

Date and Time: Saturday, May 4, 2024 2:17:00 AM EEST

Job Number: 223498154

Documents (100)

1. [Shiites see secular leadership for Iraq ; They hope religion goes to background in new government](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

2. [Faking it for fashion's sake](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

3. [From Modesto , California , a window on the Arab world: BLOGGER / Arab- American news junkie As'ad AbuKhalil goes under the radar to serve up an angry mix of news, commentary and entertainment](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

4. [A history lesson Shiite beliefs might affect Iraq 's future May 18, 2003, Sunday](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

5. [MIDEAST FLARE-UP: NEWS ANALYSIS A New Mideast Battle: Arafat vs. Hamas](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

6. [A NATION CHALLENGED: A FIGHTER'S TALE Bin Laden Stirs Struggle on Meaning of Jihad](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

7. [Predicting ... Mr Unpredictable](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

8. [Middle East peace in the balance](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

9. [Mixed feelings among Muslims War on 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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

10. [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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

11. [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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

12. [Teetering towards stability](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

13. [Democratic committee follows state election laws](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

14. [Sunnis and Shiites: Who are they?](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

15. [Book 'em in May; PARVATHI NAYAR and MINDY TAN look at the offerings for this month](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

16. [*The man who knew too much*](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

17. [*TERROR IN AFRICA: THE ATTACKS 12 Die as Israelis Are Attacked in Kenya*](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

18. [*MIDEAST TURMOIL: THE OVERVIEW In New Rebuff to U.S. , Sharon Pushes Military Sweep*](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

19. [*At Hebrew University, Hallways Are Empty and Students Are Scared*](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

20. [*CROSSROADS ON ROUTE MAP TO PEACE -2*](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

21. [SHIITES IN IRAQ SAY GOVERNMENT WILL BE SECULAR](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

22. [WAR IN THE GULF: IRAN : Another challenge awaits](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

23. [WORLD REPORT](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

24. [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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

25. [My twenty years of 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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

26. [A mixture of Muslims Politics and clerics, limousines and burquas - Islam has been adopted in strikingly different ways around the 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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

27. [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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

28. [Change sweeps 'Arab street'](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

29. [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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

30. [Africa's peace seekers: Betty Bigombe](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

31. [Beirut: glamour from the ground up](#)

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, 2001 to
Dec 31, 2005

32. [Debate Finished, Candidates Race Back to Campaign](#)

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, 2001 to
Dec 31, 2005

33. [War can get uglier when soldiers take to city streets; Casualties sure to skyrocket when house-to-house combat renders precision high-tech weapons useless](#)

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, 2001 to
Dec 31, 2005

34. [WORLD REPORT](#)

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, 2001 to
Dec 31, 2005

35. [A NATION AT WAR: HOUSE TO HOUSE Urban Warfare: Long a Key Part of an Underdog's Down-to-Earth Arsenal](#)

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, 2001 to
Dec 31, 2005

36. [Don't press Israel to negotiate with Arafat](#)

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, 2001 to
Dec 31, 2005

37. [*Islam is diverse, complex; West is misinformed: Some countries strictly follow Quran, treat women poorly*](#)

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, 2001 to
Dec 31, 2005

38. [*Israel calls up 'sleeper warriors' to hunt down Mombasa killers*](#)

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, 2001 to
Dec 31, 2005

39. [*Problems stacking up in Iraq ; The U. S. and Britain are rulers of a country with no infrastructure. They aren't committing the resources for nation-building.*](#)

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, 2001 to
Dec 31, 2005

40. [*MUSLIM WORLD FAR FROM BEING MONOLITHIC*](#)

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, 2001 to
Dec 31, 2005

41. [*Worlds of Differences*](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

42. [alice Howard was a highflying PR when she fell for an architect from Lebanon . It was only after she handed over a GBP 40,000 dowry that she realised she'd married a conman ...; femail modern times](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

43. [LIFTING A VEIL ON 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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

44. [Region watches the first domino - THE FUTURE - WAR ON IRAQ : DAY TWO](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

45. [In a Lebanese Valley, A Star Chef's Tour](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

46. [Christianity HITS a crossroad: Once-thriving Christian churches are falling by the wayside in Turkey , but one new, less rigid evangelical church is defying the odds in that Muslim 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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

47. [Riches and ruins Lebanon](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

48. [Hijack victim recalls ordeal](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

49. [LIFE-AND-DEATH STAKES IN THE WAR ON TERROR; ATTACK ON TERRORISM; All eyes are on Afghanistan as the country of 27 million is caught in the line of fire of yesterday's U.S. -led air attacks as well as in the iron grip of hardline Taliban rulers and a famine-and-war-ravaged past. Here's what major western, Middle Eastern and South Asian countries have to win and lose in the gathering military, political and humanitarian storm settling over the region.](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

50. [After September 11: Nile blues: Britain and the US claim the support of most Middle Eastern governments in the war against terrorism, but what do ordinary Arabs think? Do they see it as the west versus Islam? And what do they make of Tony Blair? Egyptian novelist Ahdaf Soueif visited Cairo to find out](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

51. [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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

52. [IS IT TIME FOR A](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

53. [The great Divide: Driven from their homes by war, Kurdish Turks struggle on for freedom -- and a state of their own](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

54. [With Europe's Passive Acquiescence, Arab Judeophobes Have Ascended](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

55. [A TALENT FOR 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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

56. [Thirteen days of terror: In 1985, Jeffrey Balkind was a passenger on a plane hijacked by Islamic fundamentalists. He now is recounting his experiences in light of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

57. [BACKGROUNDER: IRAN : Struggle pits theocracy vs. 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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

58. [Looking for trouble](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

59. [Legend of Ali continuing to grow: It was 40 years ago that Cassius Marcellus Clay burst into the spotlight, and it has never left the one they call 'The Greatest,' writes Bruce Garvey.](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

60. [Fundamental Mistakes](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

61. [A nation prepares for 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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

62. [Inside the world of the Palestinian suicide bomber](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

63. [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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

64. [What turns young men into terrorists?: From al-Qaeda to the IRA to skinheads and street-gang members -- those who embrace terrorism and violence are overwhelmingly drawn from the ranks of men in their teens or 20s. But often it seems that radical ideology is not the end in itself, but an outlet for a violent predisposition that changes aimless, identity-less losers into 'agents of destiny,' Don Butler 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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

65. [Extremists' hatred of U.S. has varied roots](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

66. [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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

67. [The week](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

68. [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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

69. [Holy avengers From American anti-abortion activists to Islamic suicide bombers certain traits are common among those who dedicate their lives to religious terrorism. While researching her book, a Harvard academic tries to find out why they believe they have a moral mandate to murder](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

70. [A WORLD 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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

71. [A WORLD 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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

72. [A WORLD 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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

73. [Just how dangerous is 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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

74. [The Threat of Jaffar](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

75. [Artikel\(en\) zonder titel](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

76. [Artikel\(en\) zonder titel](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

77. [Artikel\(en\) zonder titel](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

78. [Artikel\(en\) zonder titel](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

79. [Artikel\(en\) zonder titel](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

80. [Daniel Patrick Moynihan Is Dead; Senator From Academia Was 76](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

81. [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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

82. [Letters to the Editor](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

83. [No Headline In Original](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

84. [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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

85. [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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

86. [Artikel\(en\) zonder titel](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

87. [Artikel\(en\) zonder titel](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

88. [The roundup](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

89. [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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

90. [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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

91. [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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

92. [2002: It was a turbulent year: World grapples with lingering effects of Sept. 11](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

93. [The age of anxiety](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

94. [THE MAKING OF A TERRORIST // HE SEEMED LIKE SUCH A NICE BOY](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

95. [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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

96. [From university of jihad, a teacher of terror CALL TO ARMS](#)

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, 2001 to Dec 31, 2005

97. [Anti-Semitic lies and hate threaten us all](#)

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, 2001 to
Dec 31, 2005

98. [*The Enigma of Damascus*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to
Dec 31, 2005

99. [*No Headline In Original*](#)

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, 2001 to
Dec 31, 2005

100. [*No Headline In Original*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Hizbullah" OR "Hezbollah"

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2001 to
Dec 31, 2005

***Shiites see secular leadership for Iraq;
They hope religion goes to background in new government***

The International Herald Tribune

January 25, 2005 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 1529 words

Byline: Dexter Filkins

Dateline: BAGHDAD:

Body

With the Shiites on the brink of capturing power here for the first time, their political leaders say they have decided to relegate Islam to a supporting role as they form the new Iraqi government.

The senior leaders of the United Iraqi Alliance, the coalition of mostly Shiite groups that is expected to capture the most votes in the election Sunday, have agreed that the Iraqi whom they nominate to be the country's next prime minister would be a layperson and not an Islamic cleric. The Shiite leaders say there is a similar but less formal agreement that clerics will also be excluded from running the government ministries.

"There will be no turbans in the government," said Adnan Ali, a senior leader of the Dawa Party, one of the largest Shiite parties. "Everyone agrees on that."

The New York Times

The decision appears to formalize the growing dominance of secular leaders among the Shiite political leadership, and it also reflects an inclination by the country's powerful religious hierarchy to stay out of the day-to-day governing of the country.

Among the Shiite coalition's 228 candidates for the National Assembly on the United Iraqi Alliance slate, fewer than half a dozen are clerics, according to the group's leaders.

The decision to exclude clerics from the government appears to mean that Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, a cleric who is the chief of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, the scion of a prominent religious family and an oft-mentioned candidate for prime minister, would be relegated to the background.

The five Shiites most likely to be named prime minister are well-known secular figures. Shiite leaders say their decision to move away from an Islamist government was largely shaped the fact that the Iraqi people would reject such a model. But they concede that it also reflects certain political realities: U.S. officials, who wield vast influence here, would be troubled by an overtly Islamist government. So would the Kurds, who Iraqi and U.S. officials worry might be tempted to break with the Iraqi state.

The emerging policies appear to be a rejection of an Iranian-style theocracy. Iran has given both moral and material support to the country's two largest Shiite parties, Dawa and the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq. The conviction that the Iranian model should be avoided in Iraq is apparently shared by Iranians.

Shiites see secular leadership for Iraq ; They hope religion goes to background in new government

One Iraqi Shiite leader, who recently traveled to Tehran, said he was warned by the Iranians against putting clerics in the government.

"They said it caused too many problems," the Iraqi said.

The secular tilt comes as Shiite leaders prepare for what they regard as a historic moment: After decades of official repression, the country's largest group now seems likely to take the helm of the Iraqi state. Mindful of that opportunity and of previous opportunities missed, the Shiite leaders running for office say they are determined to exercise power in a moderate way, which would include bringing Sunnis into the government and ignoring some powerful voices in their own ranks that advocate a stronger role for Islam in the new constitution.

Still, for all the expressions of unity, just how much consensus exists within the coalition is unclear, as are the prospects for the coalition's survival beyond the elections. The Shiite leaders, and the rank and file in the Iraqi electorate, represent a wide array of political visions, and these blocs could rise or fall in influence over time.

Important Shiite clerics like Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani already wield considerable influence in the background, although his brand of Islam is thought to be relatively moderate. Shiite leaders like Hakim will probably continue to wield power behind the scenes; his views are thought to be more conservative.

During the drafting of the country's interim constitution last year, Hakim and others pushed for an expansive role for Islam in the new state, as well as restrictions on the rights of women.

Some Iraqis expressed concern that the more radical Shiites, notably the followers of Moktada al-Sadr, would be difficult to control once the election is over.

The challenge, the Shiite leaders say, will be in holding their coalition together after Sunday, when the jockeying for power begins in what is likely to be a coalition government.

"It was very difficult to bring the coalition together," said Ali Faisal al-Lami, a leader of Iraqi Hezbollah, a Shiite party that is part of the United Iraqi Alliance. "There is a good chance that it will fall apart."

If the alliance were to crumble, Shiite leaders fear, they could lose ground to Prime Minister Ayad Allawi or to the Kurdish parties, which are unified on a single slate and which will likely benefit from a large turnout. Already, Kurdish leaders have begun to talk up Jalal Talabani, the leader of the Patriotic Union for Kurdistan, as president, a post that would give him enormous power in shaping the composition of the new government.

The United Iraqi Alliance was pulled together under the leadership of Sistani, the country's most powerful Shiite cleric, who is a native of Iran. Sistani, without formally endorsing any political party, has issued a fatwa calling on all eligible Iraqi Shiites to go the polls.

The Shiite coalition is widely expected to pull in the largest number of votes on Election Day. Shiites make up about 60 percent of the electorate here, and if, as expected, large numbers of Iraqi Sunnis boycott the election, then Shiites could capture an even larger percentage of National Assembly seats.

The decision to exclude clerics from senior positions in the Iraqi government has set off a scramble for the post of prime minister. Under the election rules, the prime minister will be chosen by the party or group that forms a government, presumably by the group that wins the largest number of seats in the 275-member assembly.

Among the Shiites, the leading candidates for prime minister are thought to be Adil Abdul Mahdi, the Iraqi finance minister and a leader of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq; Ibrahim al-Jaafari, interim vice president and a leader of Dawa; Hussain al-Shahristani, a nuclear scientist; and Ahmad Chalabi, who marshaled support for the toppling of Saddam Hussein's government in the Bush administration and has since become a pariah. All are candidates for the United Iraqi Alliance.

Shiites see secular leadership for Iraq ; They hope religion goes to background in new government

All four candidates are secular-minded leaders who spent much of their lives in exile. They maintain that they would borrow from Islam's tenets in writing the country's constitution, the main task for the new government, but would ensure that the Iraqi state did not have a religious cast to it.

Also a contender for the prime minister's job is Allawi, the current head of the Iraqi government, who was chosen last June by the UN envoy, Lakhdar Brahimi, and the U.S. leadership. Allawi, a secular-minded Shiite, is running as the leader of his own slate of candidates, the Iraqi List.

Allawi's chances to remain as prime minister are thought to depend not just on well his group does at the polls, but on how well the United Iraqi Alliance fares. If Allawi's group performs well and the Shiite coalition less well, then Allawi, Shiite leaders say, could become a leading candidate for prime minister. It was a deadlock between Dawa and the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq in June that allowed Allawi to take the office.

Some prominent Iraqi Shiite religious leaders note that the Iranian regime, after taking power in 1979, marginalized and persecuted followers of the school of thought in Shiite Islam that rejects a major political role for the clergy in favor of quietism.

"It's a completely different concept of government," Shahrastani said, referring to the Iraqi government. "The Iraqi government and the constitution will seek neither an Islamic government nor the participation of Islamic clerics in the government."

Sistani, though an adherent of quietism, has involved himself in every step of the political process here. Though he has stopped short of endorsing political candidates, he has come close to backing the Shiite slate. Earlier this month, some candidates in Allawi's slate protested that the use of Sistani's picture on election posters violated the ban on the use of religious symbols. Some Iraqi Shiite leaders say that Sistani will probably have to hold the coalition together after the election.

Shiite leaders agree that the biggest task facing the next Iraqi government will be mollifying the Sunnis. The Sunnis are a minority in Iraq but a majority in most of the rest of the Islamic world, outside Iran, and some of their leaders have had difficulty reconciling themselves to a subordinate role.

While Shiite leaders say they intend to reach out to Sunnis, they will have to overcome suspicion. Publicly, that suspicion is usually expressed by making allusions to Iran.

"We're not afraid of the Shia or the Kurds governing Iraq," said Sheik Moayad Brahim al-Adhami, leader of the Abu Hanifa Mosque, a Sunni bastion in Baghdad. "But what we're afraid of is a fundamentalist representing a foreign country's interests."

Edward Wong contributed reporting.

Load-Date: January 25, 2005

Faking it for fashion's sake

Courier Mail (Queensland, Australia)

March 19, 2005 Saturday

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Section: LIFE; Pg. L04

Length: 1468 words

Byline: Sandra McLean

Body

It may look like a bargain to buy fake fashion goods but there can be a catch

'I can't afford the original so that was the main reason why I bought them. They are also good bags and pretty good quality fakes

THE temptation was too hard to resist. There for the taking, at a mere \$15, was a Von Dutch hat.

The same trendy hat -- well, the one with the genuine label -- had been seen in a major department store for \$100. Surely, it wouldn't hurt to just buy one fake?

If lawyer Stephen Stern was standing with us in that Sydney market he would have tapped us on the shoulder and said: "Just say no."

This might sound like a drug counsellor warning a client not to take a hit but for solicitor Stern the comparison isn't that far off the mark.

As the Australian legal representative for major labels such as Louis Vuitton, Dior, Cartier and Hugo Boss, he deals daily with what has become an international addiction -- the buying of fake designer goods and other counterfeit luxuries. It's an addiction that is not only costing business and governments billions in lost revenue and taxes but recent reports point to a growing human cost of faking it for fashion.

There have been reports of links between the smuggling of fake goods and terrorism, particularly Al-Qaida. Concerns also have been raised about China, where children are reportedly being used to make fake goods.

Stern has heard all these rumours. He believes the Al-Qaida link is true although he has not seen hard evidence of child labour. He knows for sure that more people are addicted to faking it.

Over the past five years Melbourne-based Stern's caseload has multiplied. In 2001, he handled up to 200 cases involving the illegal selling of counterfeit luxury goods in Australia. By 2004 the number of cases had increased to 1600.

"The trade in these goods is just getting so much bigger in Australia and all over the world," says Stern, a partner at Corrs Chambers Westgarth. "Most of the fakes are poor quality but that doesn't seem to matter -- it is just a big, big business with products pouring out of China."

Faking it for fashion's sake

In Europe and the UK the importing of fake goods is out of control. Last month a European Commission report said that British customs was losing the battle against organised criminals smuggling counterfeit goods into the country.

Seizures of such goods had tripled in the past two years, the rise in counterfeiting fuelled by the increasing use of Internet shopping and the sobering fact that counterfeiting has become more profitable than drug smuggling.

Last year the International Chamber of Commerce estimated the worldwide trade in counterfeits to be worth \$450 billion. That's an awful lot of black money.

The biggest growth areas are toys and perfumes, but counterfeiters aren't fussy. They will fake anything. As well as looking for the fake Fendi bag, customs officials now need to keep their eyes peeled for fake apples, grown from stolen seeds, and counterfeit thorn-free roses.

In Australia, the Australian Customs Service has confiscated large amounts of counterfeit or pirate goods. During 2003-04 they made more than 5000 separate seizures, finding more than two million items. The types of goods seized included toys, clothing, footwear, handbags, watches, computer games and mobile telephone accessories.

For most of us though, faking it is generally about that Von Dutch experience -- buying a fashion item, tempted by the fact that we'd be wearing the latest trendy label for a fraction of the price of the real thing.

That's how it was for Kristel Glohe, 22, a manager from the Gold Coast. In 2003, Glohe went to Hong Kong, the key reason was to buy fake luxury goods, preferably Louis Vuitton.

She also went across the Chinese border on a special shopping tour to Shenzhen. Glohe bought about 20 bags for herself and her sister, Louise, 18.

"I can't afford the original so that was the main reason why I bought them," Glohe says. "They are also good bags and pretty good quality fakes."

Glohe says she chose Louis Vuitton fakes because "they are the most popular at the moment and a bit of a trend".

Glohe says people are fine about fakes and that they "always ask me where I got them from because they look good. There isn't a bad attitude about it -- everyone knows how expensive the originals are".

Indeed the bags Glohe bought in Hong Kong and China for between \$30 and \$60 would cost several thousand dollars at a Louis Vuitton shop.

