to expel the Syrian forces and by so doing end that country's overweening influence here. The Lebanese have tolerated that presence for years, buying into the notion that the Syrians brought them stability in exchange for their putting up with Syrian power to veto most important political decisions.

As their democracy matured, more and more Lebanese came to regard the Syrian presence as a rotten bargain. Last September, when the Syrian government engineered the extension of Mr. Lahoud's term, the discontent became acute.

Enter the government of the United States. In an echo of the ambivalence many Iraqis feel about the American presence in their country, many Lebanese are skeptical of American intentions. Not least among their reasons is what they regard as the acquiescence of the United States to the continuation of Syria's military presence here in 1990, in exchange for Syria's joining the coalition that was then being built to oust Mr. Hussein from Kuwait.

What Set Loose the Voice of the People

"The Syrians had a mandate from the United States" to keep their troops in Lebanon, said a former Lebanese minister who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

For many Lebanese, what made significant change possible in Lebanon was not the elections in Iraq, but the events of Sept. 11, 2001, which prompted the Bush administration to re-examine its reluctance to challenge the Syrian regime, as well as other Arab dictatorships that had backed terrorist groups. When the Lebanese began calling for a Syrian withdrawal, the Syrian government had to defy not just the Lebanese people, but the United States as well.

For that reason, more than a few Lebanese believe, President Bush's demands are proving decisive in driving the Syrians out. "This enthusiasm for democracy may not happen again," said Khalil Karam, professor of international relations at University of St. Joseph here, speaking of American foreign policy. "Without it, we could not stop Syria."

Back at Mr. Hariri's tomb, Mr. Salha, the factory worker, offered his own grudging invitation, if only to ensure that his homeland finally frees itself of Syrian domination.

"We are not against Bush," Mr. Salha said. "If he wants to make us safe and free, that's great. Let him do it."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos: In Beirut, a protester wears a message for Syria. (Photo by Kevin Frayer/Associated Press)(pg. 1)

Democracy is not new to Lebanon, but challenging Syria's presence is. A huge rally called for the truth about the assassination of the former prime minister, Rafik Hariri, which many attribute to Syria. (Photo by Lynsey Addario for The New York Times)(pg. 5)

Load-Date: March 27, 2005

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A family at war

The Times (London)

July 27, 2006, Thursday

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Section: FEATURES; Times2; Pg. 4

Length: 2617 words

Byline: Nada Awar Jarrar

Body

The Lebanese novelist NADA AWAR JARRAR describes how her happy family life in Beirut was destroyed when Israel attacked.

Day four of Israel's assault on Lebanon, and a bride and groom appear in the garden of my parents' home. They stand side by side -her dress is white and trimmed with sequins and lace -and smile broadly as their pictures are taken.

It is not unusual for young couples to come here with photographers in tow nearly every Sunday in summer. My parents' garden has the only bit of decent lawn in this small Mount Lebanon village and around its edges, just where the grass begins to dip into the pine-filled valley below, there are flowerbeds of pink, violet and blue hydrangeas in full bloom.

The sight of the newlyweds raises my spirits. I call my two-year-old daughter Zeina over and lift her up so she can see what is going on. For a brief moment, I manage to forget about the war.

On Wednesday, July 12, I'd been sitting in a Beirut cafe with a friend when I happened to look up at the television placed just above the cashier's chair. CNN was reporting five Israeli soldiers killed and two taken prisoner in a Hezbollah operation. I knew immediately that the repercussions for such an act would be dire and hurriedly got up to return home.

Early next morning, my husband Bassem and I woke to two loud explosions. We jumped out of bed and ran on to our balcony to watch smoke rising from the airport runway in the distance. We looked at each other and realised that things were likely to get much, much worse.

We were concerned mainly about my niece and two nephews recently arrived from the US and the UK. They were here to spend the summer with us but I was beginning to think it would be best if they left the country. The airport had closed down and the only other way out would be via the Syrian border; all three have foreign passports and blatantly foreign names, and they might have difficulty getting into Syria without Lebanese IDs.