Handbags are priced from at least \$1000 with the popular multicoloured Alma selling for \$US1280.

Glohe says the shopping experience in Shenzhen was "a little scary".

"It was a big deal to get the really good fakes in Shenzhen," she says. "They don't show them in the store. You have to choose what you want from a catalogue. Then the woman disappeared for about 20 minutes down this hallway which was guarded by two other women."

Glohe says another friend who went shopping for fakes in Shenzhen talked about going into secret hidden rooms in shops where the fakes were kept.

Despite the subterfuge, Glohe says she would do it again. Asked how she felt about the links between fakes and sweatshops, she says: "It is not fantastic when you think that someone has slaved away on something for the small amount of money we paid for it."

Glohe is not committing a crime by buying these goods -- it is not illegal to buy counterfeit goods.

And she is probably a lot like millions of others around the world who buy fake goods because it is a cheaper way to get a trendy label. It's an understandable retail decision based on economic logic.

Faking it for fashion's sake

A recent poll by the UK Anti-Counterfeiting Group revealed that a third of women saw "no harm" in buying counterfeit items if the price and quality were right.

However, the problem is that getting a bargain also means paying a price, maybe not at the counter but in other ways.

"If women were aware that the profits from counterfeit bags sold at their local market stall are used to fund highly organised international terrorist networks -- groups from the IRA to Hamas and even Al-Qaida -- they would surely think twice before buying them," Ruth Orchard, director of the Anti-Counterfeit Group, says.

"What people don't realise is that the world of counterfeiting is masterminded by highly sophisticated criminals. Laundered profits from the sale of fakes have been traced to bank accounts funding Middle Eastern groups including Hezbollah, Hamas and Al-Qaida.

"It is now widely agreed that the bombing of the World Trade Centre in 1993 was funded partly by the sale of counterfeit designer textiles from an illegal outlet in New York's Chinatown. There is also strong evidence that the proceeds of counterfeiting have been used to fund IRA activities."

The cynic might say that this latest link between counterfeiters and terrorism could be a tactic by the luxury labels to make people think twice about buying fakes -- after all no one wants to be party to terrorists.

However, Stern believes the terrorism and organised crimes links are very real.

"I am not suggesting that every cent goes to terrorism, however, there have been reports by American and European organisations that show links to crime and terrorism. People might think, 'oh it is just a handbag', but there is more to it than that."

John Ramsden, chief executive director of Australia's Anti-Counterfeiting Action Group (ACAG) says there are definitely links between counterfeiters and organised crime in Australia.

Ramsden has been working for the past decade to keep the production and import of counterfeit goods at bay in Australia. His company represents 18 companies including fashion labels such as Quiksilver and Country Road. ACAG has private investigators who trawl markets and shops looking for fake goods. They even go to Tupperware parties to pick up hints on where to buy the latest fake Gucci sunglasses.

A lot of the fake clothing is made in Australia and sold at more than 1250 markets around the country. Ramsden estimates it's a business that is worth \$5 billion a year.

Overseas, there are claims that many of the fakes come from the same production line as the genuine designer articles. Some factories reportedly have a "day shift" devoted to the production of genuine designer goods, followed by an illegal "night shift" staffed by an entirely new batch of illegal workers and children who produce cheap replicas.

Ramsden says that the laws in place in Australia to prosecute counterfeiters are satisfactory.

Simply, if the general public knew more about the seedier side of faking it they wouldn't buy the goods.

Sounds OK in principle, but fashion can be a demanding beast. And a fickle one.

Who can rely on an industry that one year declares a war on fur and then the next pronounces it a must-have? Only the counterfeiters, who know they have a trend-hungry world by the fake throat.

Load-Date: March 18, 2005

Faking it for fashion's sake

End of Document

From Modesto, California, a window on the Arab world: BLOGGER / Arab-American news junkie As'ad AbuKhalil goes under the radar to serve up an angry mix of news, commentary and entertainment

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

June 25, 2005 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: TRAVEL; Pg. H12

Length: 1418 words

Byline: Robin Abcarian, Los Angeles Times

Dateline: SAN FRANCISCO

Body

SAN FRANCISCO -- It's not exactly true that As'ad AbuKhalil skipped into the meeting room at the World Affairs Council here recently. But there was a definite lilt in his step and a boyish enthusiasm about him that was, it must be said, unexpected.

After all, this jolly moon-faced man with long corkscrew curls is the deeply sarcastic, piquant wit behind the Angry Arab News Service, a popular blog that provides links and edgy leftist commentary about the war in Iraq, Lebanese politics, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and yes, even Saddam Hussein in his skivvies. ("This man deserves all the humiliation that he gets," wrote AbuKhalil.)

But as AbuKhalil happily explained over tea at the corner Starbucks after his lunchtime talk, "I am not an angry Arab. I'm an angry human being!"

Well, sure.

Given the state of the world, what anti-Zionist, pro-Palestinian Middle East expert who is also an atheist, anarchist and twice-divorced feminist wouldn't be angry? Yet here, AbuKhalil, who grew up in Beirut, Lebanon, and speaks so fast that a court stenographer recently asked him to slow down, makes a distinction: "I am politically angry, but in my personal life, I am a happy guy. I can't stand these leftists who have to ... mope? Is that the word? When I came to America, I have seen so many elite Arab intellectuals who are alcoholics, miserable, unhappy and obsessed with the Israeli lobby. And I remember early on, I was like, I am not going to live that life!"

That attitude is part of the allure of his blog, which, as more than one reader has pointed out, stands out for its sense of humour in the dour left-wing landscape.

The Angry Arab News Service, which launched in September 2003, receives between 30,000 and 35,000 hits per month, according to AbuKhalil's tracking. Half its readers are in the United States, but fans (and detractors) all over the world read it, including many in Arab countries.

From Modesto , California , a window on the Arab world: **BLOGGER** | Arab- American news junkie As'ad AbuKhalil goes under the radar to serve up an angry mix of ne....

The blog is full of links to news sources often overlooked in the mainstream U.S. media and is known for its sarcastic but knowledgeable commentary. One recurrent feature is "Culprit of the Week" in which AbuKhalil pokes fun at the U.S. government's evolving list of those responsible for the Iraqi insurgency.

He devotes about 2 1/2 hours a day to his blog, reading three Arabic-language newspapers, plus The New York Times, and headlines from the Los Angeles Times and The Washington Post. Sitting on his bed with his computer on a special stand, he monitors the information delivered to his Sony Location Free TV via two satellite dishes that bring the world to his Modesto home. (Which, despite his socialist beliefs, he owns. His house is messy because he thinks it would be exploitative to hire a maid, although he does have a gardener.)

At 45, AbuKhalil is a tenured professor in the politics department of California State University, Stanislaus, located in the town of Turlock. He is sometimes hired as an expert in civil proceedings involving Middle East issues, such as asylum cases.

Starting when he was a doctoral student at Georgetown University, many producers turned to him for what one dubbed the "angry Arab" perspective on events in the Middle East, which is how his blog got its name. He has appeared on PBS's NewsHour and CNN, and for a time was a Middle East consultant for NBC and ABC. (That experience, he wrote on his blog, served only to increase his disdain for mainstream U.S. media.) These days, he is a frequent guest on the Arab news channel Al-Jazeera, which has made him something of a star at home.

"He and I have walked down the streets in Beirut ... People come up to him and recognize him and shake his hand," said Joseph Massad, an assistant professor at Columbia University who is one of AbuKhalil's best friends. "He is well received across the Arab world," said Massad, who noted that AbuKhalil's readership cuts across political lines, from leaders of **Hezbollah** to the far Christian right.

AbuKhalil said he is careful to keep his politics out of his classroom, although it's no secret to his blog-savvy students where he stands.

Even people who loathe most of AbuKhalil's opinions find his blog useful. Martin Kramer, a fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and research associate at the Dayan Center of Tel Aviv University, who is well known for his pro-Israel views, trawls the Angry Arab News Service for links to news sources.

"AbuKhalil speaks for a certain brand of revolutionary, utopian secular Arabism that lost most of its following in the Middle East 20 years ago," wrote Kramer, also a blogger, in an e-mail. "He is against the Arab regimes, against Israel, against U.S. policy, against the Islamists, against the liberals, against the reformists ... He's the perfect example of the supremely principled and supremely irresponsible Arab intellectual. And so he's a luxury only America can afford."

On the relatively conservative Stanislaus campus of 8,000, AbuKhalil is well regarded by his students, said his department chairman, Steve Hughes.

"He has a following," Hughes said. "He is a character, and a lot of students like that. I think the real measure of his impact is that routinely we will have one or two students a year who go off to do graduate work in Middle Eastern studies, and that never happened before his arrival."

But AbuKhalil does not emphasize his U.S. citizenship, which he attained in 1989. "If, as Jean-Paul Sartre said, 'For the purposes of anti-Semites, I am a Jew,' that's how I feel in America. I have to be an Arab. For all those weak, timid Arabs I've seen after Sept. 11, I never say I am an American citizen ... I used to hate when someone I admired and knew like (the late pro-Palestinian intellectual) Edward Said would say, 'As an American ...' I don't want to defuse it. I want to speak to you as the other. I am the other amongst you. If it bothers you, that's your problem, not mine."

From Modesto , California , a window on the Arab world: BLOGGER I Arab- American news junkie As'ad AbuKhalil goes under the radar to serve up an angry mix of ne....

His family, although Muslim, was split along sectarian lines; his father's family was Shiite, his mother's Sunni. "I was a very religious dude when I was 8," AbuKhalil said. "I used to say I would never shake hands with women. I was really fanatic."

He abandoned religion after he was stung by one of his grandmothers, who criticized the position of his arms as he prayed. "My Sunni family of my mother taught me how to pray. So I went to show my Shiite grandmother how I pray, and she was like, 'This is not Islam!' I was insulted. I felt bad ... And then I discovered Marxism and leftism by the time I was 13, 14, so ever since I have stayed like that."

After finishing his studies at the American University of Beirut, he left Lebanon for the United States in 1983 and received his doctorate in comparative government from Georgetown University.

Before landing in California's San Joaquin Valley, he taught at a number of universities and colleges, including Tufts, Georgetown and George Washington, and was a scholar at the Middle East Institute in Washington.

He had already been married and divorced (to an American Jewish woman) by the time he arrived in Turlock in 1993 for a two-year visiting appointment. Although he was offered a post at Georgetown at the end of that time, he decided to stay in Turlock because he'd fallen in love with the woman who would become his second ex-wife, and also because Stanislaus changed his appointment to a tenure track job.

As happens with many bloggers who develop loyal followings, he is worried that the Angry Arab News Service is taking over his life.

When (former Lebanese prime minister Rafik) Hariri was assassinated, the blog was down for six or seven days, because of technical problems with his server. "You have no idea how obnoxious it was! I was suffocating! And many of my friends were calling, saying, 'As'ad you have to blog or the people who come there will leave!' I was like, 'What can I do?' So then I came back and I blogged on Hariri and it got good circulation in Lebanon. Now I feel morally obligated. There are people who come every day, and I have to feed the beast."

ANGRY ARAB NEWS SERVICE

All the news that's fit to blog

www.angryarab.blogspot.com

- Launched in September 2003
- 30,000 - 35,000 hits per month
- Among favourite topics are the war in Iraq, Lebanese politics and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict -- oh, and Saddam Hussein's skivvies.

BLOGGER AS'AD ABUKHALIL

- Born in Beirut
- Professor of politics at California State University, Stanislaus, in Turlock, Calif.
- Anti-Zionist, pro-Palestinian, atheist, anarchist, twice-divorced feminist.

Graphic

From Modesto , California , a window on the Arab world: BLOGGER I Arab- American news junkie As'ad AbuKhalil goes under the radar to serve up an angry mix of ne....

Photo: Robert Durell, Los Angeles Times; As'ad AbuKhalil, a professor at the Stanislaus campus of California State University, spends about 21/2 hours a day navigating the Web for news, commentary and links to his website, the Angry Arab News Service.

Load-Date: June 25, 2005

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***A history lesson Shiite beliefs might affect Iraq's future May 18, 2003,
Sunday***

Charleston Gazette (West Virginia)

May 18, 2003, Sunday

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Length: 1647 words

Byline: Jeffrey Weiss The Dallas Morning News

Body

For many Americans who have been struggling to understand Islam, the war with Iraq has raised two new questions:

What is a Shiite? And what is there about Shiism that might affect Iraq's future and the American role in rebuilding that nation?

The answer to the first question is relatively simple: Shiites are the largest minority sect in Islam, representing about 10 percent of more than a billion Muslims in the world. But in Iraq, they are the majority, representing about 60 percent of the population. (About 85 percent of the Muslims in the world, and almost 40 percent of Iraqis, are Sunni.)

The answer to the second question is anything but simple. But experts say the history and practice of Shia offer clues, if not a road map, for what is possible in post-Saddam Iraq.

The Shiites (they generally refer to themselves as Shias) were discriminated against under Saddam Hussein. But Shia history and culture are all about how to survive as a downtrodden people. So it's not clear how they'll adjust to greater control of their government - if they get it.

"You find a lot of Shias not comfortable with the idea of being in control," said Khaled Abou el Fadl, an expert on Islamic law - Shia and Sunni - at the University of California, Los Angeles. "They have spent hundreds of years celebrating the position of the minority."

Still, some Shia clerics are already trying to fill the power vacuum in Iraq. Some have tried to take over hospitals. Others are running social service projects, distributing food and water.

Many Shias share an identity that includes a millennia-long history of persecution, a theological emphasis on sacrifice, a particular reverence for religious authority and a deeply held suspicion of political institutions.

Shia practice includes a flexibility that could either encourage democracy or support a rigid theocracy. What Shia does not include is a specific prescription for what a government should be, said Maulana Shamshad Haider, religious leader for the Metroplex Organization of Muslims in North Texas, a Shia mosque in Irving.

Neither theology nor tradition make an Islamic theocracy like the one in Shia-controlled Iran inevitable, he said.

A history lesson Shiite beliefs might affect Iraq 's future May 18, 2003, Sunday

"It was not a recipe given in our hadiths [sacred sayings]," he said.

But Shia culture makes it particularly important for Americans to gain the support of top Shia religious leaders, whose power and authority among followers are comparable to that of the pope.

And Americans should realize that the sometimes-prickly reception they're getting in Iraq isn't necessarily personal, experts say. It represents a traditional Shia reaction to any secular authority.

"To be a dissenter has been considered morally superior," el Fadl said.

Shia is not completely new to Americans who pay attention to faith and politics in the Middle East.

The Ayatollah Rouhollah Khomeini, a Shia cleric, was the spiritual leader behind the overthrow of the repressive, American-backed shah of Iran and the establishment of an "Islamic republic." His dark-robed visage and fiery rhetoric (calling the United States the "great Satan") became notorious during the Iranian hostage crisis of 1979-81.

And the Lebanese Hezbollah, responsible for the 1983 suicide bombing that killed more than 200 U.S. Marines, is largely backed by Shia contributions.

That violent reputation was augmented last month by unforgettable images of a Shia ritual. Tens of thousands of men took to the streets in Iraq, beating themselves with chains and slicing themselves with swords, mourning the killing of their prophet's grandson, Hussein, more than 1,300 years ago. Some chanted anti-American slogans along with their traditional prayers.

In some ways, Shias are more different from Sunnis than Catholics are from Protestants. They accept some different sacred texts, have a different sense of religious authority and have a long history of mutual antagonism.

In other ways, they are at least as similar as, say, Lutherans and Methodists. In the largest local Sunni mosque, the Dallas Central Mosque in Richardson, Imam Yusuf Kavakci encourages Shias and Sunnis to pray together and has performed "mixed" marriages.

"Though to be fair, there may be other mosques where other people do not feel so welcome," Imam Kavakci said.

For Shia and Sunni, tradition holds that Muhammad is God's last prophet, and the Quran is the only correct account of God's words. Both groups agree about many sayings of Muhammad, called hadiths, that are considered essential instructions for believers.

But Shias and Sunnis differ in their beliefs about what should have happened after Muhammad's death, traditionally set in A.D. 632.

Sunnis say the leadership of the fledgling Muslim nation went, as it should have, to a trusted companion of Muhammad.

Shias say the prophet had publicly declared that his successor should be his cousin and son-in-law, Ali, and future leaders were to be selected only from his descendants.

However, three caliphs, or leaders, were selected before Ali got his turn. And after his death, the caliphate did not stay with his family.

Today, Ali, his two sons and nine of their descendants are revered by Shias as the only true successors to Muhammad's authority.

Sunnis, on the other hand, regard Ali as an important spiritual leader, but believe that Muhammad gave no special instructions about the role his family was to play in Muslim leadership.

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To Shias, the issue is much more than a historical question about political leadership. Their tradition holds that only Ali and his descendants possessed complete and perfect understanding of the Quran. Their sayings (and those of Fatima, Ali's wife and Muhammad's daughter) are also considered authoritative by Shias.

Among the other major differences between Shias and Sunnis:

s The lines of authority. Sunnis can pick and choose among several schools of interpretation of Islamic law. Shias are supposed to have an allegiance to an ayatollah (which means "sign of God") whose rulings are considered absolutely authoritative. But there are several so-called "grand ayatollahs" and no universally acknowledged Shia leader.

s Independence from government. The major Sunni schools are government-financed. Shias, however, have a tradition of giving a fifth of their income to their ayatollah to pay for religious education and other functions. Even under the shah and Saddam, that allowed Shia institutions to thrive. The contributions also give considerable economic power to the ayatollahs.

s Judicial reasoning. For both Shia and Sunni, the most respected religious authorities tend to be jurists, not theologians. Their role is to decide how the Quran and hadiths should be applied to current conditions. Shias emphasize adapting the law to conditions in the world, rather than just examining the sacred texts, experts say.

This emphasis on logic and reasoning, what in Arabic is called *ejtehad*, has led Shia scholars to confront issues such as cloning, rights of women in divorce and fertility research more aggressively than their Sunni counterparts, el Fadl said.

It's also what encouraged Ayatollah Khomeini to go beyond the traditional Shia reluctance to combine religious and secular authority. For most of their history, Shia scholars understood their role to be critics who told government authorities when they were not acting in accord with Islamic law. Ayatollah Khomeini suggested that conditions in post-shah Iran required that more authority be placed in the hands of the top clerics. As a result, the top religious authorities in Iran have veto power over laws passed by the secular government.

That's not to say the same will happen in Iraq if the Shias prevail there. At least one Iraqi ayatollah agrees with Khomeini's viewpoint; but others do not.

s Temporary marriage. In Sunni tradition, this is an element of early Islam that is no longer valid. Shia consider the practice of marriages that expire at a fixed time still appropriate in principle, even if they are seldom performed. Supporters say temporary marriage simply recognizes the reality of sexual needs or that it gives couples a chance to test their compatibility. Opponents say it's a way to oppress women and evidence of the corruption of Shia.

s Other differences are more important from the inside: the exact timing of prayers, how to wash before worship, upon what surface heads can rest in prayer. Those differences are enough so that some Sunnis declare Shias to be unbelievers, el Fadl said.

Early Muslim history was bloody. Shia tradition teaches that Ali and 10 of his sacred successors, called imams, were stabbed, poisoned or slaughtered on the battlefield by other Muslims over more than 200 years. Two of the Shia's holiest shrines, the tombs of Ali and his son, Hussein, are in Iraq.

Most Shias believe that the 12th imam was commanded by God to go into hiding 1,072 years ago - and is still alive, awaiting God's commandment to return and bring justice to the world.