Bassem and I go to bed on Thursday night having decided to send my elderly parents and the children up to my father's village 20km (12 miles) east of Beirut until we can work out what to do. All I can focus on as I wait for sleep is my anger at Hezbollah for making the decision to go to war without consulting anyone else in the country. It is several hours before I finally manage to drop off.

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The next morning I watch one car drive off with my parents, their Filipino housekeeper and the dog. The driver, a sensible young man from a village in the West Bekaa who has been taking care of my father for the past year, has promised me that if the roads prove too dangerous, he'll turn back. As I wave them away, I can hear Israeli fighter jets overhead and Bassem tells me he thinks we should make our way up to the mountains as well. Back in the apartment, I take out a large suitcase and begin to throw in clothes; later I will discover missing essentials such as dental floss, books, warm sweaters and Zeina's potty (we had been planning to embark on toilet training this summer).

Our first night here and Zeina is unused to the new surroundings. We are all three of us sharing a room and she has to sleep in a portable cot that is smaller than her bed at home. I sit in an armchair where she can see me and wait as she cries herself to sleep. In the dark, the pine trees outside our window are visible only in silhouette.

We are all exhausted with sadness.

The next day we receive dozens of e-mails and calls from friends both here and abroad asking how we are doing. My brother calls from Saudi Arabia where he works and my two sisters telephone from Florida and London. For the moment at least, there is no talk of trying to get the children out of the country. It seems safer to stay put in the village and wait it out for a day or two to see what transpires.

Karim, 22, and Dina, 19, are my older sister's children. Their father is American and they have lived in the US all their lives, although they make regular trips here to visit us. Ramsey is my younger sister's 16-year-old son. His father is from the UK and he was born and brought up in London, but he has also made frequent trips to Lebanon over the years. Along with my brother's daughter Aida, 18, they all seem unaware of how serious the situation really is. They try constantly to make me smile and I am unable to oblige.

First you hear the drone buzzing incessantly from an indeterminate place in the sky. I think the technical name for them is "unmanned aircraft" and the Israelis use them for reconnaissance purposes just before the real bombing begins. A few hours later the distant rumbling of aircraft grows louder and is followed by explosions. That moment before the bomb finally drops is the worst, I think.

Later, you find out who or what was hit.

The BBC World Service reports that hundreds of thousands of people have been made homeless by these attacks. Where will they all go? Lebanon's Minister for Education has opened up government schools around the country to house the refugees. I cannot help but think selfishly of our beautiful apartment in Beirut.

As badly as I feel about the plight of people displaced by the onslaught, I know I would hate to have strangers move in to my home. Friends from Beirut's southern suburbs are staying in my parents' flat and they have promised to look after ours as well. Later that night, we see pictures on television of refugees from the south camping out in a public garden in Beirut only five minutes' walk from where we live. This should not be happening.

Bassem has been busy making sure that we will have enough provisions for a lengthy stay here. Already there are rumours of shortages of cooking gas, petrol, milk, flour and other staples. We also have to ensure that my parents will not run out of their medications. Bassem makes the rounds of shops and pharmacies in Kornayel as well as in neighbouring villages. Prices have gone up and supermarket shelves are emptying at an alarming rate, so we must act fast.

We are fortunate in that the caretakers of our mountain home have a thriving cottage garden planted with parsley, mint, coriander, tomatoes, long beans, cucumber, corn, onion, courgettes and cabbage. The caretaker's wife also stocks up on wheat every year and makes her own mountain bread on a wood-fired stove she has set up by the shed.

We are getting at least 12 hours of electricity a day and are using our generator only when it is absolutely necessary as the country is also likely to run out of fuel oil. We buy plenty of candles and matches and, to Zeina's

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delight, Bassem hands each of us a small, imitation-leather key-chain with a tiny light attached, just in case we get caught in the dark.

On our second night in the village we discuss again the possibility of sending my nieces and nephews across the border to Syria. A close relative who lives with his wife and two sons in Miami is here on holiday and is also anxious to get his family out. Perhaps the children can go with them. We are encouraged by the fact that dozens of minivans packed with people and luggage have driven up the main road of the village and through to the town of Zahleh in the Bekaa, which is only half an hour away from the Masnaa border crossing. Perhaps it will not prove as difficult as we had thought. While we wait for my sisters and my brother to phone, the children say they don't want to go, but I for one would like to be relieved of anxiety over their safety.

It occurs to me how different my circumstances are this time around. When the Lebanese civil war broke out in August 1975, I was a schoolgirl and on holiday with my mother and sisters in England. We thought it would just be a matter of one or two weeks before we could go back home, but I did not return for good until 20 years later.

I am married now, with a two-year-old child as well as elderly parents to care for and cannot single-handedly make the decision to simply pack up and leave. But most of all, I feel that every part of my life is invested in this country, my past and present and the future for Bassem and Zeina and myself as a family. How can something so important be shattered in a matter of days? Do the Israelis and their allies in the United States realise what they are doing to us, or is it just that they simply do not care?

We are Druze, our family has lived in this village for hundreds of years and I think of myself as a native of the mountain. My father had this house built in the early 1950s, soon after he and my mother got married. We came up here after the end of the school year throughout our childhood and ran wild in the pine forests above the house. They were memorable summers which came to an abrupt end once the civil war began.

A soft mist comes up from the valley every afternoon and Zeina stares at it in surprise; I tell her that the sky has come down to be with us. I hope that she too will grow up to love the way the swirls of cloud float between the umbrella pines and then linger on the grass and flowers.

The children are set to leave tomorrow morning. They will join a convoy of three minivans and a dozen other people. Bassem decides to take everyone out for a farewell drink at an outdoor cafe but I refuse to go. I am tired and not in the mood for conversation and cannot bring myself to leave Zeina even for an hour or two. If Israeli jets break the sound barrier or bomb somewhere close by and she is awakened violently from her sleep, I want to be there to comfort her.

On the morning of the children's departure the caretaker's wife prepares a special breakfast of wholemeal flatbread with olive oil, thyme and sesame seeds. We make a huge pot of tea, cut up some ripe tomatoes into wedges and sit around the kitchen table eating and talking. I know I will be more at ease once my nieces and nephews are gone, but I want to savour the short time we have left together.

After the minivans set off my mother disappears into her bedroom: she has suffered an asthma attack and had to rush to fetch her inhaler. Bassem calls for a doctor for her and she calms down somewhat after that.

My father, who suffered a stroke several years ago that has left him virtually unable to speak, closes his eyes once the children are gone and refuses to communicate with anyone for the rest of the day.

As I put Zeina to bed later that night I find myself lamenting her fate. Unlike her cousins, Lebanon is her only home. What will this country be like to grow up in now?

Why should she have to suffer the consequences of a mindless war that has brought an independent country to its knees? I feel in part responsible for all of this.

Bassem and I married in the US, where he had been living for more than 25 years, and it was I who insisted on coming back home. Sometimes the heart is wrong.

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The Lebanese Druze leader Walid Jumblatt asked in an interview on television last night why it is that Lebanon always has to pay the price for the tragedy of Palestine. If other Arab countries are so intent on fighting Israel, why don't they do it on their own soil? Good question, I think. I go to sleep thinking about how Jumblatt concluded the interview: "The Lebanese choose life," he said. "We will not die."

It is exactly one week since this madness began and we are beginning to settle into an uneasy routine in this house. The village has gone eerily quiet now that all the summer visitors are gone. People here depend on the summer season for their livelihood. How will they manage this winter without the income they would have earned?

Rami, the young man who looks after my father, finds out today that his village close to the border with Syria has been hit. He telephones to ask about his wife and young daughter who are, thankfully, unharmed. We think about how best to remove them from the village and bring them here. This sort of thing is happening all over the country.

Big drama at the house yesterday. An enormous vehicle used by a neighbour to dig wells for his construction business has been parked on the road just above our place. Only two days ago, Israeli warplanes hit two similar vehicles in the middle of Achrafieh in the Christian part of Beirut because they thought they were rocket launchers. Everyone is furious with him and we telephone around frantically trying to locate him and have it moved away.

His parents say there is no danger that the Israelis will try to hit the vehicle and we ask them why it is, then, that their son saw fit to move it away from his own house. Half an hour later, it is gone. The next morning we learn that Israeli planes bombed two similar vehicles in Tyre overnight.