From the Shia point of view, the ancient treacheries committed against their imams are as current as the bloody demonstrations in the streets of Iraq last month.

Those were well-organized demonstrations, joined by as many as a million men. That the Shias could organize such a showing so soon after the fall of Saddam indicates how deeply ingrained Shia culture remains in Iraq, even after decades of government oppression, said Kevin Jaques, assistant professor of religious studies at the University of Indiana.

A history lesson Shiite beliefs might affect Iraq 's future May 18, 2003, Sunday

"As we saw immediately after the fall of Baghdad, the Shias were much more organized than people expected them to be,' he said. "They had to be able to nuance the system and go under the radar screen."

Flying under the radar is keeping with Shia history, he said. But it's difficult to predict how Shia traditions will play out next, Jaques said.

"It's hard to say, because Shias in Iraq haven't been allowed to do anything Shia for so long," he said.

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MIDEAST FLARE-UP: NEWS ANALYSIS; A New Mideast Battle: Arafat vs. Hamas

The New York Times
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Section: Section A; Column 3; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

Length: 1469 words

Byline: By JAMES BENNET

Dateline: JERUSALEM, Dec. 5

Body

After 14 months of conflict here, the radical group Hamas has gathered such strength that it has as much claim as Yasir Arafat's Fatah faction to represent the Palestinian mainstream. Maybe more.

Today, the two organizations squared off. Mr. Arafat put Hamas's spiritual leader, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, under house arrest in Gaza, a move that brought hundreds of Hamas supporters into the street to protest. The arrest of Sheik Yassin, who is paralyzed, was largely symbolic but was not appreciated by Hamas, and it may or may not presage a broader assault.

After the killing of 25 Israelis over the weekend in three Hamas suicide bombings, Israel stepped up its demands that Mr. Arafat crush the organization. He effectively accepted that mission on Sunday, declaring a state of emergency as his security lieutenants promised a crackdown on Hamas and another radical group, Islamic Jihad, which carried out a suicide bombing today in Jerusalem that wounded three Israelis.

Then, to no one's surprise, Mr. Arafat dragged his feet.

But as Israel mounted a fierce military campaign to threaten and embarrass Mr. Arafat by striking at emblems of his authority, a growing international coalition lined up to hold him to his promise.

Now Mr. Arafat appears to be starting the test of power that Israel has sought, matching his dwindling support against the growing strength of an organization whose strategy for confronting Israel is more popular than the one he officially advocates.

Even if Israel were to topple the longtime Palestinian leader, Hamas is not yet in a position to take over immediately in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This is not to say, however, that Hamas is to be trifled with.

The United States views Hamas in simple terms -- as a terrorist group. But its power has grown steadily, for reasons that illustrate how ugly this conflict became while the Bush administration focused elsewhere.

MIDEAST FLARE-UP: NEWS ANALYSIS A New Mideast Battle: Arafat vs. Hamas

As of early October, support among Palestinians for the Islamist groups had risen to 31 percent, up from 23 percent in September 2000, according to a poll by Dr. Nader Said of Bir Zeit University in Ramallah, in the West Bank. Among Islamist groups, Hamas is the heavyweight.

The same poll, which had a margin of error of three percentage points, showed that support for Mr. Arafat's Fatah organization had dropped to 20 percent, from 33 percent. Such polling has consistently shown that many Palestinians are uncommitted as yet to either group and are still persuadable.

In general, Hamas tends to do disproportionately well among women, who appreciate its schools and other services, Dr. Said said.

Hamas also appears to be doing well with young people. In student council elections last month at Al Najah University in Nablus, on the West Bank, Hamas and its Islamic allies overwhelmed Fatah, 60 percent to 34 percent. Palestinian analysts took note of the result because it was the first student election held during the uprising.

Hamas's promotion of Islam and its schools and health clinics have all contributed to its rising strength. But the greatest source of its popularity is this: Its suicide bombers kill Israelis.

Palestinians argue that the Israeli military kills civilians. Israelis counter that, unlike suicide bombers, they do not kill civilians on purpose. Most Palestinians do not value that distinction.

It is hard for those who have not experienced it to understand the rage felt even by elite Palestinians over their treatment by Israeli soldiers -- who are acting, the Israelis say, out of fear for their own citizens' security.

"It's not the primitive colonial model, where you use large-scale killing of the population," said Saleh Abdel Jawad, a professor of political science at Bir Zeit. "It's not this at all. It's a system that suffocates you slowly, slowly. It paralyzes your life, daily. And the people arrive to the point of explosion, and they cannot explode. And then one of the suicide bombers explodes instead of them."

He offered himself as an example, describing the humiliation and anger he felt after being held at a checkpoint in the baking sun for an hour and a half for no reason that he could see: "I remember myself, despite the fact that for 20 years already I don't believe in violence -- hate violence. In my daydream there was this feeling that I want to get down from the car and grab the soldier and kill him -- the feeling of impotency in front of this pressure."

Surveys of Palestinians show that in the long term, most favor a two-state solution to the standoff with Israel, the approach that Mr. Arafat has also formally accepted. That puts them at odds with Hamas, which wants a two-stage solution: Drive the Israelis out of the West Bank and Gaza, then drive them out of the Middle East.

But in the short term, Hamas is winning the argument over strategy and tactics. Most Palestinians do not support the cease-fire Mr. Arafat keeps insisting he wants, and many of them approve of the suicide bombings, which he condemns repeatedly -- if, by Israeli lights, insincerely.

"This is not like 1996," said Muhammad Ghazal, a political leader of Hamas. That year, after a wave of suicide bombings, Mr. Arafat rounded up 600 Hamas militants and even replaced preachers in Gaza mosques with his own more conciliatory men. But in 1996, peace negotiations were going somewhere.

"There were a lot of promises for Arafat," said Mr. Ghazal, adding with evident satisfaction that now, "We lost all our support for a peaceful solution for our struggle."

Palestinians have drawn a lesson from Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000, after 22 years' occupation there. Israel presented that decision as common sense, but many Palestinians concluded that the war of attrition conducted by Hezbollah guerrillas had forced Israel to run.

Militants from Hamas and other organizations -- including Mr. Arafat's own Fatah, which is largely secular -- argue that only that approach will push the Israelis out of the West Bank and Gaza. Yet Mr. Arafat keeps insisting that he wants a cease-fire.

MIDEAST FLARE-UP: NEWS ANALYSIS A New Mideast Battle: Arafat vs. Hamas

Islamic Jihad, which Israelis say is financed by Iran, is seen as far less organized and sophisticated than Hamas, which is backed by donors in Persian Gulf states and by some American organizations.

With its roots in Egypt in the Muslim Brotherhood, the organization that became Hamas was nonviolent and charitable until the first intifada broke out in 1987. Fearful of losing his following to militant organizations, Sheik Yassin formed Hamas, an Arabic acronym for Islamic Resistance Movement that means "Zeal." The new organization had a military wing.

Rather than following a steady line, reflecting the growth of its social-services network, the popularity of Hamas has tracked the ebb and flow of conflict with the Israelis. It is no coincidence that its popularity has climbed during the past year as peace talks collapsed.

But Dr. Said, of Bir Zeit University, called the new support for Hamas precarious. "Most of it is very soft support," he said, an assessment echoed by Israeli analysts.

Asked if Hamas would take over if Mr. Arafat fell, Boaz Ganor, director of the International Policy Institute for Counterterrorism, replied: "Conceivable? The answer is yes. Probable? The answer is no."

He predicted a period of chaos, followed by the formation of a three-part coalition of Mr. Arafat's old guard, young leaders of this uprising and Hamas.

Who might emerge as the foremost Hamas leader is anyone's guess. Its officials are divided between political leaders, who are known, and military ones, who generally remain anonymous until Israel hunts them down and kills them. Of the political leaders, the most prominent are Abdel Aziz al-Rantisi and Mahmoud al-Zahar. The political leaders claim not to know about military operations, a claim Israelis dispute.

Palestinian and Israeli analysts say that while its Islamic message is part of the appeal of Hamas, most Palestinians would reject the restrictions of a fundamentalist regime.

"They would regard that as a repressive regime if it were ever imposed on them," said Martin Kramer, an expert on Islamic politics at Tel Aviv University. "I think a lot of the increase you hear about in support for Hamas these days is really a flirtation. It's not a shift in allegiance."

Khalil Shikaki, a noted Palestinian pollster, predicted that if the conflict continued, Hamas would become the dominant organization within two years. "People want nothing short of revenge, blood, more of it," he said, "and under these conditions, the ones who give them blood are the ones they will give their support."

But if a crackdown on Hamas is followed by hope for peace, that attitude is likely to change fast. "This is temporary," Mr. Shikaki said of the blood lust he described. "Once the reason for it is gone, then support for it is gone."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos: At a Ramallah checkpoint on the West Bank yesterday, an Israeli soldier ordered a young Palestinian not to pass. Yasir Arafat responded to demands that he curb terrorism by arresting Sheik Ahmed Yassin, the spiritual leader of Hamas, which took responsibility for weekend attacks that killed 25. (Photographs by Reuters)(pg. A16)

Load-Date: December 6, 2001

MIDEAST FLARE-UP: NEWS ANALYSIS A New Mideast Battle: Arafat vs. Hamas

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A NATION CHALLENGED: A FIGHTER'S TALE; Bin Laden Stirs Struggle on Meaning of Jihad

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Byline: By JOHN F. BURNS

Series: THE FORCE OF ISLAM: Militants at a Crossroad

Dateline: AZHAKHEL BALA, Pakistan, Jan. 20

Body

Little in the manner of Ijaz Khan Hussein betrays the miseries he saw as a volunteer in the war in Afghanistan.

Mr. Khan, a college-trained pharmacist, joined the jihad, or holy war, like thousands of other Pakistanis who crossed over into Afghanistan.

He worked as a medical orderly near Kabul, shuttling to the front lines, picking up bodies and parts of bodies. Of 43 men who traveled with him to Afghanistan by truck in October, he says, 41 were killed.

Now with the Taliban and Al Qaeda routed, have Mr. Khan and other militants finished with holy war?

Mr. Khan, at least, said he had not.

"We went to the jihad filled with joy, and I would go again tomorrow," he said. "If Allah had chosen me to die, I would have been in paradise, eating honey and watermelons and grapes, and resting with beautiful virgins, just as it is promised in the Koran. Instead, my fate was to remain amid the unhappiness here on earth."

Jihad literally means striving. The Prophet Muhammad gave Muslims the task of striving in the path of God. Whether that striving is armed or a personal duty of conscience is a question causing consternation in the world's 1.2 billion Muslims, and that question goes to the heart of President Bush's war on terrorism.

In the Muslim world, it seems that Osama bin Laden is now a fractured idol, and many Muslim scholars criticize him. Yet he also remains appealing to others, almost as a political Robin Hood.

"Osama bin Laden is not a theologian, or a jihadist in the traditional sense of the term; he's a political activist," said one critic, Olivier Roy, a French scholar who has written several books about Afghanistan. "He has Islamized the traditional discourse of Western anti-imperialism. So a lot of Muslims support him, not because they see him as a true warrior for Islam, but because they hate America, and he's the only man in the Islamic world that they see fighting the Americans. He's like Carlos the Jackal converted to Islam."

A NATION CHALLENGED: A FIGHTER'S TALE Bin Laden Stirs Struggle on Meaning of Jihad

In mosques and Islamic seminaries from Morocco to Indonesia, moderate Muslims have been scouring the Koran to demonstrate that a true vision of jihad can never be squared with Sept. 11, even while expressing how aggrieved Muslims may be with America over issues Mr. bin Laden has identified in his videotapes, like Israel's treatment of Palestinians, the presence of American troops in the Arabian peninsula and the United States' role in maintaining sanctions against Iraq.

"Don't make the mistake of thinking that Osama bin Laden is the true face of a billion Muslims, or the true voice of the Koran," said Dr. Safir Akhtar, a research scholar at the Islamic University in Islamabad, a Saudi-financed institution that has long been a magnet for young militants from around the Islamic world.

"He may have a special appeal through his religiosity," Dr. Akhtar said, "and his spartan way of life, and he has certainly drawn deeply from Muslims' deep sense of frustration, but people think of him more as an adventurer than as an Islamic leader, and they know from their own studies that his sense of jihad is deeply flawed."

Conversations with ordinary Muslims in Pakistan tend quickly to turn to their disillusionment with the inglorious figure Mr. bin Laden has cut since Sept. 11 -- as he counseled future jihadis that "this world is an illusion," valueless beside paradise, and posed for the videotapes with a Kalashnikov and a camouflage jacket, while avoiding the hazards of combat himself. Moreover, many of Islam's most militant theologians now rebuke Mr. bin Laden, who suggested in the videotapes that he cast himself in the mold of Saladin, who recaptured Jerusalem from the Crusaders in the 12th century.

From Cairo, Beirut and Tehran, and a dozen other centers of fervent Islamic belief, pioneers of Mr. bin Laden's kind of jihad -- violent, anti-Western, above all anti-American and anti-Israeli -- have called him a coward and an enemy of Islam.

No example is starker than that of Sheik Muhammad Hussain Fadlallah, spiritual leader of Hezbollah, the Lebanon-based Party of God, for 25 years a scourge of Israel and the United States with its suicide bombings and other terror attacks in Lebanon and Israel. After a 1983 truck bombing of a United States Marine barracks near the Beirut airport killed 241 servicemen, American officials accused Sheik Fadlallah of having ordered the attack, an allegation he returned when he blamed the Central Intelligence Agency for a 1985 car bombing outside his Beirut home that killed 75 people.

But Sheik Fadlallah, now 66, has been relentless in his condemnation of the attacks in America.

He preaches that they were "not compatible with Shariah law," the Koranic legal code, nor with the Islamic concept of jihad, and that the perpetrators were not martyrs as Mr. bin Laden has claimed, but "merely suicides," because they killed innocent civilians, and in a distant land, America. In an interview with a Beirut newspaper, Al Safir, Sheik Fadlallah again accused Mr. bin Laden of having ignored Koranic texts.

"There is no concept of jihad as aggressive combat," he said, quoting verses of the Koran that Islamic theologians have argued over for centuries. In misreading these texts, he said, Mr. bin Laden had relied on "personal psychological needs," including a "tribal urge for revenge."

An Egyptian-born theologian, Sheik Yusuf Abdullah al-Qaradawi, with a history of anti-American militancy even longer than Sheik Fadlallah's, expresses a similar view. From his base in the Persian Gulf state of Qatar, the 75-year-old sheik has issued Islamic fatwas, or decrees, on issues like the need for Muslims to boycott McDonald's restaurants, and on husbands' right to beat their wives as long as they do not draw blood.

But on the Sept. 11 attacks, he has used language similar to that of Mr. Bush and other American politicians.

"Islam, the religion of tolerance, holds the human soul in high esteem, and considers the attack on innocent human beings a grave sin," said. "Even in times of war, Muslims are not allowed to kill anybody save the one who is engaged in face-to-face confrontation with them.

"Killing hundreds of helpless civilians," he added, "is a heinous crime in Islam."

A NATION CHALLENGED: A FIGHTER'S TALE Bin Laden Stirs Struggle on Meaning of Jihad

To many Western scholars, Mr. bin Laden stands out not for the liturgical context, but for drawing on the wellspring of anti-Western sentiment in the Muslim world.

Another French scholar, Gilles Kepel, said Mr. bin Laden drew his views from a deadly mixture of the fundamentalist, aggressive form of Islam known as Salafism that he knew as a student in Saudi Arabia and the heady, but misleading, experience he had when he arrived in Afghanistan in the 1980's to join the last stages of the jihad against Soviet occupation troops.

"By 1989, the jihadists thought that they had destroyed the Soviet Union, and that militant Islam was a force that could prevail against any enemy, forgetting that what really drove the Russians out of Afghanistan was the Stinger antiaircraft missiles given to them by the United States, which neutralized Soviet air power," Dr. Kepel said. "This led them to believe that they could triumph everywhere."

That has not been the case. The Taliban ruled Afghanistan for just five years. Islamic militancy has been violently suppressed in Egypt and Algeria, has crested as an influence in Sudan, and has achieved little in Chechnya and Kashmir.

In Pakistan, clerics who saw the country as following in the Taliban's rise have instead witnessed the nation's president, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, starting a broad-based crackdown on Islamic militancy.

Yet there are legions of young men who seethe with resentment at America and its power, and long after Mr. bin Laden and Al Qaeda have faded into history, they seem likely to form a ready pool of recruits for messianic leaders.

In Pakistan, that is evident in any one of the hundreds of Islamic schools and seminaries that flourished around Peshawar, the frontier city, in the wake of the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan. Although they are under notice now from General Musharraf that they will no longer be allowed to operate as thinly disguised recruiting camps for holy war, their courtyards still teem with angry young men who say they will one day find a way to strike back at America for all it has done in Afghanistan, and for America's "crimes" against Muslims.

At one such institution, the Markaz-e-Islami seminary near Peshawar, a visitor stopped recently to read a painted signboard inscribed with 140 names of Pakistanis who have died as "holy warriors" in Afghanistan and Kashmir since 1993.

A bearded young man named Nurullah, introducing himself as a student, pointed to a fresh board nearby that has been prepared for the names of the latest martyrs, men who died fighting with the Taliban after Sept. 11, and said, "Jihad will continue until doomsday, or until America is defeated, either way."

The Force of Islam

This is the last in a series of articles examining the growth in the influence of Islam. Previous articles focused on Islam and women, the devout rulers of Saudi Arabia, and Muslim influence in Indonesia, Russia, Nigeria and Turkey. Articles in the series and related coverage are available on the Web:

nytimes.com/world

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

A NATION CHALLENGED: A FIGHTER'S TALE Bin Laden Stirs Struggle on Meaning of Jihad

Photos: Ijaz Khan Hussein, a Pakistani pharmacist who joined the fight against the United States, said that despite the hardships he would do it all again. (John F. Burns/The New York Times); Throughout the Muslim world, a theological debate is being waged over Osama bin Laden's vision of jihad. (Reuters)(pg. 15)

Load-Date: January 27, 2002

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Predicting ... Mr Unpredictable

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

February 3, 2001 Saturday

Late Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; News Review; Pg. 33

Length: 1519 words

Byline: Ross Dunn

Body

A man with a reputation for ruthlessness has become a compelling choice for many Israelis to be their next leader.

ARIEL SHARON is the man Israel turns to in a crisis, when the country's very existence appears to be under threat. The fact that he is expected to become prime minister next week is a reflection of how deep are the troubles confronting Israel.

But there is a risk that Sharon may plunge the nation into an even deeper crisis he had that sort of reputation before he became the front-runner in the special election next Tuesday against the Prime Minister, Ehud Barak.

Sharon's rehabilitation has been extraordinary, 18 years after he was found indirectly responsible by a government commission for the massacre of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and declared unfit to serve as defence minister.

Many Palestinians blame him for sparking the present unrest through his visit in late September to a shrine in Jerusalem's walled Old City, sacred to Jews and Muslims.

Only months ago, even members of his own right-wing Likud Party saw Sharon as merely a caretaker leader who would be forced to step down as soon as the former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu decided the time was ripe to return to the political arena.

But with Netanyahu out of the race and Israel still confronting a bloody Palestinian uprising, a majority of Israelis appear to be poised to vote for Sharon.