Planes overhead and the explosions that follow are very loud. I am with Zeina in the sitting room and she jumps up and grabs at my knees. I tell her it is only fireworks and she says: "Fire here?" Moments later we see smoke rising from the hills across the valley. On the television, the announcer says a bridge on the Damascus road only a short distance away has been hit yet again. Too close for comfort.

Almost a normal day. Bassem's brother, Samir, who has been staying in the family's summer home in the town of Aley, about half an hour away, comes over for lunch.

Samir's wife and two sons left for Jordan last week and he has brought along an artist friend from Beirut. A number of cousins from the village also come over to visit. Our spirits are lifted, if temporarily, by the company.

Talk is of the war, of course, what is happening, why it is happening and what the consequences might be. The Israelis have apparently dropped leaflets warning those who remain in the south to leave immediately. I wonder how they expect people to escape when their planes and rocket fire have destroyed all the roads leading out of the region. The sight on television of women and children carrying suitcases and mincing their way through the rubble of bridges as they try to get to the other side makes me very angry. How dare they do this to us?

Day 13 of Israel's onslaught on Lebanon, and Rami has brought his wife and daughter over to stay. Zeina keeps taking her new playmate by the hand, dragging her around the house and garden and pointing out things of interest. Rami tells us that as they were making their way over here from their village, two factories were bombed not far from the main road, one that produces sugar and the other ceramic tiles. They are only two among dozens of factories that have been targeted by the Israelis -only last week, one of the country's main dairy farms was destroyed.

It has occurred to me that, along with many other Lebanese of my generation, I have always defined my life in terms of "before" and "after" the civil war that began in 1975 and did not end until 15 years later. We look back with nostalgia on the "golden" years that preceded civil conflict and the hardship of exile that followed once it began.

Now that another war has come along, I'm not sure what to think. This is becoming something like an in-between life.

We drive to the town of Aley to visit Samir for lunch and to meet other members of my husband's family who are gathered there. Bassem has the radio tuned to an Arabic station and Zeina and I sit in the back seat humming along with the music and looking out the window at the hills and houses and surrounding countryside.

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I told Bassem earlier today that if it takes this country another 20 years to recover from all this, by then we will both be too old and tired to dream again.

All I can think of now is that no matter what state it's in, this is our home and this is where we will stay.

Nada Awar Jarrar was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Prize in 2004 for her novel Somewhere, Home. Her new book, Dreams of Water, is published next year.

Load-Date: July 27, 2006

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your LETTERS: VIEWPOINT - Laws flouted

Daily Post (North Wales)

July 27, 2006, Thursday

North Wales Edition

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Section: LETTERS; Pg. 14

Length: 134 words

Byline: Donald Saunders

Body

AFTER over two weeks of the disastrous war, where both Israel and Hezbollah have grossly flouted most parts of The Geneva Convention on Military law, we are being asked by the U.S and U.K. governments to "await the pleasure" of Israel whilst it continues to destroy a country, and their opponents respond in a similar way.

Hundreds of innocent civilians, chiefly women and children, are being massacred.

Our Government should be ashamed in supporting the U.S. by refusing to demand an immediate ceasefire and, in effect, supporting such illegal methods of dealing with the situation.

No solution of the overall Middle East problems will be achieved until Israel's decades of mistreatment of the Palestinians is tackled and a fair settlement of the occupied territories is negotiated.

Donald Saunders. Rhos-on-Sea

Load-Date: July 27, 2006

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Canberra Times (Australia)

July 27, 2006 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: A; Pg. 16

Length: 985 words

Byline: The Canberra Times

Body

Hard to be unbiased Those criticising Robert Fisk's reports on Lebanon might not know that he walked through the Shatila and Sabra Palestinian refugee camps in 1982.

Fisk saw what the Israeli Army's ally, the Lebanese Christian Phalange, had done while the army looked on.

I defy anyone to be totally unbiased after walking among hundreds of dead women and children.

There will be no peace until voters force politicians to accept killing civilians is always a war crime, whether you do it with a suicide belt or by pulling the trigger of your F16 jet, Apache helicopter or M16 rifle.

It is a war crime when you order civilians to flee then blow up the roads and bridges they try to escape on or you target their minibus which is their only means of escape.

It is not anti any religion to discuss the war crimes committed in the name of that religion - be it Christian, Jewish, Muslim or other.

The Middle East tragedy is endless because extremists and key leadership figures on both sides refuse to accept the right of the other to live. Rod Olsen, Flynn As far wrong Hezbollah is in killing civilian Israelis, equally distant is Israel from having right on its side.

Peace will not come to the Middle East until enough are blind toothless and have no choice left other than to put down their gun. David Grant, Murrumbateman, NSW The United Nations finally got it right.

Hezbollah are cowards who hide among civilians and it is they, and only they, who are responsible for all civilian deaths on both sides of the border. I just wish the "peace" protesters could get it right also.

Mike Lankuts, Gilmore Australia's silence on the destruction of Lebanon and Gaza is a disgrace.

Along with the international community, Australia has a responsibility to protect civilians of whatever nationality caught up in the conflict.

The Federal Government must find its voice in support of an immediate ceasefire by Israel, Hezbollah and Hamas, and UN brokered negotiations.

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Intensive bombing and rocketing of civilian areas and the rapidly rising death toll of women and children on both sides is no recipe for peace.

More likely it will breed another generation of hatred and retribution.

Australia must support for UN intervention and a negotiated settlement.

Action on UN Security Council resolution 1559 (2004) calling for disarming of Hezbollah and Hamas is urgent but so too is long overdue action on UNSC resolution 242 (1967) which remains "the basis for every state in the region to live in peace".

The root cause of today's conflict lay in the failure of the international community to implement resolution 242. Israel's continued occupation of territories won in conflict, expansion of settlements on Palestinian land, the erection of the apartheid wall in the West Bank and recognition of the democratically elected Palestinian Government (with time for Hamas to review its policy on Israel) must all be addressed if a just and lasting peace is to be achieved.

Russell Rollason, president, United Nations Association of Australia (ACT) Clive Williams claims ("Hezbollah cannot be destroyed", July 25, p13) that, since 2000, Hezbollah has been attacking Israel to pressure Israel into giving up occupied Lebanese territory, and that Israel will eventually have to negotiate on the issue of occupied Lebanese land.

In fact, as the United Nations has certified, Israel withdrew from all Lebanese land in 2000.

The so-called disputed area, the Sheba'a farms, was part of Syria before Syria lost it, together with the Golan Heights, in Israel's defensive war in 1967.

Only Hezbollah, Syria and Lebanon maintain it is Lebanese land, so Hezbollah has a pretext for continuing to attack Israel.

Mr Williams also accuses both sides of war crimes.

While Hezbollah targets civilians, Israel targets Hezbollah and tries to avoid civilian casualties.

These casualties happen largely because Hezbollah shelters itself among the civilians, but this is a war crime by Hezbollah, not by Israel.

Alan D. Shroot, Forrest 'Surplus' humans According to new reports, Germany is seeking an EU ban on stem-cell research funding.

Germany's memory of genetic experimentation, all in the name of medical research of course, during the dark days of the Nazi regime, is one reason it opposes embryonic stem-cell research.

Then, as now, those killed during those medical experiments were considered useless/surplus humans, so let them be put to some useful purpose before they die. As a result the world rose as one to condemn those responsible for this disregard of human life.

Maybe Brent Howard (Letters, July 23) would subscribe to the idea of making use of all those prisoners in our gaols deemed "never to be released".

They are useless/surplus so why not put them to some use, all in the name of medical research of course, with the additional benefit of saving the taxpayer money for their life-long upkeep.

P. Robinson, Holt Brent Howard (Letters, July 24) suggests that "destructive embryonic research", involving the killing of embryos, does not harm them.

A reasonable question in response to that proposition would be: "What kind of harm is greater than killing?"

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It is a reminder that what is being killed is full of inherent potential by virtue of its being, and that the potential to live, grow and develop is part of what it means to be a living human being.

The argument that embryos "have never been sentient" would, if accepted by society, not augur well for adults and children who, because of serious accidents or genetic predispositions, have a much- decreased level of sentiency, or would be - like persons in a coma - not sentient at all.