"It's a measure of how desperate Israelis feel this time that Sharon could even be considered a candidate at all," says Yossi Klein Halevi, a senior writer for the Jerusalem Report. "The power of Sharon and what also frightens many Israelis is that he is in a sense a wild card. Sharon is the person who steps in at a time of desperate emergency. That is the role he has played in the Israeli army and in Israeli politics."

Even some of his strongest supporters believe that Sharon's greatest test will be his ability to control the wild impulses that have characterised his years in politics. His deeds as a soldier and as a politician have been heroic and in some cases horrific.

Predicting ... Mr Unpredictable

Although known as perhaps Israel's most brilliant military strategist, Sharon was never chosen to be chief-of-staff of the defence forces because of his reputation among fellow officers for unpredictability and exceeding the orders of his superiors.

Yet when Israel was in danger of being defeated by Arab armies in the 1973 Yom Kippur War, it was Sharon who was called up from the army reserves to turn the tide of battle. It was Sharon who led the Israeli troops across the Suez Canal and who many believed saved the country.

"Sharon is almost in a sense the doomsday weapon for Israelis," Klein Halevi says. "When Israelis feel their backs are to the wall, there is one last resort and that is Mr Sharon." So with Israeli society seemingly in dire straits yet again, Sharon's candidacy for prime minister not only became possible but also compelling for many citizens.

Many Israelis feel that the peace talks with the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, have collapsed and even if a new deal is stitched up in the near future, the recent violence has shown that it is unlikely to hold.

For years Sharon warned of the dangers of attempting to negotiate with the Palestinians and allowing them to establish a state on Israel's doorstep.

He was born in 1928 on a Jewish agricultural settlement under the British mandate of Palestine and his views about Israel's place in the Middle East were forged early.

Such communities often came under attack from Arabs, and Sharon grew up knowing that Israelis had to defend themselves. He carried a gun while still a youth and in 1945 joined the Haganah, the Jewish underground military organisation that helped drive the British out of Palestine and set the stage for the establishment of modern Israel.

In Israel's war of independence in 1948, he proved himself an able officer with a natural ability to lead and inspire his fellow soldiers.

But his reputation was sullied only a few years later after he was appointed as the head of a special unit to counter cross-border Arab terrorist attacks.

In 1953, in response to the murder of a Jewish woman and her two children near Tel Aviv, he was instructed to blow up 10 homes in the Jordanian border village of Quibya. Instead, his raiding party destroyed 45 houses in the village, killing 69 residents, half of them women and children.

The incident first marked Sharon with a reputation for ruthlessness, and the international community was so outraged that the Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, was forced to offer a public apology.

But Sharon remained unrepentant. Two years later, as the commander of a battalion of paratroopers, he led a reprisal attack against an Egyptian army base in the Gaza Strip, killing 38 Egyptian soldiers and wounding 44 others.

In doing so, some Israeli analysts believe that Sharon destroyed the first chance for peace with the Arab world and set the stage for the series of wars that followed.

Uzi Benziman, in his biography Sharon, an Israeli Caesar, wrote: "Many of these missions took on the most unexpected proportions, surprising both the government and the army, which had initially authorised them. The Egyptian President, Gamal Abdel Nasser, stated that, as a result of this raid [into Gaza], he became convinced that peace between Israel and Egypt would be impossible."

But the damage that observers say Sharon did to the prospects for peace while in the army did not bar his entry into parliament.

And it was as defence minister that he showed his headstrong nature by masterminding Israel's invasion into Lebanon in 1982. He was forced to resign after the inquiry into the massacre of hundreds of Palestinian civilians in the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps south of the city by Israeli-allied Lebanese Christian militiamen.

Predicting ... Mr Unpredictable

And for the next 15 years he held only second-rank posts in the Cabinet until made foreign minister in Netanyahu's government in 1998. After Netanyahu's defeat in the 1999 elections, Sharon became leader of the Likud.

But the real turning point in his career has come as the result of the Palestinian intifada or uprising. The violence came in the wake of Arafat's refusal to accept Barak's far-reaching concessions at the failed Camp David peace talks last July.

Arafat's rejection came despite the fact that Barak was the first Israeli leader to offer to share power in Jerusalem, which the Palestinians want to become the capital of their future State, as well as more than 90 per cent of the West Bank.

The prominent Israeli analyst Leslie Susser says: "The fact that Mr Barak was seen by Israelis to have made such a generous offer to the Palestinians and prepared to go so far towards the Palestinians in getting a peace deal, and yet this was answered by violence, seemed to many Israelis to justify the right-wing thesis that peace with the Palestinians is not possible."

Susser says this meant an immediate shift in support away from Barak to Sharon, who argues that a tough approach to the Arab world is the only way for Israel to survive in the Middle East.

But there were other factors in Barak's fall from grace. Although Israel's most decorated soldier, he had only a few years in parliament before becoming Prime Minister.

Barak shares with Sharon the same determination to reach a goal, sometimes without caring too much about the methods or their consequences. Both are former commandos who head towards a target and do not allow anything to stand in the way.

Klein Halevi says: "If you look at how Barak has gone about the peace process, it recalls Ariel Sharon in Beirut in 1982. What Sharon has tried to do through war, Barak is trying to do with peace, which is change the Middle East, totally turn events upside down, turn preconceptions upside down and impose your vision on Middle East reality.

"Sharon thought he do could it through power and conquest. Barak believes he could do it through concessions. But the ambition, the drive, the ruthlessness is the same."

Ironically, Barak might have contributed to his political decline by fulfilling his pledge to withdraw Israel's troops from Lebanon. It was not so much the pullback itself but that it took place while under attack by members of the militant Islamic guerilla group **Hezbollah** in southern Lebanon.

This appears to have sent a signal to the Palestinians that they, too, should use violence to put pressure on the Israelis.

"Barak took Israel out of Lebanon and he brought Lebanon with him," Klein Halevi says.

"Barak's fatal flaw was not that he offered Israel's ultimate concessions; it was not even that he violated his own promise not to compromise on Jerusalem; it is that he did so under fire, under threat of violent blackmail.

"When Barak made his first offer to Arafat at Camp David in July and that offer was rejected by three months of violence, Barak should have said the negotiations are over and not [offered] more concessions and let Arafat understand that violence works.

"You can offer those concessions but at the same time you have to make sure that the Middle East understands we [Israelis] have not lost our resolve."

Graphic

Predicting ... Mr Unpredictable

ILLUS: Ariel Sharon ... deeds as a soldier and as a politician have been heroic and horrific.

Load-Date: July 24, 2007

End of Document

Middle East peace in the balance

The Advertiser

February 17, 2001, Saturday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 55

Length: 1600 words

Byline: MINERVA NASSER-EDDINE

Body

The election of Ariel Sharon as Prime Minister of Israel has provoked fear and tension in the Middle East with Arab states on a high state of military alert as violence escalates. MINERVA NASSER-EDDINE reports.

WHAT can Sharon do to us? a former Egyptian diplomat asked. "He's going to appoint a cabinet member who talks of bombing Cairo. So what? We've lived with these threats for years. It's the Americans who should be worried."

While such indifference may be conveyed publicly by some regional inhabitants, the recent election of Ariel Sharon to be Israel's new Prime Minister is no lighthearted matter. It is evident that such developments have a real possibility of inflicting internal, regional and international instability.

This is reflected in the ongoing spiral of violence since last week's vote. Slowly, the stone-throwing intifada (uprising) by Palestinian youths is being replaced with arms against a militarily strong and defiant Israeli Defence Force. In the past week alone the world has witnessed ongoing gun battles in West Bank towns, the assassination of a Palestinian and, most recently, the death of eight Israeli soldiers by a Palestinian bus driver in Tel Aviv. It is highly unlikely that the cycle of violence will be abating soon.

The tension is further exemplified in the raised state of alert being reported in the region. Israel, its neighbors and some European military bases have been put on a high state of military readiness. The United States has delivered Patriot anti-aircraft missiles to Israel, and the US brigade from the 69th Air Defence Artillery arrived in Haifa under the pretext of a "military exercise".

An alliance between Syria, Iraq and Iran is slowly emerging. *Hezbollah* is reported to be deploying its short-range rockets near the Israeli border, while Islamic resistance cells are reportedly being established in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. The IDF is beefing up its military deployment through increased patrols, and additional heavy artillery redeployment.

Meanwhile, the new American administration is dispatching messages to Arab leaders to "demonstrate restraint" and to give Mr Sharon and his new government "an opportunity to prove his intentions".

Tensions arose in September when Mr Sharon, a Likud right-wing hardliner, visited Al-Aksa and Dome of the Rock mosques in Jerusalem, bringing with him an entourage of more than a thousand security guards.

The provocative visit was considered an antagonistic and deliberate move to destabilise the peace negotiations. Pleas from Palestinian negotiators to stop Mr Sharon's visit fell on deaf ears, resulting in the Jerusalem uprising in

Middle East peace in the balance

which more than 650 Palestinians and 24 Israelis (most of Arab background) have died and 10,000 people have been injured.

Mr Sharon is not new to controversy. He is known infamously for his record involvement in war crimes dating as far back as the 1950s. He was the main proponent behind the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, which witnessed the death of 20,000 civilians and the use of non-conventional arsenal such as napalm. The aim was to destroy the PLO's base in Lebanon. Soon after the invasion, a massacre within the Palestinian refugee camp in the capital's outskirts transpired, resulting in the brutal murder of up to 3000 children, women and elderly.

An Israeli inquiry found Mr Sharon "personally indirectly responsible", but he refused to resign and was removed from his post, although he retained a position in the Israeli Cabinet as a minister without portfolio.

MR SHARON is considered a hardliner because of his opposition to peace with Arab states. As well, he launched the policy of Jewish settlements, and controversially occupied a home in occupied East Jerusalem inciting the Palestinians further by raising an Israeli flag on its rooftop.

He was dubbed "the bulldozer" for the mass bulldozing of Palestinian homes in a Gaza Strip refugee camp in the early 1970s which left 16,000 displaced Palestinians uprooted. He has described the Palestinians as "bugs", depicting them in his autobiography, *Warrior*, as infantile and untrustworthy.

Not surprisingly, his election has provoked fear and tension within the region. Mr Sharon's supporters have been working to dispel the reality of Mr Sharon's past, and have desperately been creating a new image of an elder statesman who is to be considered as a war hero, a military strategist and, now, a man who is ready for peace.

However, both his political opponents within Israel and the region consider him a man with no limits who is willing to use power ruthlessly, regardless of its ramifications.

Mr Sharon's electoral success came after Israelis had grown tired of the bloodshed and instability the peace process had bought. They had lost faith not only in former prime minister Ehud Barak but in the entire seven years of negotiations. The anti-Barak vote was a vote for his inability to end the violence.

Ironically, the success of Mr Sharon will bring Israel more violence, instability, alienation and insecurity.

It is with this divisive and negative background that Mr Sharon and the Likud party came into office. Mr Sharon is challenging this climate on two fronts: the desire to establish a broad-based ruling coalition, and the attempt at changing his public image.

How Mr Sharon is to compile his coalition and balance the power and interests of all involved is his most challenging task. This, in turn, will determine his political success.

During his election campaign, Mr Sharon worked towards changing his public image and stated: "I have decided to work to bring peace, but that requires that the other side fulfils its obligations. Confidence-building steps must come from both sides." This is puzzling because on numerous occasions he has refused to acknowledge the binding agreements signed by his predecessors. His response to the continued intifada will entail the full seizure and control of certain Palestinian areas, as well as the immediate deployment of IDF troops throughout the occupied territories.

As a result, the Syrian armed forces have been placed on the highest state of alert in anticipation of an Israeli attack against Syrian positions, both in Lebanon and Syria. The Syrians are shifting air defence systems, including surface-to-air missiles, and are reinforcing critical positions. A large concentration of Iraqi troops was also recently deployed on the Syrian border under an agreement between the Iraqi and Syrian presidents. Syrian President Assad apparently seized this as an opportunity to warn Israel that if it enacts its threat to attack Syria, then Israel would have to face a much larger-scale threat of Syrian forces backed up by Iraqis, and the involvement of Iranians.

Despite this alliance amongst traditional foes, the broader Arab regimes are divided over their public response to the election of Mr Sharon.

Middle East peace in the balance

Despite Mr Sharon's threats, Egypt and Jordan's public stand continues to be conciliatory and moderate, urging calm and patience. On the other hand, Syria called for a renewal of the Arab boycott against Israel and considered Mr Sharon's victory a declaration of war. Whether this division will deepen or reconcile depends on the developments in Israel and the region in the coming months. If Mr Sharon militarily cracks down on the Palestinians and decides to pre-empt an attack on its neighbors, moderate Arab governments will be forced to take a more hardline and reactionary response to Israel's aggression.

The US has been urged to reconsider its role with Israel or face the threat of Arab retaliation within the region and outside it. Calls to boycott the US for its "bias in favor of Israel" are no longer coming only from the more radical states in the region, but are now also being heard from moderate states such as Egypt and Jordan. The Clinton administration's open support of Israel and its constant attention to the conflict has left the Bush Administration in a difficult position. By sidelining the importance of the regional developments Mr Bush will risk endangering vital US interests in the region. He cannot afford to lose the support of the traditionally US-backed Arab regimes, nor openly support Israel as previous administrations have done.

On the other hand, if he openly encourages Israel, Mr Sharon will see it as a green light to enforce his expansionary vision which will plunge the region into the abyss of war.

It will be wise for the Arabs to watch Mr Sharon closely as it is highly likely that he will eventually return to his old ways. It is almost certain that Mr Sharon will order the Israeli army to intensify its attacks against the Palestinian areas, using force. He will encourage home and land confiscations throughout the occupied territories, as well as tighter border closures.

He will escalate the levels of repression and brutality which may induce a mass transfer to neighboring states.

International condemnation should be swift and damning. Otherwise, the alternative is regional war which will be horrific, drawn out and will change the political face of the Middle East substantially.

The inhabitants of the region are at boiling point. The double standards between Israeli and Arab aggression has been highlighted extensively over the years. Political change is desired and the coming of Mr 1Sharon may bring about these much needed changes.

It is not only the Americans that need to be worried.

* Minerva Nasser-Eddine holds a MA degree from ANU's Centre of Middle Eastern and Central Asian studies. She is undertaking a PhD at the University of Adelaide.

Load-Date: November 21, 2001

Mixed feelings among Muslims; War on Terrorism

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

October 13, 2001 Saturday

Late Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; Pg. 32

Length: 1624 words

Byline: Hamish McDonald

Body

The US-led strikes in Afghanistan are inflaming the Muslim world, but Islamic unity is paper-thin so far, as Herald Foreign Editor Hamish McDonald reports from Tehran.

Hossain Alamdari, 27, is thin with intense brown eyes and a straggly beard, dressed in worn clothes. With a few other theological students he is sitting and chatting on the floral carpets in the foyer of Ayatollah Marashi Majafi Library in Iran's holy city of Qom, only a metre away from the sarcophagus containing the late ayatollah himself.

Alamdari, from a remote southern province, is certain what the United States has been doing in neighbouring Afghanistan this week: expanding its regional power.

"We believe that all Muslims should join hands to resist the Americans," he said.

In the traditional bazaar of the capital, Tehran, where more than a third of Iran's economic activity takes place, Mohsen, 24, is lanky, elegant, and clean shaven in his family's large carpet showroom. His concerns this week were the high local price of personal computers, and the difficulty of getting visas to the West, rather than joining any war.

"They will never get young people now to volunteer like they did against Iraq," he said, referring to the 1980-1988 war in which at least half a million on both sides died.

At least until late yesterday, when mullahs across Iran sharply raised the volume on anti-US messages at midday prayers, and worshippers were then encouraged to join officially organised street rallies, Iran's reaction to the US-led bombing in Afghanistan has been divergent.

It has almost been two countries. The Iranian state has condemned the US intervention, with the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, taking the harshly critical line that has filtered down to Alamdari in Qom, and the government of the liberal reformist cleric, President Mohammad Khatami, issuing a cooler verdict of "unacceptable". Like the young businessman Mohsen, the Iranian public's reaction was noteworthy for its detachment and self-absorption.

This alone should be enough to counter any assumption that Islamic reaction to this crisis will be uniform. Or that it will be predictable on the basis of whether particular countries are "pro-Western" or "US allies", or "radical" or "fundamentalist". Or that some sweeping confrontation of the civilisations, Islamic versus the West, is coalescing.

Mixed feelings among Muslims War on Terrorism

Elsewhere in much of the Muslim world, in contrast to Iran, it has tended to be the regimes trying to express their support for the US action and at the same time quell surges of public protest that would reveal the unpopularity of their policies.

This reversed situation has led to tragedies: Yasser Arafat's police firing on Palestinian crowds for the first time, with some fatalities. It has led to more routine suppression, with the Jordanian Government rounding up members of the Muslim Brotherhood and other usual suspects. And to occasional farce, like the Turkish officials who blocked two families naming their newborn sons Osama in honour of the US's ultimate target, Osama bin Laden.

The mixed feelings were reflected when the foreign ministers of the 57-nation Organisation of Islamic Countries had an emergency meeting in the Qatari capital, Doha, on Wednesday and broke up early, issuing a mild communique that did not condemn the strikes in Afghanistan but expressed concern they might cause civilian casualties. Several of the organisation's leaders even found positive outcomes emerging from the crisis, notably US President George Bush's statement that Washington had long had in mind the emergence of a Palestinian state, and the subsequent US rebuke for the Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, for implicitly comparing this to British prime minister Neville Chamberlain's appeasement of Hitler in 1938.

But regional analysts point out the subdued mood could easily turn to outrage if the US campaign causes significant civilian casualties and suffering. "The situation is very tense," said Abbas Maleki, a former deputy foreign minister of Iran. "From Indonesia to Morocco, they are waiting to see the balance of the US attacks: are the Americans really targeting terrorist groups, or all the cities and people of Afghanistan who have suffered from the 1980s up to now?"

The use of US and other foreign ground troops, as opposed to raids by special forces that would presumably remain unseen, would also risk a backlash, said Abbas, who heads Tehran's International Institute for Caspian Studies. "It is very, very dangerous. Afghans are opposed to the Taliban, but it does not mean they support foreign troops inside their country."

Even so, the paradox of Islamic reaction is that if he calls this week for a jihad against the US from the Taliban leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar, and Osama bin Laden strike fire anywhere it will probably be in some of the most pro-Western, pro-US countries, such as Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, and the Islamic parts of Asia from Pakistan to Indonesia and the Philippines.

The ingredients for receptivity include: populations excluded from power by traditional rulers, social oligarchies or political elites; visible links of dependency on US and other Western military and economic support; and religious education systems

that augment or replace non-existent or failing state education.

In many cases, the forcible suppression by secular elites or traditional despots of modernising Islamist oppositions which typically seek egalitarian democratic societies infused with Muslim values, and support the emancipation of women (as long as they are modestly dressed) has cleared the way for reaction in the form of Taliban-style fundamentalism, which seeks only to apply the Sharia law based on Koranic precepts and the life of the Prophet Mohammed.

One example was the Algerian Army's refusal of the 1991 election result that should have put FIS, the Islamic Salvation Front, into government a violation of democracy that had the transparent backing of France and other Western powers.

Since then, Algeria has been racked by anarchic and random massacres carried out by the shadowy fundamentalist movement GIS, the Special Intervention Group.

Scores of other alienated young Algerians have gravitated to bin Laden's al-Qaeda network, as have similar dislocated Islamists from other countries, and drifted towards fundamentalism. In a recent paper, the noted French scholar of Afghan and Islamic radical movements Olivier Roy noted a "growing disconnection of militant networks

Mixed feelings among Muslims War on Terrorism

from their sponsoring States", which resulted in a brand of militant Islam that was "both more radical and less sophisticated than the preceding Islamism. Activism has replaced ideology".

By contrast, Iran, which has been under US economic blockade virtually since its Islamic revolution in 1979 and on Washington's list of states sponsoring terrorism since 1984, is becoming more moderate in its behaviour towards the West, if not in its

rhetoric.

"Unlike the Arab Middle East, which is becoming very politicised, the Iranian public is becoming apoliticised," says one of Tehran's leading specialists on Middle East affairs, who asked not to be named.

The reason, he thinks, is the wide generational gap that has suddenly emerged in the country. With 65 per cent of the population under the age of 30, the national leadership talks from a different era that of the harsh struggle against the Shah's rule and the long sacrifice of the war with Iraq. "This young generation is more interested in its future, job security, employment, and economic well-being rather than politics," the expert said.

One result is that Iran, culturally distinct from the Arabs and the only Muslim country with a Shia majority, is quietly slipping into an older pattern of foreign relationships. "Historically, Iranians have not really associated themselves with Middle-Eastern politics," he said.

"Strategically speaking, Iran has always searched for partners beyond the region, not within the region. So Iranian foreign policy within the last two decades is really a historical aberration searching for a Middle Eastern identity." The generational shift would increase the tendency to look to the West, he said.

The shift is apparent in lessening interest in the Israel-Palestinian question, despite constant hostile references to Israel and its US backing in leaders' speeches and newspaper commentaries.

"The Palestinian issue has been part of the revolutionary ideology of the state for the last two decades, but there is not much public backing," the specialist said. "That's the contrast: in the Arab countries the governments are trying to distance themselves from the Palestinian issue whereas the public is vastly interested. In Iran, Central Asia, Turkey and the Caucasus people may follow what's happening with the Arab-Israeli issue or Arab grievances regarding the United States, but they're not part of it. "

With Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon, Iran's active confrontation of Israel through its sponsorship of the Shia **Hezbollah** forces there has been sidelined, the specialist said.

Iran continued to give explicit moral backing as a state to the radical Hamas and Islamic Jihad groups among the Palestinians, which have tried to disrupt the Oslo peace process.

This irks the United States, but in terms of substantial support to these groups, Iran was far outweighed by private contributions from places like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait another Middle Eastern paradox. Rhetoric and substance will remain hard to unravel in the Islamic world if the Western intervention in Afghanistan deepens.

Often, and sometimes misleadingly, it will be ideological faces like Hossain Alamdari in Qom's seminary that are more apparent than the apolitical Mohsen in the Tehran bazaar.

Graphic

ILLUS: An Afghan woman holds her sick child while being detained in south-eastern Iran. Photo: AFP/Behrouz Mehri. An Afghan woman holds her sick child while being detained in south-eastern Iran. Already host to more than

Mixed feelings among Muslims War on Terrorism

2 million Afghan refugees, Iran has closed its frontiers. Photo: AFP/Behrouz Mehri (Appeared in the Early edition only).

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End of Document

No Headline In Original

Chicago Daily Herald

November 21, 2002, Thursday F3

Copyright 2002 Paddock Publications, Inc.

Section: NEWS;; Fence Post;

Length: 464 words

Body

As you pull over, say thanks to rescue crews

Our Tri-Cities communities have a common blessing for which to be grateful - the protection provided by the expertise and dedication of our Tri-City Central Dispatch.

The 911 crews make a critical difference in many lives every day of the year.

Their prompt response to our 911 calls, their skill, good judgment and compassion in providing immediate treatment while transporting us to emergency facilities have made the difference between life and death in many cases.

Add Tri-Com to your list of things to be thankful for. Remember to pull over and stop and not try to beat the siren to the next intersection.

Breathe a prayer for each mission you witness and be proud of your community's support for the health care it provides.

Eleanor Smith

St. Charles

Don't overlook hideous acts, words by Israel

Chaya Gil finds the Hezbollah opinion that Jews are subhuman "frightening."

She also quotes a Hezbollah guide who calls Jews "pigs and apes."

She compares the terrorist organization to Nazis and accuses them of anti-Semitism.

I have no love for the Hezbollah. They are harming the Palestinian cause.

But anti-Semitic? How can that be? Members of Hezbollah are a Semitic people themselves, as are the Palestinians, even those Palestinians who are Christian.

As for the dirty talk, does she believe the Israelis are above this sort of thing?

Israeli Tourism Minister Rebavan once called Palestinians "lice" and "a cancer."

No Headline In Original

Also, a gentleman (?) by the name of Rabbi Yaacov Perrin was the author of a memorable quote. It was his opinion that "1 million Arabs are not worth a Jewish fingernail."

I don't like to hear these things from either side, but they don't frighten me.

What really frightens me is the wording on some news reports such as one from a national news agency when a suicide bomber killed 26 Israelis at a religious gathering.

It said, "What a despicable crime, how hideous," etc. I agree it was all those things. However, when Israeli soldiers invaded a refugee camp, not to worry, "only 50 Palestinian men, women and children were killed."

That smacks of genocide, and that really frightens me.

Jean Baker

Wheaton

Homeland security could threaten rights

Three community organizers from Belarus visited our office. When discussing President Bush's homeland security plan, they shook their heads and said, "This is how it began when we lost our rights in Belarus ... except the enemy was the United States."

I listened to the president's press conference about his plans for the Department of Homeland Security.

How many constitutionally guaranteed civil rights will U.S. citizens be willing to give up to protect against the unknown?

Sarah Klaper

Community Lawyer

Citizen Advocacy Center

Elmhurst

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Chicago Daily Herald

November 5, 2002, Tuesday DuPage

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Body

Thomas needs lessons in evaluating schools

In his Oct. 23 column, Cal Thomas tries to make the case that the amount of money spent by a school has no impact on its educational outcomes. He arrives at this conclusion by noting that some schools have very low expenditures per student yet score very well on standardized tests while other schools with high expenditures per student have poor scores on these tests.

Thomas should remember the old principle of scientific research, "all other things being equal." He should be aware that the schools he is comparing have students with other differences besides the amount of money being spent on them.

There are schools in which the vast majority of students come from single-parent, poverty-stricken homes. Many of them come from homes in which English is not spoken. These students often lack basic medical care and cannot read because they need glasses. It only stands to reason that these students may do quite poorly on tests despite the added spending.

I advise Thomas, a self-proclaimed Christian, to reread the Gospels to learn how he should regard "the least of these of my children."

Matthew DuPree

Glendale Heights

Don't overlook hideous acts, words by Israel

Chaya Gil finds the **Hezbollah** opinion that Jews are subhuman "frightening."

She also quotes a **Hezbollah** guide that calls Jews "pigs and apes." She compares the terrorist organization to Nazis and accuses them of anti-Semitism.

I have no love for the **Hezbollah**. They are harming the Palestinian cause. But anti-Semitic? How can that be? Members of **Hezbollah** are a Semitic people themselves, as are the Palestinians, even those Palestinians who are Christian.

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No Headline In Original

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That smacks of genocide, and that really frightens me.

Jean Baker

Wheaton

More Suzanne Fields, and less Molly Ivins

Suzanne Fields is a very talented writer and tells it like it is without being nasty or catty.

Please publish her more often, and get rid of Molly Ivins.

Thomas W. Bahr

Wheaton

Load-Date: November 11, 2002

Teetering towards stability

THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN

December 17, 2005 Saturday

All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Inquirer; Pg. 21

Length: 1694 words

Byline: Martin Chulov, Additional reporting by Suha Maayeh

Body

MATP

Iraq's elections raise troubling issues at a tipping point in the country's future, Middle East correspondent Martin Chulov writes

IRAQI officials are today busily counting up to 15 million ballots lodged in the most meaningful ballot of the post-Saddam era. But elsewhere in the Middle East, leaders are nervously counting the cost.

Just as the final result of Thursday's watershed poll will take time to play out across Iraq's sectarian strongholds, the full effect of legitimising a sharp shift in domestic power will need time to trickle through to the war-torn nation's neighbours.

Across the region there is a troubling consensus that almost any of the possible electoral outcomes will be unpalatable and destabilising. Results are still a week away at least. But the likeliest outcome is that the Shi'ite Muslim majority, so long Saddam Hussein's whipping boys, will do well out of the poll, potentially ending up with 120 seats in Iraq's new 275-seat parliament.

To form a government, though, the Shi'ites -- who campaigned under the banner of a loose conglomerate called the United Islamic Party -- will need a coalition partner. It's probable that they will turn to the Kurdish groups in a power-sharing deal that would best reflect the ethnic make-up of Iraq but further fuel the implacable Sunni insurgency.

By the time polls closed on Thursday, it was clear the Sunni Arabs had learned from their mistakes during the vote for a transitional government in January, when they boycotted en masse and spent the rest of the year with a dwindling political voice. This time Sunnis showed up at polling stations across the insurgency-ravaged centre of the country, ensuring a stronger presence in Iraq's first four-year parliament. But their lack of numbers means they will never again enjoy absolute control over the levers of authority as they did during Saddam's three-decade rule.

Across the spectrum of post-election scenarios, there are looming nightmares for almost all of Arabia, Israel, the US and Europe. None of the key participants want to see disfranchised Sunni factions escalate their attacks against an already tortured nation, but neither do they want to see the likely spin-off from a second scenario: the Shi'ite groups polling less than a secular bloc led by former prime minister Iyad Allawi.

Teetering towards stability

While the Sunnis revelled under Saddam, the Shi'ites were brutalised. Since their tormentor was toppled, they have patiently organised factions, played ball with the US occupation and sat tight.

"They have waited 30 years for a shot at power," says Middle East project director for the International Crisis Group, Joost Hiltermann. "What are they going to do if someone tries to take it away from them? They may fight."

The nightmare for the Arab world could not get much worse. If Iraq's Shi'ites took to arms, the conflict would inevitably drag in Iran, the only Shi'ite stronghold, backed by a new president not shy about his regime's regional ambitions. If Iran sprang to its Iraqi brethren's rescue, the Sunni Arab states of Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates would come under enormous pressure to defend their own interests. Saudi Arabia has a large Shi'ite minority of its own and is alarmed about the looming shift in the region's sectarian power balance.

"The Iran-Iraq war is being re-fought," Hiltermann says. "The Saudis are backing the Sunnis and the Iranians are behind the Shi'ites. The forces that could prevent civil war are weakened and those that are clamouring for war are strong."

Israel also would have a strong vested interest in shoring itself against any regional dispute. So far the Middle East's only nuclear power, the Jewish state wields plenty of muscle. Israel has long condemned Iran for backing the Hezbollah guerillas rallied on its northern border and, with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's three recent challenges to Israel's right to exist, it could easily be tempted to weigh into a conflict.

The Middle East, for 90 years the world's most complex chessboard, is at a crucial phase. Not since the haphazard carve-up that followed the fall of the Ottoman Empire after World War I has so much been at stake on so many fronts. Nothing in Iraq is happening in isolation.

The giant stride towards self-determination that many Iraqis made on Thursday when they emerged from polling stations sporting emblematic purple paint-stained fingers, will count for little if a unified and stable democracy fails to emerge from the mayhem of the past two years.

"The first step for legislators is to solve the mess of the new constitution and determine whether the country remains as one or splits into autonomous sub-states," says Oraib Al-Rantawi, director of the Al-Quds centre in the Jordanian capital, Amman.

The Balkanisation of Iraq is another option that much of the Middle East would find tough to stomach. The Sunnis would find it too much to bear. Since Iraq was hastily pieced together by Britain after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, it has been a patchwork of three disparate religious and ethnic groups: the pious Shi'ites to the south, the Kurds in the north and the Sunni Arabs left to the country's simmering centre.

Fuelling the Sunni rebellion has been the fact that not only did they lose their power base when Saddam was deposed, they also lost access to Iraq's enormous subterranean lakes of oil, which lie at the county's extremities. The Sunnis are convinced that if Iraq is partitioned, the untapped billions in oil wealth will be out of their reach and placed in the clutches of their two ethnic rivals.

After suffering at the brutal hands of Saddam, the Kurds also are looking to collect. One way or another, they are set to become king-makers in the new parliament. They are sure to be courted by Allawi's secular group and the United Islamic Party of the Shi'ites. Whoever they agree to wed, it is likely they will need to make concessions to their oft-stated agenda of an independent homeland in the north. Rantawi says the Kurds may be tempted to put self-interest aside in the short term and align with Allawi. "Most of them are hugely secular and they are worried about the increasing influence of Iran," he says. "Whatever they decide will be pivotal."

A partitioning of Iraq also is likely to deliver an extremist Sunni-Arab mini-state in the centre of the country, again a horror story for most neighbours.

"A break-up of Iraq would be the worst case scenario," Rantawi says. "It would be something Jordan could not live with."

Teetering towards stability

Despite describing the ballot as a "satanic project", an alliance of five Sunni insurgent groups led by al-Qa'ida's Abu Musab al-Zarqawi said during the week they would not disrupt the vote with bombs and rifles. The insurgents instead elected to work with the cards they were dealt and gradually rebuild their shrunken power base through the political process.

Zarqawi repeatedly has stated his aim is to make Iraq the centre of a new Islamic caliphate modelled on the traditions of a 7th-century utopian world of the prophet Mohammed. His network has drawn support and financial backing from across the Sunni Arab world. Without trying, Zarqawi has become a regional political player. It is a reality he is content to use as a means to an end, for now.

Across Baghdad, in Ramadi, Kirkuk and even Saddam's home town of Tikrit, the voices of ordinary Iraqis were heard through their ballot papers with minimal fuss.

In Amman, more than 600,000 Iraqis living in self-imposed exile cast their ballots at a primary school in a wealthy suburb on Wednesday and Thursday. Iraqis spoken to by Inquirer cared little for the high-stakes games of Middle Eastern politics. They simply wanted a chance to secure their futures. The mood around polling stations was less emotional than during the vote for a transitional government in January and the constitutional referendum in October.

Lawyer Mahdi Al Rahim, who arrived from Baghdad two days ago, says the election is a crucial step in Iraq's future.

"The elections are fantastic," he says. "It's the first time we practice democracy in the right way. It is a crucial and important time and we hope this parliament will be quite representative of the population. This time we are enthusiastic to vote, and we hope that things will get started and get better. We can see a light at the end of the tunnel. I hope the democratic and liberal forces win."

Adnan Abdul Hamid Abdali, a Sunni civil engineer, is an electoral newcomer.

"Last year I boycotted the elections," he says. "Those who won the elections the first time did not bring with them security and stability. They brought with them the divisions and sectarian problems. I am here today not because of my conviction in the election process because I do not believe that elections and occupation go together. Rather, I am hoping that there will be security and stability, and maybe people now will start recognising the resistance."

Mohammad Rida, a Jordanian resident for 19 years, is looking for a reason to return to his homeland. "Things look good now we can give our opinions. In the past I wouldn't be able to do that. Now I have become free and, God willing, all shall be well and security will be restored. If there's security, why shouldn't I return?"

Watching the ballots come in during the next week and with much more at stake in the short term than any Middle Eastern regime will be the US, where Capitol Hill legislators will face elections of their own in November next year. The war in Iraq and the 2150 dead servicemen and women are not playing well on the domestic front. Neither is the commitment of 160,000 US soldiers.

The US has tried to manoeuvre a way out of the quagmire through the democracy it has urged on Iraq. An escalating regional crisis, calling for its military to stay longer, could well be too much for many already skittish congressional leaders to deal with.

The best that vested interests can hope for is that somehow the horse-trading of the next few months will lead to a unified and stable democracy. With decades of blighted ambition set against so many cross purposes, it sounds like an Arabian fable.

Load-Date: December 16, 2005

Democratic committee follows state election laws

St. Petersburg Times (Florida)

December 5, 2003 Friday

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Section: PASCO TIMES; Pg. 2; LETTER

Length: 1744 words

Series: LETTERS

Body

Re: Focus is needed on Democratic committee errors, Dec. 2 letter

Editor: As treasurer of the Pasco Democratic Executive Committee, I have to ask the letter writer if he has any understanding of Florida's election laws. His letter sure sounds as if he doesn't, which might explain why he and the Republican Executive Committee are in serious trouble with the Florida Elections Commission, the Judicial Qualifications Commission and the Florida Republican Party - again.

Our office rent includes all utilities. I personally wrote a check for our April office rent early - in March. This is clearly on the elections reports we filed. If the writer had bothered checking on either of these, it would have saved him at least some embarrassment that is so obvious in his very angry, but grossly inaccurate letter.

As for our DEC reporting cash contributions in excess of \$100, that is true. I did do that. All these so-called "contributions" are from the East Pasco Democratic Club, and the total for the three quarter periods reported so far is \$875.00, reported in seven different transactions as "cash contributions." The distinctions here are that the East Pasco Democratic Club does not have its own bank account but runs all its member dues and other funds through the DEC account - most of this money is club member dues. All monies from the club are posted as contributions from the club to the DEC. We are not required to include member dues as contributions, but we fully disclose everything so that the public has a true picture of all DEC funds available from every source.

The only error I have committed here is not breaking down the amount in checks vs. the amount in cash.

Our DEC books have always been open to any and all inspections. Not once has the Pasco Democratic Party been accused of or investigated for campaign finance irregularities, but then we have nothing to hide. We report over and above what is actually required by law. Our party does not violate any elections finance or other laws.

Our party did not forget to include in our reports the \$7,500 in ethically questionable contributions nor the \$7,350 in ethically challenged expenditures for judicial candidates, in a report that was signed by the letter writer and the chair of the Republican Party of Pasco.

I think it's very clear which political party in Pasco has knowingly and repeatedly violated several aspects of both elections and ethics laws in Florida.

Democratic committee follows state election laws

I think that C.T. Bowen pretty much hit things squarely on the head in his Nov. 30 column. The only thing I might disagree with is his phrase "Try conspiracy and incompetence." I'd leave out the incompetence part. It looks suspiciously like they knew exactly what they were doing and just got caught.

Pat Burke

Treasurer, Pasco DEC

Zephyrhills

Chasco doesn't offend Native American

Re: Racist Chasco Fiesta should end, Dec. 3 letter

Editor: I am a Native American. I grew up on and around reservations. I go back any time I have the opportunity. My wife, who is Greek, is a member of the Krewe of Chasco.

I personally find one thing about Chasco Fiesta offensive. It is offensive to me that people with Irish names, like Callaghan, would presume to defend our way of life. Does he think we cannot fight our own battles?

Our battles are not against Chasco. Our battles are fought every day on the reservations and are far more important. Unemployment and poverty on the reservations are so extreme they make Third World nations look like posh resorts.

The white people who presume to speak for me would be wiser to turn their energy to the true atrocity that has been committed. Some of my fellow Indians (yes, we don't mind being called Indians) live on reservations where the poverty rate is 100 percent. My own reservation, in South Dakota, presently has a poverty rate of over 75 percent.

The letter suggests there is a tremendous ground swell of anger over Chasco. I saw photos of a demonstration against Chasco a couple years ago. They depicted a group of about four protesters, their friends and nothing more at Simms Park. In fact, the protesters were outnumbered by the children on the playground equipment behind them. The simple fact is no one cares, except a few white people who should have better things to do with their time.

The cost of the festival is also a point of contention. I don't really know what the cost is, but the financial cost is likely offset by the tax revenues and business receipts the festival generates.