In view of the scientific fact that stem cells can be harvested in a non- destructive fashion from adults, a preoccupation with destructive embryonic research makes no sense.

Last but not least: it's a scientific fact, not religious dogma, that embryonic beings are human beings. Henk Verhoeven, Beacon Hill, NSW

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ISRAEL MISSILES KILL 10 IN GAZA

The New York Times

June 14, 2006 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 4; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

Length: 1356 words

Byline: By STEVEN ERLANGER and IAN FISHER; Steven Erlanger reported from Gaza for this article, and Ian Fisher from Tel Aviv.

Dateline: GAZA, June 13

Body

Eight Palestinian civilians were killed and more than 40 wounded Tuesday by an Israeli missile strike on Islamic militants riding in a van that Israeli officials said was carrying rockets to launch at Israel. Two men in the van were also killed, including a man the Israelis consider an important rocket maker.

The officials said the strike had prevented more of what has been a rising number of Palestinian missile attacks launched from Gaza. But the civilian casualties further inflamed Palestinian rage over eight deaths last week on a beach from what residents said was an errant Israeli shell. Seven of the dead were from one family.

In a news conference in Tel Aviv, Israel's defense minister, Amir Peretz, announced Tuesday that an investigation into the deaths on Friday showed that Israel was not to blame.

"We have enough findings to back up the suspicion that the intention to describe this as an Israeli event is simply not correct," he said, citing films, data on where and when the shells landed, and a piece of shrapnel taken from a victim. "The accumulating evidence proves that this incident was not due to Israeli forces."

The account was quickly disputed by officials from Human Rights Watch, who cited contrary evidence from an investigation of their own.

In the attack on Tuesday, one missile struck a van and killed two members of Islamic Jihad and apparently wounded a third. But a second missile fired shortly afterward hit the curb just in front of a house whose occupants had emerged to see what had happened, and members of the Mughrabi family and their neighbors were killed.

Two children and three medical workers died in the second explosion, after the first had destroyed the yellow Volkswagen van of a noted Islamic Jihad rocket maker, Hamoud Wadiya, who was killed. Israel said Mr. Wadiya was transporting Katyusha rockets to launch at Israel, and rockets were seen in the wreckage.

The Katyusha is a factory-made weapon of longer range and much greater accuracy than the crude Qassam rocket that Palestinian militants build in machine shops with explosives mixed in cooking pots.

The Katyushas, Israel says, have been smuggled into the Gaza Strip from Egypt and represent a significantly enhanced danger to Israeli cities.

ISRAEL MISSILES KILL 10 IN GAZA

Since Israel withdrew from Gaza 10 months ago, scores of Qassam rockets have been launched from Gaza; Israel says there were 100 rockets fired last month. Between June 2004 and March 2006, eight Israelis, including three children, were killed in the attacks, the Israeli military says.

Israel says it has been forced to go after the launching sites because the Palestinian authorities have done nothing about them.

Palestinian militants say they launch the rockets in response to Israel's continuing campaign to capture or kill Palestinian militants from Islamic Jihad and Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades.

After Tuesday's attack, a weeping Hekmat Mughrabi said her 30-year-old son, Ashraf, had died in her arms. Ashraf ran to the door after the first explosion, trying to calm children playing on the roof, she said. "He was shouting to the kids, 'Don't be afraid, don't be afraid!' " and had not even finished his sentence when the second missile hit, she told The Associated Press.

An angry Palestinian Authority president, Mahmoud Abbas, called the Israeli actions "state terrorism" and accused Israel of trying to "wipe out the Palestinian people."

Mr. Abbas, whose aides feel his support for talks is being undermined by the civilian death toll, said, "Every day there are martyrs, there are wounded people, all of them innocents, all of them bystanders."

The deaths are bound to make it harder for Mr. Abbas and the United States to persuade Hamas, which controls the Palestinian Authority, to recognize the right of Israel to exist, to forswear violence and to accept previous Palestinian-Israeli agreements, which are based on a permanent two-state solution.

Mr. Abbas will also find it more difficult to get Hamas to accept a referendum proposal that would at least implicitly recognize Israel.