If the writer really cared about my people, he would have wanted the festival to grow larger. I met many of my fellow tribesmen who had brought their music, their wares and their vibrant stories to share with the people of Pasco County. We should feel enriched and thankful they were here. The \$13,000 bill, if it is correct, is small potatoes compared to the traditions exposed to the county.

Additionally, my people made money from this event. They were here selling their goods. If Chasco Fiesta were gone, then where would my fellow Indians sell their wares and make their living? Back on the reservation with its 75 percent poverty rate?

I personally think it is an honor to have festivals celebrating our culture. I do not want to be a few pages in a dusty history book. We, many nations of Indians, are alive and well. Images of us in festivals and on football helmets are not an offensive thing.

Instead of these terrible protests, go to the reservations. Teach an Indian to read. Donate money to an Indian charity or to an alcoholism program for my people. Do something, anything. Just do not believe the words of white

Democratic committee follows state election laws

people who presume to know what is best for Indians. We have been down that road a few times in the past couple hundred years and look where it got us.

Leon Flood, New Port Richey

Gun show sales threaten public safety

Editor: Closing the gun show loophole is a public safety issue. It is not the legal possession of weapons with a background check that is at issue. It is the sale of weapons to criminals, substance abusers and terrorists that has jeopardized the safety of all citizens.

Florida law is clear that felons, those under domestic violence injunctions or as specifically noted in Florida Statute 790.25, "persons who have been adjudged mentally incompetent, or who are addicted to the use of narcotics or similar drugs, or who are habitual or chronic alcoholics," are prohibited from using weapons.

Felons buying or selling firearms were involved in more than 46 percent of the ATF investigations involving gun shows. In more than a third of the investigations, the firearms were known to have been involved in subsequent crimes, including assault, robbery, burglary and homicide. Documentation shows that weapons were acquired at gun shows by members of Hezbollah, the IRA and al-Qaida operatives.

Shocking as those facts are, Stetson Law Forum reports more than 4,000 women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends each year, a majority (over 76 percent) with handguns. Hank Earl Carr was the poster boy for weapons acquisition, often at gun shows. Pasco County shoulders its own shame for the shootings and murder of women in domestic violence incidents.

The lack of action by the County Commission to close the gun show loophole directly contributes to criminal activity as Florida is considered a major exporter of undocumented weapons used in criminal activity in other states. Since the onus of responsibility lies with the sellers of cigarettes or alcohol to verify the requirements to purchase such products, we must expect that weapons purchasers meet the requirements of the law.

One recent writer stated that he lives to vote Republican; then he should follow the directive of Republican Attorney General John Ashcroft speaking for the current administration Feb. 27, 2002, that this administration supports the closing of the gun show loophole. The administration made it clear that keeping weapons out of the hands of terrorists is a priority for homeland security.

With all the protestations to allow undocumented sale and purchase of weapons, the gunrunning taking place from Florida and the arming of terrorists through the gun show loophole, questions arise as to the activities or motives and undocumented cash produced in such sales. The County Commission has an obligation to protect not only Pasco County, but to provide protections in accordance with homeland security.

Joann Ross, Hudson

Reports prove no gun show loophole

Re: Counties' gun show loophole must be closed, Nov. 26 letter

Editor: Research the facts and one will quickly see the emotionally charged letter regarding gun shows is primarily politically motivated and inconclusive. Multiple government resources, often also cited by the letter writer and his organization, have stated the contrary. For example: the Bureau of Justice Statistics 2001 report "Firearms Use by Offenders," found that less than 1 percent of U.S. crime guns come from gun shows.

Democratic committee follows state election laws

A 2000 bureau study, "Federal Firearms Offenders, 1992-98" found only 1.7 percent of federal prison inmates obtained their gun from a gun show. And a National Institute of Justice 1997 study, "Homicide in Eight U.S. Cities," reported less than 2 percent of criminal guns come from gun shows.

In October, a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) task force made up of 14 academic, business and government health experts, reached the following conclusion concerning the effectiveness of eight different types of gun control laws: "insufficient evidence to determine the effectiveness of any of the firearms laws." In short, a review of 51 published studies found no conclusive proof that these measures reduce violent crimes, accidents or suicide.

Residents of Pasco and Polk counties are not easily swayed by unfounded scare tactics, especially ones in which terrorist attacks against this nation are manipulated by special interests to advance political agendas. Residents in Pasco and Polk counties continue to communicate that they will not tolerate any further restrictions on their rights nor will they be scared into giving up those rights.

In June of this year, the Arizona Legislature passed a resolution that recognized the value of gun shows to local communities and declared, "the so-called gun show loophole is a fallacy generated by groups whose ultimate goal is to eliminate gun shows and all private firearms transactions." Seems like it is about time for Florida to do the same.

Ed Mejias, Land O'Lakes

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Sunnis and Shiites: Who are they?

Lincoln Journal Star (Nebraska)

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City Edition

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Byline: BOB REEVES, Lincoln Journal Star

Body

The news from Iraq and the Middle East these days is filled with references to Sunnis and Shiites, the major divisions of Islam.

For example, we know Shiites won the most votes in the January election in Iraq, and that Shiites, Sunnis and other religious and ethnic minorities are still trying to piece together a government there.

Former dictator Saddam Hussein was a Sunni, and the militants in Fallujah and other Iraqi insurgents are often identified as Sunnis.

We also know that the leaders of Iran are Shiites, while the leaders of most predominantly Muslim countries are Sunni. Both religious groups have a significant presence in Lebanon, where the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri, a Sunni, produced widespread demonstrations against the Syrian occupation of Lebanon. Then **Hezbollah**, an organization identified as Shiite, led demonstrations in favor of a continued military presence in Lebanon by Syria, a country identified as Sunni.

While the political positions and alliances can get very confusing, it's helpful to know something about both the differences and the similarities between the two groups of Muslims.

In most aspects of belief and practice, Shiites and Sunnis are alike, said Adnan al-Jabiry, imam (prayer leader) at the Nebraska Islamic Foundation, which has a Shiite mosque at 7125 Douglas St.

The main difference between the two, he said, involves the succession of leadership after the prophet Muhammad died in 632. Shiites believe that the prophet designated his cousin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib to take his place as leader of the Muslim community.

Instead, Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, a leader of the powerful Quraysh tribe in Arabia, became the first caliph, a position that combined both political and religious authority. Neither Abu Bakr nor the two caliphs that followed him were members of the prophet's family. Finally, in 656, 'Ali became the fourth caliph but his opponents staged a revolt and 'Ali moved the capital from Medina, in Arabia, to Kufah (near modern Najaf) in Iraq, where he had more support.

The followers of 'Ali were known as the shi'a, referring to the party that supported 'Ali as the legitimate successor to Muhammad. They regarded him as the true imam, or leader of the Muslim community.

Sunnis and Shiites: Who are they?

'Ali was assassinated in 661, and after that the leadership of the growing Muslim empire returned to caliphs who were not of the prophet's family.

Shiites continued to follow the religious leadership of a succession of imams who were of the prophet's bloodline. 'Ali, the First Imam, was succeeded by his oldest son, Hasan, who is believed to have been poisoned. He was succeeded by his younger brother, Husayn, who died in the massacre of his family by the sixth caliph, Yazid, at Karbala in Iraq in 680.

The martyrdom of Husayn became a key event in Shiite history, remembered each year on Ashura, a day when Shiites dress in the black clothes of mourning and grieve over the death of Husayn.

In Iraq and other countries with large Shiite populations, people re-enact the battle of Karbala and some worshippers beat themselves symbolically with their fists to show oneness with the martyr. Some extremists even beat themselves with chains or cut themselves with knives, but that's not condoned by the majority of Shiites, al-Jabiry said.

In Lincoln the members of the Douglas Street mosque, which serves about 2,000 people, mostly Shiite refugees from Iraq, observed Ashura in late February with prayers and readings of the story of Husayn. On Friday, they had another day of prayers, with many participants again wearing black, marking the end of 40 days of mourning for Husayn.

"The blood of Imam Husayn is a volcano in the hearts of Muslims," al-Jabiry said. Husayn is a symbol of a person standing up for justice, and for the true principles of Islam as revealed in the Quran, he said.

The majority of Shiites believe that the succession of imams continued until the 12th Imam, Muhammad ibn al-Hasan, who disappeared at age 4 in 874. They believe he went into "occultation," or hiding, and "is still living among us," al-Jabiry said. They believe that someday the 12th Imam will reappear, along with Jesus, to establish a reign of peace and justice on earth.

Sunnis also believe in an ultimate reign of peace and justice, but do not believe in a "hidden imam." All Muslims believe that Muhammad and other prophets, including Jesus, were human beings and not divine. Shiites also believe that while the 12th Imam in some mysterious way has continued to live, he also is only a human being.

Al-Jabiry and other local leaders are volunteers who have other jobs in the community. Al-Jabiry, who taught school in Iraq, studied the Quran and other religious writings on his own and led a study group in a refugee camp in Saudi Arabia before coming to the United States.

In terms of practice, both Sunnis and Shiites follow the same Five Pillars of Islam, proclaiming that there is one God (Allah in Arabic) and Muhammad is his prophet; praying five times daily; giving alms to the needy; fasting during the month of Ramadan; and making a pilgrimage (hajj) to Mecca once in a lifetime, if able.

The word Sunni derives from the sunnah, or life example of the prophet Muhammad. Shiites also follow the teachings and example of the imams.

"The two branches are more similar than they are different," said Simon Wood, assistant professor of classics and religious studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, who teaches courses about Islam.

He noted that for Sunnis, who make up more than 80 percent of Muslims worldwide, any good Muslim can be leader of the community. For Shiites, while they may have local imams, such as al-Jabiry in Lincoln, the true imam is the human descendant of the prophet.

"Shiites have an intrinsic understanding of authority," Wood said. "They believe authority is received from a previous imam, not delegated by the community."

Sunnis and Shiites: Who are they?

The concept of the hidden imam gives Shiism a more esoteric character than the Sunni faith, he said. The highest level of religious knowledge is not found in a literal reading of the Quran but in an allegorical meaning that is only fully known by the imams.

Through his martyrdom, Husayn "is champion of the downtrodden, and his experience has been explicitly compared with the passion of Jesus," Wood said. "In a manner that resembles certain Christian themes, suffering becomes, if not a gift from God, a way to God."

Husayn differed from Jesus, however, by dying "with a sword in his hand, so to speak - not the death of a pacifist," Wood said.

According to Hassan al-Jabiry, a board member of the Nebraska Islamic Foundation, Husayn is revered because he was trying to protect Islam from corruption. Today, he inspires Shiites to stand up against oppression wherever they live, he said.

Shiism was originally an Arab movement. Iran, which is not an Arab country, did not become Shiite until the 16th century, under the Safavid dynasty. The current Shiite Islamic state of Iran dates from Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's revolution in 1979.

In Iraq, even though they made up more than 55 percent of the population, Shiites were denied political power under Saddam Hussein, who local Iraqis say played on the differences between Shiites and Sunnis to maintain his own power base.

Osama bin Laden and many of his followers are Wahhabis, inheritors of a Sunni revivalist movement that began in 1700s Saudi Arabia. Wahhabis sought to purge Muslim society of what they considered un-Islamic beliefs and practices and made violent attacks against Shiites. The Taliban in Afghanistan also was mostly Sunni.

Wood will discuss the differences between Sunnis and Shiites in detail in his "Topics in Islam" course next fall.

While Sunnis and Shiites often find themselves on opposite sides in today's conflicts, historically they have been able to live together in peace, said Mohammed al-Bezerji, an Iraqi immigrant now living in Lincoln.

"I lived almost half of my life in Iraq, and I didn't see many differences," he said. "I had both Sunni and Shiite friends. The media have tried to emphasize the differences, and Saddam did as well."

Both Adnan and Hassan al-Jabiry noted that the two groups generally get along well in Lincoln, although many do not feel comfortable worshipping at the others' mosque. The Islamic Foundation of Lincoln mosque, 3636 N. First St., is the Sunni mosque in Lincoln and has members from many national and ethnic backgrounds.

The current leader of Shiite Muslims in Iraq is the Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, who supported the recent election and has called on the Iraqi Alliance to include Sunnis and other minority groups in the government.

"Shi'a is not hatred," Hassan al-Jabiry said. "They are a loving, peaceful people, even toward those who have oppressed them for years."

On the wall in the office at the Douglas Street mosque is a large color poster of Muhammad Bakr al-Hakim, al-Sistani's predecessor who was killed in 2003 by a terrorist bomb in Najaf, at a site very near the burial place of 'Ali, the first Imam. Al-Hakim was considered a moderate, willing to negotiate with the Americans, but also a staunch supporter of Islam.

He continues the tradition of Shiite martyrs, who died defending their faith, Hassan al-Jabiry said.

Reach Bob Reeves at 473-7212 or at breeves@journalstar.com.

MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about Islam and the differences between Shiites and Sunnis, read:

Sunnis and Shiites: Who are they?

* "Islam: Faith and History," by Mahmoud M. Ayoub (\$19.95, Oneworld Publications)

* "Islam: A Short History," by Karen Armstrong (\$19.95, Modern Library)

Graphic

1. Sunni Muslims pray at the Um al-Qura mosque in Baghdad. ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE PHOTO 2. Imam Adnan al-Jabiry leads prayers Thursday at the Nebraska Islamic Foundation in northeast Lincoln. The Shiite mosque is made up almost entirely of Iraqi immigrants. WILLIAM LAUER/Lincoln Journal Star 3. Iraqi women recite prayers at the holy shrine dedicated to Imam Husayn in Karbala. ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE PHOTO b/w list of top 10 largest national Shiite populations, SHEILA STORY Lincoln Journal Star, Source: Adherents.com

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Book 'em in May;
PARVATHI NAYAR and MINDY TAN look at the offerings for this month

The Business Times Singapore

May 27, 2005 Friday

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Section: EXECUTIVE LIFESTYLE; Trends

Length: 1653 words

Body

FOX News recently reported that the publishing industry was printing more than the public wanted to buy, based on a survey by the Book Industry Study Group (which said that books sold dropped by nearly 44 million between 2003 and 2004, even as the number of titles published annually approaches 175,000). Not good news for the booksellers of Orhan Pamuk's Istanbul (below), or anyone in the trade generally. While book lovers hope that the positive fallout might be more stringent quality control in what is actually published, they also bemoan the loss of literary territory to pixels and celluloid, though the latter trade can be a two-way one.

Cellulose and Celluloid

The line between the written and spoken word blurs with the book-to-movie and movie-to-book phenomenon. Anyone who hasn't taken time off to meditate on an Outer Rim planet would, of course, know the most famous example of the latter, i.e. Matthew Stover's *Revenge of the Sith* (\$37.95), based on the story and screenplay by George Lucas. The book is best read as an expansion of the more arbitrary shorthand notations of the film's plotline, rather than as literary prose. The film tie-in edition to Douglas Adams' classic, *The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy* (\$15.95), comes with extensive additional material from the film such as cast pictures and interviews. But also - interesting to fans - an afterword by executive producer and close friend of Adams, Robbie Stamp, on why this always-a-pleasure-to-revisit book has taken so long to be cast in celluloid.

Paperback Writer

It's useful to keep an eye on paperback releases especially of series you're hooked on, like Patricia Cornwell's uber cool forensic pathologist Kay Scarpetta. Her latest, CSI-like escapade, *Trace* (\$15.95), has Scarpetta return to her old stomping grounds, Richmond. She cleverly deciphers an unexplained death to be murder, then finds herself personally involved in the murderous mayhem. Cornwell has lost some of her early edge - the ability to mix cold forensics and warm humanity in just the right proportions - but still makes for a good read.

A variant of this format - pieces of a puzzle that come together and into the life of the investigator - is also seen in Mark Billingham's latest, *The Burning Girl* (\$15.95).

Brewed for the Coffee-table

In *Beads of Borneo* (\$45), Heidi Munan, private researcher and honorary curator of beads at the Sarawak Museum, strings together a colourful account of the cultural role, magic, and the stories around beads. Munan's informative account caters to collectors of beads and students of costumes, as well as people with an interest in, but no prior

Book 'em in May; PARVATHI NAYAR and MINDY TAN look at the offerings for this month

knowledge of, Borneo history or culture. Well researched and written, Munan allows the flourishes to come from the pictures that display the sheer magnitude of colours, types, and designs of the beads.

In Bloom (\$47.50), by Alice Whately, covers the range of home decor florals: feminine, exotic, funky, retro, even vintage. While Whateley does emphasise that the design should be kept simple, here's some friendly advice: before emulating Whateley ensure that you a) adore flowers or b) are wealthy enough to redecorate when the florals begin to wilt. A third option is to pick up Modern Asian Living (\$57) by Wongvipa Devahastin na Ayudhya and Sakul Intakul whose approach is sleek-contemporary, yet very 'Asian' with its use of 18th century Chinese figurines, the ubiquitous but still-gorgeous lotus, and of course, lots of wood.

New Fiction

John O'Farrell's May Contain Nuts (\$27.70) is a funnily written account on parenting that's reassuring to both parents and kids who think their family's idiosyncrasies are isolated examples of lunacy. The 'punnily' curious title is explained early in the book, as a mother leaps across the room to prevent her son from eating a biscuit which 'may contain nuts'. This despite the parents having no idea whether their son is even allergic to nuts, it's just that the boy has never been exposed to them before. Very warm-fuzzy-making.

The Women's Murder Club solve crimes together in their home city of San Francisco. Author James Patterson, who has reported on the ladies for some 10 years, teams up with Maxine Paetro to present the fourth in the series, 4th of July (\$27). Police Lieutenant Lindsay Boxer makes an instantaneous self-defence decision that triggers a chain of death, shame, trial-by-jury - and another string of murders in the town that Boxer sneaks off to, to keep low profile. The pace is good, but the zippy format of 146 chapters, few longer than a couple of pages, may not be to everyone's taste.

Another ongoing series about women and crime detection is Alexander McCall Smith's delightful In the Company of Cheerful Ladies, the latest in the No 1 Ladies' Detective Agency series. Quirky, whimsical yet brimming with life, the series is set in Botswana, where our heroine, Precious Ramotswe, is more burdened than ever with strange goings-on that include the appearance of a pumpkin and secrets from the past.

Marilynne Robinson's critically acclaimed Gilead (\$39.95) - it won this year's Pulitzer and National Book Critics Circle prizes for fiction - is the tale of a dying Iowa preacher, structured as a letter that seeks to explain his life to his young son. The prose is a lyrical delight. 'I told you last night that I might be gone sometime,' the book opens, 'and you said, Where, and I said, To be with the Good Lord, and you said, Why, and I said, Because I'm old, and you said, I don't think you are old. And you put your hand in my hand and you said, You aren't very old, as if that settled it.'

Rising Sun

It's a cute figure that you see without quite noticing it all over Japan - on dishes, textiles, folk art. Described as 'plump and frumpy', yet 'fun and playful and open' this is a figure that has received little analysis - till Otafuku: Joy of Japan (\$33), written by Amy Katoh both in English and Japanese. Katoh traces the roots of this mythic figure and shows how she is such an integral part of Japanese culture - right down to the food and Okame Sushi, a dish served in the form of Otafuku's face.

Ningyo: The Art of the Japanese Doll (\$120), by Alan Scott Pate, covers more general ground than the specificity of Otafuku, but successfully showcases the delicate beauty and variety of Japan's dolls. If one wanted to nitpick, it would only be with the author's decision to pick most dolls from the 18th and 19th centuries, and from private collections.

In The Modern Japanese Garden (\$36), Michiko Rico Nose - with the help of photographer Michael Freeman - invites you to a stroll of aesthetic and meditative pleasure among the contemporary gardens of Japan. The featured gardens are inventive, with clean lines and a perfectly-honed balance.

Non-Fiction

Book 'em in May; PARVATHI NAYAR and MINDY TAN look at the offerings for this month

There's always the danger of being labelled exploitative when the arts respond to news-making tragedies whether as a film, play, or indeed, book. *Tsunami: The World's Most Terrifying Natural Disaster* (\$34.95), by Geoff Tibballs, is no doubt borne of good intentions - some proceeds are listed as going to Care International. While it doesn't reek of exploitation, the exhaustive media coverage of the event makes this compilation feel a bit redundant.

Another disaster area is visited through *In Looking for the Afghan* (\$19.50), where Richard Loseby lucidly recounts his trip back to Afghanistan during the Middle-East turmoil. The seemingly foolhardy trip was undertaken by the author to try discover what befell a young Hezbollah mujahed who once saved his life. *Inside the Wire* (\$41), written by Erik Saar and Washington correspondent Viveca Novak, describes Saar's six months at the terrorist detention centre at Guantanamo Bay. Theirs is a no-holds-barred approach, probably essential to the recounting of this controversial story.

Orhan Pamuk's fluidly written *Istanbul: Memories of a City* (\$29.95) - translated by Maureen Freely - is both autobiography and portrait of the city of the author's birth. The book is a very personalised account of the city's histories and stories, memories and moods. For example, Pamuk devotes a whole chapter to describing Istanbul as the very essence of huzun, the Turkish word for melancholy.

Help Thyself

You can't really help yourself unless you can laugh about it all - and here Toni Goffe's *The One Minute Exercise Book: No Gym, No Leotard, No Sweat!* (\$15.95) might help. The exercises and the brief timeframes suggested by the title are real, though with the emotive illustrations and easy writing style, it may be the cheek muscles that get the best workout. Another small-sized book, Charlotte Haigh's *The Top 100 Immunity Boosters* (\$14.95) is stacked with useful information to help you pick the immunity boosters you need. Take a typical page, say, on the humble bell pepper. It talks about its usefulness to the immune function; its nutrients; a useful fact (green and yellow peppers have the same level of Vitamin C as red pepper but less beta-carotene); a simple recipe - Stuffed Peppers; and information-at-a-glance symbols that say it is good for the heart, an anti-oxidant and anti-bacterial.

Anti-Ageing Medicines (\$30.95) is the fifth book on the subject by Marios Kyriazis, a pioneer in the science and application of anti-ageing medicine. 'My aims are practical and simple,' he declares in the introduction: they are to discuss the actions of the anti-ageing remedies available today, as well as explain the ageing process - both of which he proceeds to do comprehensively. The book is factual and scientific, in contrast to the feel-good aspects of staying young lauded in *The 5 Principles of Ageless Living* by Dayle Haddon. Filled with inspirational quotes from the literary greats, Haddon's elixir of youth can be broken down into five main principles: looking good, nurturing the spirit, honouring the body, discovering wisdom and staying connected.

The books are available in all major bookstores

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The man who knew too much

Gold Coast Bulletin (Australia)

September 6, 2003 Saturday

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Section: WEEKENDER; Pg. W04

Length: 1570 words

Byline: Michael Jacobson

Body

A new book reveals former FBI agent John O'Neill, who died in the World Trade Centre collapse, warned that Osama bin Laden would target the Twin Towers. Michael Jacobson reports

TWO years ago on September 11, 2001, in the minutes after the planes slammed the twin towers of the World Trade Centre and before the towers came crashing down upon himself and thousands of others, John O'Neill would have been one of the few to know exactly what was happening.

O'Neill was a singular man, one who stood out in the sometimes shadowy world of the FBI and its counter-terrorism operations. As an agent, he sported cravats, custom suits, Gucci shoes and semi-transparent silk socks. He wore a 9mm revolver strapped to his ankle. He hit nightspots and rubbed elbows with the rich and famous.

His personal life was complicated. He lived with one girlfriend, Valerie James, but told at least two others he would be with them. None of the women knew about each other or that O'Neill, in fact, was married. Sometimes, one of the women, Anna DiBattista, would threaten to end their relationship.

"Just love, just love me," she remembered O'Neill would say.

Perhaps it was the flashy, even tawdry aspects of O'Neill's life that told against him during his time with the FBI, putting him off-side with some in authority and constraining his efforts to fight the al Qaeda terrorism network and its leader, Osama bin Laden.

In the new book *The Man Who Warned America*, author Murray Weiss reports that O'Neill was constantly frustrated in his efforts to fight al Qaeda.

That fight began in March 1995 when the newly-crowned FBI section chief for counterterrorism studied a rambling communique from a little known Saudi expatriate named Osama bin Laden.

At the time, US terrorism experts believed the biggest threats were Hezbollah and Hamas but, after reading bin Laden's angry diatribe against the Saudi royal family for allowing US military bases in their country, O'Neill was left in no doubt.

He met FBI deputy director Robert 'Bear' Bryant, believing that bin Laden was the world's most pressing threat.

"The first time I ever heard of bin Laden was from John O'Neill," says Bryant.

The man who knew too much

O'Neill also began discussing bin Laden with Richard Clarke, the national co-ordinator for counter-terrorism, comparing bin Laden to Adolf Hitler.

Over the next three years, O'Neill investigated al Qaeda's bombing of the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, was named special agent in charge of the national security division of the FBI's New York office and warned that terrorists could strike on American soil at any time.

Then on August 7, 1998, he received the news that US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania had been bombed. O'Neill called the office: "We have to get moving on this. I know who did this. It's bin Laden."

O'Neill wanted to lead the investigation into the attacks that had killed 247 people and was angry when told to wait. His anger turned to outrage when President Bill Clinton then announced to the world: "Today we have struck back."

Tomahawk missiles had been fired at a bin Laden camp in Afghanistan and a pharmaceutical plant in the Sudan that intelligence sources identified as a chemical weapons facility.

O'Neill was not the only one who suspected Clinton's announcement, coming just three days after his televised admission about Monica Lewinsky, was a cynical attempt to divert attention from the scandal.

While the US strikes had no appreciable military impact, the inquiry that followed did define the structure of al Qaeda and identify its leaders and key soldiers. O'Neill had created the template for all international terrorism investigations.

THE last car to roll off the last ferry from British Columbia to Port Angeles, Washington, on December 14, 1999, was a steel blue Chrysler 300M. Customs inspector Diana Dean was puzzled.

The driver had detoured hours out of his way to make the ferry and, when Dean asked him to open the trunk, he bolted, only to be tackled by agents six blocks away.

Dean searched the car and found 10 large bags of whitish powder, the makings of one or more powerful bombs. Tattered scraps of paper were found in the driver's pockets with a single word, Gani, and a phone number with a 718 area code.

The arrest sent shock waves throughout the US Government. Intelligence had warned of possible millennium attacks but the White House and Justice Department decided to keep a tight lid on the arrest of Ahmed Ressam, an Algerian linked to the terrorist Armed Islamic Group.

When O'Neill finally received hard information from Seattle, he discovered Gani might be just across the Brooklyn Bridge. FBI agents traced Ressam's phone calls to a building in Flatbush and O'Neill assembled a team of agents for 24-hour surveillance.

For two weeks, agents and detectives watched Gani, otherwise known as Abdelghani Meskini, a suspected Algerian terrorist who had spent a year in Afghanistan and received advanced training in the use of explosives.

Finally, on December 30 and barely 24 hours before the first of the New Year's Eve revellers were expected to arrive in New York's Times Square, O'Neill gave the order to move in.

Meskini was questioned for the next 11 hours, revealing he had approached an Algerian in Montreal, Mokhtar Haouri, and asked if he would become a martyr for bin Laden. He was told to help Ressam, who was going to America to commit terrorist acts and 'light the fire'.

Agents fanned out across seven states to head off a millennium attack, tagging more than 40 people with ties to Ressam or Meskini.

But there were still the celebrations at Times Square. If there had been an attack, the NYPD and FBI had a plan to get the word out - The Voice of God, meaning they would tap into the vast speaker system set up for the celebration

The man who knew too much

and broadcast the voice of Mayor Rudy Giuliani or Manhattan South commander Alan Hoehl, letting people know what had occurred.

The attack never came and O'Neill relaxed with a cigar. He went up to the chic nightclub Elaine's about 2am and sipped Chivas Regal whisky. Everyone who knew him posed the same question: Is it safe?

"Of course, it is," he told them. "If it weren't, I wouldn't be here".

Happy as he was that night, O'Neill was becoming increasingly fed up with bureaucratic in-fighting. He was passed over for promotion to head the New York office in May 2000 and four months later, when the USS Cole was blown up by al Qaeda in Yemen, he was sent to lead the investigation.

There he ran into Ambassador Barbara Bodine, who seemed more concerned with preserving her relationship with the Yemeni government than helping the FBI.

Her dislike of O'Neill seemed to grow daily. He became the first FBI official in history to be denied 'country clearance' by a State Department official.

The danger to the FBI from hostile Yemenis grew so great that on Father's Day, June 16, 2001, O'Neill ordered his agents out of Yemen. Bodine was livid and insisted she was the only one who had authority to order an FBI pullout. She told the embassy's heavily-armed Marine guards and diplomatic security personnel to block FBI agents from leaving.

The bizarre stand-off lasted several hours. Finally, the ambassador was ordered by her superiors to release the agents and the FBI departed Yemen completely. Within two months, O'Neill retired from the FBI and accepted a new job, as director of security at the World Trade Centre.

ON Monday, September 10, 2001, O'Neill went to Rockefeller Centre to see its director of security, Raymond Powers. They spent nearly two hours discussing security procedures until the conversation shifted to bin Laden.

Powers commented it was ironic O'Neill had taken a job at a building that had already been attacked by Islamic extremists. O'Neill told Powers he was sure bin Laden would attack on American soil and expected him to target the Twin Towers again.

"It's going to happen," said O'Neill. "And it looks like something big is brewing."

The next morning, O'Neill was in his office on the 34th floor of the south tower when the first hijacked plane slammed into the north tower. O'Neill immediately called his 29-year-old son, JP.

"My father said he was OK and he was going to check the damage," said JP.

"I love you," O'Neill told his son before hanging up. At 9.03am, a second plane crashed into the south tower, unleashing another massive fireball.

By then, O'Neill had reached the concourse level, where he helped shepherd a group of children from a day-care centre to safety in the plaza. When he caught his first glimpse of the carnage, he knew immediately it was the work of bin Laden.

He called girlfriend Valerie James:

"Val, it's terrible. There are body parts everywhere."

Anna DiBattista dialled O'Neill's cell phone at 9.29am.

"Honey, I'm safe. I'm fine," he reassured her. "I've been in and out of the building."

She urged him to get out and leave.

The man who knew too much

"I can't," he said. "I'm helping people and doing things. I love you. I'll be OK."

At 9.49am, O'Neill headed toward the south tower. Sixteen minutes later, the top floors began to collapse.

Detective Louie Napoli, whom O'Neill sent to Pakistan three years before in search of suspects in the African embassy bombings, had been right under the north tower when it was struck. He asked everyone if they had heard from O'Neill, then realised the worst.

"He chased bin Laden all over the world and bin Laden caught up with him," said Napoli.

'It's going to happen. And it looks like something big is brewing'

Load-Date: September 7, 2003

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TERROR IN AFRICA: THE ATTACKS; 12 Die as Israelis Are Attacked in Kenya

The New York Times

November 29, 2002 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 6; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

Length: 1582 words

Byline: By DEXTER FILKINS with JAMES BENNET

Dateline: MOMBASA, Kenya, Friday, Nov. 29

Body

In coordinated assaults on Israelis in the Kenyan city of Mombasa on Thursday, terrorists fired shoulder-launched missiles at a crowded Israeli passenger jet, missing their target, minutes before three suicide bombers drove up to the doors of an Israeli-owned hotel and detonated their explosives.

The bombers killed themselves and at least 12 others -- 9 of them Kenyans and 3 of them Israelis -- and wounded dozens more. In the chaos of black smoke, screams and burning thatch, the blast gutted the resort hotel, the Paradise.

Israelis who had hoped to take advantage of the Hanukkah holiday to escape to the seaside found themselves engulfed instead by the too familiar horrors of a suicide attack: the smell of burned flesh, the sight of the stunned and staggering wounded -- a man with a deep slash in his back, a girl with a small hole in her stomach -- and of those who were completely still. Witnesses said a single hand was found about 300 feet from the site of the explosion.

"It was like being back home, it really was," a survivor, Kelly Hartog, said by telephone from Mombasa. "It's the same pictures. And in one of these surreal things, when we got to the hotel here and saw CNN, it could have been a downtown street in Jerusalem."

Israeli and Kenyan officials said that, though there were competing claims of responsibility for the attack, it was possible that Al Qaeda was behind the attacks. But the Bush administration cautioned that it was premature to blame Al Qaeda.

Hours after the attacks in Kenya, in a separate suicide assault inside Israel, terrorists tied to Yasir Arafat's Fatah faction turned guns and grenades on Israelis as they went to the polls to choose the leader of the dominant right-wing party, the Likud. At least six Israelis were killed in that incident, in the town of Beit Shean in the northern Jordan Valley. Page A29.

This morning, 150 heavily armed Israeli commandos were at the airport here to evacuate some 283 Israelis tourists, including 18 wounded -- 10 seriously. Most of them were staying at the Paradise.

TERROR IN AFRICA: THE ATTACKS 12 Die as Israelis Are Attacked in Kenya

"There's 10 people I'm really about, who are in big trouble," said Lt. Col. Yoram Asraf, an Israeli commander. "The others are half-and half."

"These people are afraid," he added.

Asked if they were there for a military operation, Colonel Asraf said: "No. We are just evacuating."

An Israeli physician at the airport, Dr. Yoel Donchin, said that the most severely wounded were a mother -- who lost two children in the blast -- and her sole surviving child. The woman's husband was less badly wounded. The family had arrived at the hotel only an hour before the attack, Dr. Donchin said.

"They came here with three children and they went back to Israel with only one," he said.

From his ranch in Crawford, Tex., President Bush issued a statement Thursday night deploring the violence in Israel and Kenya. "Today's attacks underscore the continuing willingness of those opposed to peace to commit horrible crimes," he said.

A Bush administration official said on Thursday that it still was not clear who was behind the attacks. "You can find 10 analysts who say it was Al Qaeda, and you can find 10 analysts who say it was one of the standard groups that attack Israel," the administration official said. It's clear this attack was aimed at Israel."

Officials from the United States Embassy in Kenya are expected to meet with Israeli and Kenyan investigators Friday to offer assistance in their investigation.

As Israelis came under attack abroad and at home on a day of spiraling violence, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon declared on Thursday that terrorists did not "look for reasons to kill Jews. Their aim is to kill young and old, women and children, only because they are Jews." Urging voters to go the polls, he said, "We should not let the murderers disrupt our lives." Early returns indicated that Mr. Sharon easily won the Likud primary, and with it a mandate from his party to pursue the elusive peace and security he promised when he first ran two years ago.

Mr. Sharon directed Israel's spy agency, the Mossad, to track down those behind the attacks in Mombasa. If Al Qaeda was responsible, it would be the first time the group was known to have struck at Israelis since the current American antiterrorism effort began, although its leader, Osama bin Laden, has often inveighed against Israel.

Israel's defense minister, Shaul Mofaz, vowed, "Our hand will reach them."

The attack raised the prospect that Israel might take a higher-profile role in the pursuit of fundamentalist Islamic terrorists worldwide, a change that security analysts said could alarm Arab states and complicate the Bush administration's plans for possible military action against Iraq.

Israel's foreign minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, called it "quite possible" that Al Qaeda was behind the attack, but said that Israel would explore other possibilities. Some Israeli officials said that the Lebanese guerrilla group Hezbollah might be involved.

As in the attack on a Bali nightclub last month that killed more than 180 people, most of them tourists, the twinned assaults in Kenya took place in a sandy resort town known more for its thriving tourist trade than for any radical politics.

The United States, which has been building up its forces in the Horn of Africa, has been concerned about continued Qaeda activity in the region. In nearly simultaneous attacks on Aug. 7, 1998, on the United States embassies in Nairobi, Kenya's capital, and in neighboring Tanzania, 224 people, including 12 Americans, were killed. Those bombings were attributed to Al Qaeda, and since 1998 the United States has given Kenya \$3.1 million for anti-terrorist training, a State Department official said.

As recently as Nov. 12, the United States provided Kenya with \$750,000 to improve airport security.

TERROR IN AFRICA: THE ATTACKS 12 Die as Israelis Are Attacked in Kenya

Mombasa is a popular destination for Israeli tourists, and those attacked on Thursday -- both aboard the plane and in the Paradise hotel - were on package tours set up by an Israeli tourist agency that runs weekly flights there. With a kosher restaurant and a synagogue, whose Torah scrolls were rescued from the blaze, the Paradise resort hotel was particularly popular with Israeli tourists.

A senior official with the protection and security division of Israel's Shin Bet security agency said that the attack was carefully plotted.

"We're looking at a very planned, organized attack against Israelis in Mombasa," the official said. "They were looking for Israelis to kill. If the incident succeeded, it would have resulted in the deaths of over 300 to 400 Israelis."

He said that Israel had learned of two competing claims of responsibility for the attack, but, declining to name the groups, he said that intelligence agents did not consider the claims solid.

The Israeli government said that three of its citizens, including two boys, were killed in the bombing at the hotel. Witnesses said that most of those killed in the blast were members of a youthful Kenyan dance troupe that greeted the Israelis when they arrived at the Paradise. "They were singing and dancing with drums," said Ms. Hartog, an editor at The Jerusalem Post. "They were kids - they were young girls."

Witnesses at the scene provided conflicting accounts of the bomb attack. Some said that a green sport utility vehicle tucked in behind a bus carrying Israeli tourists in order to pass a barrier at the hotel's entrance; others said that the vehicle simply crashed through a barrier and headed for the hotel's doors.

Ms. Hartog said that her group had left the bus after their overnight flight and entered the hotel's dining room for breakfast when they heard a tremendous blast and felt the hotel tremble. "For a split second there was a complete silence, but then we started seeing the debris from the thatch roof," she said. "And then people started screaming."

An Israeli witness who gave her name as Naima told Israel Radio, "people had cuts in their hands, in their legs, they had holes all over their body."

Ms. Hartog said that she and others went to the aid of the wounded, searching for drinking water and using makeshift stretchers to carry them to a boathouse, out of the blazing sun.

"Afterwards, when we were dragging suitcases along the beach, Kenyans -- more than one of them -- came up and said, 'We're so sorry this happened,' " Ms. Hartog said. "And really their fatalities were worse than ours."

The sport utility vehicle was obliterated in the attack, witnesses said. The bus the tourists arrived in was blasted and scorched to a skeleton.

The Israeli government dispatched at least four planes to Kenya on Thursday to carry investigators to the scene and to bring home the survivors, the wounded and the dead.

The senior Israeli intelligence official said that the attack on the plane, which was carrying 261 passengers, occurred at about 7:30 a.m., roughly 20 minutes before the hotel bombing and less than 20 miles away. He said that two missiles appeared to have been fired, and that Israeli security agents at the scene recovered two spent canisters from what were probably SA-7 missiles. He described the weapon as a 30-year-old shoulder-launched, surface-to-air missile of Soviet manufacture.