There was pandemonium on Tuesday at Al Shifa Hospital, where the dead and the wounded were brought. Gunmen surged through the courtyard, firing weapons into the air, and banging on the door of the morgue to retrieve the bodies of their colleagues or family members.

They grabbed stretchers and paraded the corpses in impromptu marches around the hospital yards and into the streets, bearing the black banners of Islamic Jihad and the yellow ones of Fatah and Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades, to which Ashraf Mughrabi belonged.

In a gruesome scene, one Islamic Jihad militant smeared the blood of his dead colleague onto his rifle and lifted it high into the air. Amid the acrid smoke of burning tires, women shouted, "Death to Israel! Death to the occupation!"

After the explosion on the beach in Gaza on Friday, Hamas said it was abandoning its 16-month cease-fire with Israel, though Israeli officials insist that Hamas had started firing its own Qassams toward Israel a week before.

Human Rights Watch, which has been investigating the Israeli shelling in Gaza on Friday, said of the deaths, "The evidence we have gathered strongly suggests Israeli artillery fire was to blame." It called on Israel to open an independent investigation rather than relying on its own military.

An American expert working with Human Rights Watch, Marc Garlasco, is a former Pentagon official who did bomb damage assessment for the American military in Kosovo and worked for the Defense Intelligence Agency.

He said that he had visited the beach the day after the explosion, and that the crater size, the shrapnel and the location of injuries on the bodies all pointed to "a shell dropping from the sky, not explosives under the sand."

In an interview in Gaza, he said he had found shrapnel "consistent with a 155-mm. Israeli shell fired from a M109 howitzer," including one piece stamped "155mm."

Defense Minister Peretz and other Israeli military officials offered a different analysis.

ISRAEL MISSILES KILL 10 IN GAZA

They contended that the explosion on the beach occurred between 4:57 p.m. and 5:10 p.m. They based that on an array of films, not specifically identified but shown at the news conference in Tel Aviv. One film taken from seaward showed what the officials called normal activity on that stretch of beach, with the time stamped as late as 4:57. A later film stamped at 5:15 showed an ambulance arriving from a hospital about five minutes away.

Brig. Gen. Hezi Levy, Israel's surgeon general and one of the investigators, said that they had accounted for all but one of the shells fired that day, and that none of them had exploded during this time. He said the one unaccounted-for artillery shell was fired "much" before 4:57. Later, another military official specified that that shell was launched at 4:30.

"There is no chance that this shell caused such damage," the general said.

The news conference, however, did make clear that shelling had occurred near that time and place. The last shell fell, according to a photograph of the site marked with the artillery hits, at 4:48, several hundred yards north of the site of the deaths.

General Levy said that four of those injured were taken to Israeli hospitals and that the single piece of shrapnel extracted from one of them did not match any munitions used that day.

The officials said they also reviewed other recent bombardments in the area and ruled out the possibility that an Israeli shell had landed there earlier and might have been set off by the Palestinian family.

Mr. Peretz and the others refused to speculate on what could have caused the explosion, though military officials have contended that Hamas may have planted land mines against Israeli commandos.

Mr. Peretz did not rule out the possibility of allowing outside experts review Israel's evidence, as Human Rights Watch demanded. But the army's chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Dan Halutz, said he did not see the need.

"What we are doing is very, very, very professional," he told reporters. "We don't need the assistance of anyone."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo: Victims from a house in Gaza that was hit yesterday by an Israeli missile. A rocket maker was also killed. (Photo by Khalil Hamra/Associated Press)(pg. A6)Chart: "Comparing Rockets"A Palestinian van hit by an Israeli missile on Tuesday was carrying Katyusha rockets.KatyushaRange: up to 28 miles

length: 17 feetThere are two known variations of the Katyusha used against the Israelis -- the 240-millimeter, above, which was test-fired by Hezbollah in August 2005, and the 122-millimeter, fired from the Gaza Strip in March 2006.QassamRange: 2-6 miles

length: 6 feetQassam are handmade rockets with shorter range and less accuracy than the factory-made Katyusha.(Sources by Military Periscope

GlobalSecurity.org

Jane's

Israel Defense Forces)(pg. A6)

ISRAEL MISSILES KILL 10 IN GAZA

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