Mr. Netanyahu called the attack in Kenya "a very dangerous escalation of terror."

Referring to the failed missile strike, he said, "It means that terror organizations and the regimes behind them are able to arm themselves with weapons which can cause mass casualties anywhere and everywhere."

Graphic

Photos: Kenyan Red Cross volunteers carrying the body of a victim from the car bombing at the Israeli-owned Paradise Hotel in Mombasa. (Agence France-Presse)(pg. A1); A man hurt in the bombing attack on the Paradise Hotel was treated at a hospital in Mombasa yesterday. At least 12 people were killed. (Getty Images); Wreckage at the Paradise Hotel. Some witnesses said a sport utility vehicle crashed through barriers and drove into the hotel before exploding. A bus carrying Israeli tourists was near the vehicle. (Francesco Broli for The New York Times); The Paradise Hotel near Mombasa, Kenya, was devastated in a car bombing yesterday. The hotel, which included a synagogue and kosher restaurant, was popular with Israeli tourists. (Associated Press)(pg. A30) Map of Mombasa, Kenya, highlighting the locations of where the bombs detonated and where missiles were launched at passenger plane: Mombasa is a popular destination for tourists from Israel. (pg. A30)

Load-Date: November 29, 2002

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MIDEAST TURMOIL: THE OVERVIEW; In New Rebuff to U.S., Sharon Pushes Military Sweep

The New York Times
April 11, 2002 Thursday
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Length: 1676 words

Byline: By JAMES BENNET

Dateline: GINAT CAMP, West Bank, April 10

Body

A day ahead of Secretary of State Colin L. Powell's arrival in Israel in hopes of securing a truce, a Palestinian suicide bomber attacked an Israeli bus today and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon vowed to continue Israel's military sweep through the West Bank.

Rebuffing American demands for a withdrawal, Mr. Sharon said the United States and other nations should not "put any pressures upon us."

Mr. Sharon addressed soldiers at this improvised hilltop base overlooking Jenin, a Palestinian city where Israel pressed its offensive today by sending armored bulldozers crashing through the densely populated refugee camp.

Late tonight, an Israeli official said as many as 200 Palestinians had been killed in Jenin. Most, he said, were armed men. Palestinian resistance in Jenin, the fiercest that Israeli forces have encountered, appeared to be ebbing.

Israeli forces withdrew from three West Bank villages today, Yatta, Qabatya and Samua, but continued hunting suspected militants in four major cities and towns and an undisclosed number of other villages. Late tonight, Israeli tanks moved into Ber Zeit, a village in the central West Bank, The Associated Press reported.

Earlier in the day, Israel's security cabinet formally decided to continue the military operation, now nearly two weeks old. It acted after the suicide bomber struck, killing eight passengers and tearing apart a bus near Haifa, on the coast. Four of the dead were soldiers.

It was the first suicide attack in 10 days. For some it underscored the crying need they saw for Israel's military mission, and for others the folly they saw at its core.

Along Israel's embattled northern border, more missiles and mortar bombs were fired from Lebanon, despite American efforts to persuade Syria to restrain the militant Lebanese group **Hezbollah**. The attacks injured no one but fed fears of a widening conflict, further complicating Secretary Powell's difficult mission.

The secretary is arriving late Thursday at a moment filled with hostility and mistrust, burdened by the numbers of casualties on both sides, the bitter enmity of the leaders and the spreading separation of the two peoples.

MIDEAST TURMOIL: THE OVERVIEW In New Rebuff to U.S. , Sharon Pushes Military Sweep

Palestinian families have been hiding in their homes as Israeli patrols round up their men for questioning and Israeli machine-gun fire pounds through their streets. Israelis, despairing of Palestinian willingness to recognize a Jewish state, have been avoiding cafes, parks and malls for fear of suicide bombers.

After resisting becoming entangled here, President Bush reversed course and dispatched Secretary Powell as the body count grew and he came under pressure from Arab states, whose backing he is seeking for a possible attack on Iraq. The anxiety of Israeli officials over the Bush administration's evolving policy also increased today as the country's diplomatic predicament worsened.

The European Parliament urged the 15 members of the European Union, Israel's biggest trading partner, to impose sanctions against Israel because of the military operation.

Here at the military camp, Mr. Sharon warned about 50 soldiers sitting in the dirt beneath an awning here, their M-16 rifles in their laps: "We are in a diplomatic battle. Arab countries are pressuring the U.S. and European countries as much as they can in order to make Israel carry out a plan or plans that we can't."

He described Israelis as victims in a multifront war, a fight against terrorism, a "diplomatic struggle" and a "public opinion battle."

"We are the victims of terror," Mr. Sharon told the soldiers. It was a war Israel did not want or start, he said. "But we got to a situation where we couldn't deal with it anymore," he continued. "The terrible thing, and it is perhaps the cynicism of the world, is that the one being blamed, is particularly us."

The isolation of Yasir Arafat eased a bit today when Israel permitted other Palestinian officials to enter his besieged compound in Ramallah. The Palestinians then met in Jerusalem with Gen. Anthony C. Zinni, the Bush administration's special envoy here, to prepare for Secretary Powell's arrival. Israel had previously blocked General Zinni from meeting with the group.

Secretary Powell has said he wanted to meet with Mr. Arafat, a decision Mr. Sharon has called a "tragic mistake." Mr. Sharon considers Mr. Arafat an enemy of Israel, not a potential negotiating partner.

But Israel's defense minister, Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, said the government would not interfere with the secretary's plans. "As long as Powell wants to see Arafat, he can see him," Mr. Ben-Eliezer said after sitting at the prime minister's right hand during his remarks here. "We are not preventing him to see Arafat."

About 300 Palestinians surrendered in Jenin today, Israeli officials said. Witnesses described masses of women and children fleeing the refugee camp as bulldozers cut through the ramshackle warren of adjoining and stacked homes.

"Vietnam -- something like that," said Eitan Gafni, a reserve soldier serving here, describing the condition of the refugee camp to Israeli television. "There's nothing there now."

In an overwhelming display of force within easy sight of Jenin, dozens of Israeli armored vehicles and tanks waited in a camp gouged out of the hillside, below where Mr. Sharon spoke late this afternoon.

At a checkpoint a mile or so away, mobile antiaircraft guns were parked, and mechanics worked on one engine. The soldiers said that they had served in the Israeli campaign in three cities, from Ramallah to Nablus to Jenin, and that the fighting had grown fiercer as they moved to each new front.

The Israeli Army continued to block journalists from entering Jenin, saying it feared for their safety. But Israeli officials were also nervously looking ahead to the eventual withdrawal, fearful that Palestinians would try to present the many corpses as evidence of an Israeli massacre.

Palestinians accuse Israeli ground forces of firing randomly into their neighborhoods. But many soldiers and Israeli officials said the Israeli Army was acting morally, and was even endangering its own men by applying force cautiously in an effort not to harm civilians.

MIDEAST TURMOIL: THE OVERVIEW In New Rebuff to U.S. , Sharon Pushes Military Sweep

Israelis are troubled by the world's perception of the military mission.

"I've seen pictures of us on the television, and we don't look very good," said Sgt. Dov Rifken, 20. But, he said, "we're supposed to protect our people, our country. We do what we need to do, and we make sure that's all we do."

The Palestinians have no military aircraft. They have been fighting mostly with semiautomatic rifles, homemade explosives and some mass-produced explosives like antitank weapons. Israel has been using the antiaircraft weapons, capable of shooting 3,000 20-millimeter rounds a minute, to pulverize houses containing gunmen.

"If we see some people shooting from a house, we take it down," Sergeant Rifken said.

In Jenin, said Cpl. Yaron Zeltzer, 20, "the Palestinians were really prepared, and there was a much more tough section of terrorists." The Palestinians had concealed booby traps in sewers and other unexpected places, he said.

On Tuesday 14 soldiers were killed in Jenin, 13 in an ambush. Another soldier died in Nablus on Tuesday, the victim of mistaken fire from Israeli forces.

Mr. Ben-Eliezer, the defense secretary, said he could not predict how much longer Israel would continue its military operation. But it was too early to stop, he said. "We can just evacuate today, and tomorrow the suicide bombers, the suicide shooters, will move again," he said.

Asked how Palestinians were able to carry out today's suicide bombing in Haifa, he said the Israeli operation could minimize terrorist capabilities and "destroy for a while the motivation" of attackers, but "there is no 100 percent answer to terror -- no."

Palestinian officials say that rather than suppressing the motivation for such attacks, the Israeli operation is likely to feed it.

The Islamic group Hamas claimed responsibility for the Haifa bombing and attributed it to a Palestinian from the Jenin refugee camp. Hamas is opposed to a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and it has engineered suicide attacks during previous diplomatic missions by General Zinni.

Those missions also coincided with halts in Israeli incursions into Palestinian-controlled territory that had resulted in many Palestinian deaths.

Some Israeli officials said the bomber had come from Tulkarm, where Israeli soldiers have withdrawn to form a cordon around the city. They dismissed any suggestion that the bombing undermined claims for the success of the mission, saying it actually demonstrated the dangers of withdrawing.

But in Washington, Ari Fleischer, the White House spokesman, suggested that the bombing showed the wisdom of President Bush's call for a withdrawal. Mr. Fleischer said the attack underscored "the need for all parties to step back, for Israel to withdraw, and for the Palestinians and the Arabs to stop the violence, stop the killing."

The comment stunned Israeli officials, who read it as suggesting that the Israeli action provoked rather than prevented terrorism. "It legitimizes terror," one Israeli official said.

This official, who insisted on anonymity, expressed consternation at what he viewed as a reversal of American policy, from apparent support of the Israeli operation to Mr. Bush's demand, first made last Thursday, for withdrawal. "Do they want to go into a collision course with Israel?" he asked.

Secretary Powell plans to meet with Mr. Sharon before seeing Mr. Arafat. Israel offered Mr. Arafat the chance to hold the meeting in Jericho, which has not been raided by the army during this operation, rather than in battered Ramallah, in an office that is said to have turned rancid.

MIDEAST TURMOIL: THE OVERVIEW In New Rebuff to U.S. , Sharon Pushes Military Sweep

Such a move might also suit Israel purposes, one official acknowledged, since the pictures might be prettier in Jericho and Israel might even have the chance to raid Mr. Arafat offices, where military officers believe he is hiding wanted men.

Mr. Arafat declined the offer of a different venue, the Israeli official said.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos: Ariel Sharon, left, and his defense minister, Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, next to him, at a camp near Jenin yesterday. (Reuters); Israeli troops poured through the refugee camp in Jenin yesterday, arresting Palestinian men after ordering them to strip off their shirts. (Agence France-Presse)(pg. A14) Map of Israel highlighting Jenin. (pg. A14)

Load-Date: April 11, 2002

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At Hebrew University, Hallways Are Empty and Students Are Scared

The Chronicle of Higher Education

April 19, 2002, Friday

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Section: INTERNATIONAL; Pg. 43

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Byline: HAIM WATZMAN

Dateline: Jerusalem

Body

Students at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem call it the "revolving gate." For those coming from the nearby dormitories and those trying to avoid the exhaust fumes in the tunnel where the buses go, it's the entrance of choice to the central compound on the Mount Scopus campus. In past years, a lone, elderly guard manned the gate. He'd gingerly lift students' knapsacks, shake them slightly, and pronounce them free of concealed weapons.

When the Palestinian intifada intensified a couple of years ago, another guard was added, but the method remained the same. At the beginning of this academic year a third guard appeared, this time a young, broad-shouldered man who stood watch, with a notably unconcealed weapon, on the other side of the street, where he had a wide field of view.

This month, on the first day after a long, tense, and bloody Passover vacation, the revolving gate's security has once more been ratcheted up. Prime parking spaces are blocked with steel barriers, and another youthful guard now patrols the sidewalk in front of the security booth. Inside, the elderly guard and his pal have been replaced by more-determined types, who actually open backpacks and plunge hands deep inside.

The revolving gate leads into the social-sciences wing of the main building, and the long corridor that stretches from anthropology to communications to political science to business is quiet, nearly deserted, at 10 a.m. A single sullen student sits on a tall chair at an espresso stand gulping coffee and intently reading a photocopied article. Are the empty corridors evidence of Israel's call-up of 20,000 reservists, or are they just, as one student suggests, a sign that this year's freshmen realize that they don't have to show up for every class to get a degree?

'Intolerable' Situation

At the end of the corridor, at a large picture window with a view of the Old City, two second-year students in international relations are chatting. Dotan Corem says two friends from his hometown, Meitar, a suburb of Beersheba, were called up suddenly during Passover. Both are in the West Bank -- one in Hebron, where things have been relatively quiet, and the other in Jenin, where there has been fierce fighting between Israeli and Palestinian forces.

The wave of Palestinian suicide bombings in Israeli cities before and during the Passover holiday has not altered Mr. Corem's natural optimism. "The attacks still haven't gotten close to me or to anyone close to me," he says. But he notes that he has started taking a cab rather than the bus. Buses have been targets in some of the bombings.

At Hebrew University, Hallways Are Empty and Students Are Scared

He supports Israel's military operation in the West Bank. "We had to do something. The situation was intolerable."

His companion, Galya Maoz, is from Netanya, where a Palestinian detonated himself in a hotel dining room at the beginning of a Seder, the ceremonial meal of the first night of Passover.

Twenty-seven people were killed and dozens wounded. Two of the dead were close friends of her parents.

"I'm definitely frightened. I don't know if I'll still be around tomorrow," she says. "We don't go out, don't go into town much. There's a sense of helplessness."

She believes that a continuing war is inevitable, and that unconventional weapons will still come into play. "Everything hangs by a hair," she says. "All it takes is one madman."

Frightened Palestinians

The social-science corridor ends at the Forum, an open area with a snack bar and an enclosed patio, where students congregate. A young man and a young woman, at a table apart from the other students, are chatting in Arabic. A chilly wind makes their conversation difficult to hear. They agree to an interview on condition that their names not be used.

They are Israelis by citizenship and Palestinian by ethnicity. The young man, who is from Galilee, in the north, is not a student at the university. He recently completed law school at Yarmuk University, in Jordan, and is making arrangements to get his degree recognized in Israel. The young woman is studying social work and lives in the "triangle," an area in central Israel with a high concentration of Arab villages.

"I'm scared, too," he declares. "There are bombings and terrorist attacks and hotheads all around. In Jordan I felt secure. It was very quiet. No one ever asked to check my identity card."

"I'm suspicious of everyone, even if they don't look Arab," she says. She smiles wanly, recognizing the irony of what she's said.

At bus stations and in Jerusalem, they are the objects of suspicion, constantly stopped for questioning by policemen and soldiers. On the university's campus, they do not feel that they are targets, they say. Their relations with Jewish friends and classmates are largely unaffected by the violence, they feel. The young man notes, however, that Israeli friends now make excuses when he invites them to his village -- and that he makes excuses when they invite him to their homes.

Israel's military action? They tick off a list of reservations, but then they reach the bottom line: "I support military action to stop the suicide bombings," he says.

Beyond the Forum is the library and the humanities wing.

The social-sciences corridor is straight; this section is labyrinthine, full of odd alcoves. Outside the drama department sit three undergraduates in archaeology. The two women don't want their names used. Vitaly Shulov, whose accent originates in Latvia, he says, doesn't mind being identified.

The women are scared. One says she used to be a left-winger and favored accommodation and compromise with the Palestinians. Now she criticizes the government of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon for being too moderate and not taking even harsher military action.

Mr. Shulov, for his part, says there's nowhere for an archaeologist of the biblical period to be. Besides, he thinks, in the long run things will get better. "We've got to hit them hard. Then invest in their education, rebuild their leadership, help them economically. Maybe in 50 to 100 years there will be normal relations."

The Loyal Opposition

At Hebrew University, Hallways Are Empty and Students Are Scared

Backtracking past the Jewish-studies and philosophy departments returns you to the Forum, where student groups seek members and debate. A wiry young man with close-cropped hair and a melancholy expression is manning a table for Meretz, a left-wing party that opposes the current military operation. He's Nimrod Banai, in his second year in the economics department, and he lives in Jerusalem. After the terrorist bombings during the Passover vacation, and with Israeli forces in battle in the West Bank, it's not easy to be a Meretz activist on campus.

He grimaces when he hears about students whose political views have swung from favoring accommodation with the Palestinians to supporting confrontation with them. "When someone says they've gone over to the center or right, I see that as problematic," he says. "It means you weren't really on the left to begin with. Your ideology apparently didn't have a very strong foundation."

Despite his party's line, the student says he perhaps sees the need for military action against the Palestinians. But such an action can be legitimate, he argues, only if carried out by a left-wing government that is determined to go on to a peace agreement with the Palestinians. Mr. Sharon is not, he maintains.

Mr. Banai hasn't been called up yet. His reserve unit belongs to the northern command. But the shelling of northern Israeli settlements by Hezbollah irregulars in southern Lebanon may well send him into action soon.

Relations with Arab students remain good, he says, but then he glances over to the next table -- manned by the Arab Students Committee -- and shakes his head. "They've had some demonstrations just outside campus that are so extremist that I'm afraid of getting anywhere near them," he mutters.

The next table is manned by Abed Kananeh, a third-year student in communications and political science from Galilee. The committee's position is clear, he says: "The Israeli army is an army of occupation. It is an army fighting an entire nation. It's not a war, it's the strong side versus civilians."

He, too, is anxious. "Everyone, Arabs and Jews, is afraid to go out," he says. "And taking a bus isn't like it used to be."

No More English Speakers

A bit farther up the campus road is the new building of the Rothberg International School. Until last year, English was the lingua franca here. Now you hear Russian, French, even Chinese. The only two people talking in English in the snack bar are graduate students, and one of them is Belgian.

She's Dominique Claeys, a master's-degree candidate here for a year of study. She's talking to Kris Colbert, an American Jew, who is completing a master's degree in Israeli politics and society.

Yes, there are few American students left, Mr. Colbert confirms. Few came this year, and as the intifada has grown more violent, many of them have left, whether of their own volition, at their parents' insistence, or at the behest of their sponsoring institutions in the United States. There are now 643 students enrolled in Rothberg's three programs, compared with 1,331 in 1999-2000, before the intifada grew more violent. The school is allowing students who leave to complete their course work via e-mail.

Mr. Colbert says he'll lose his chance at a degree if he leaves. In the meantime, he says, he feels calm.

"You know that in the background fighting is going on. But if I didn't watch the news I'd say that everything is normal."

Feeling 'Quite Stressed'

Ms. Claeys doesn't agree. "I'm quite stressed. Hebrew University is separate from the rest of the city -- it's a kind of enclave -- but we all go out less and we take taxis instead of buses when we do."

Just before Passover vacation, they relate, the university made a halfhearted attempt to extend the snack bar's hours into the evening, as a kind of pub where students could drink beer without venturing into town.

At Hebrew University, Hallways Are Empty and Students Are Scared

But hardly anyone came.

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CROSSROADS ON ROUTE MAP TO PEACE -2

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Body

Iran

KNOWN as Persia until 1935, Iran has a distinct cultural identity within the Islamic world by retaining its own language and championing the Shi'ite branch of Islam.

It became an Islamic republic in 1979, when fundamentalist clergy headed by Ayatollah Khomeini forced the Shah into exile. In 1980 Iran was invaded by Saddam Hussein's Iraq, resulting in a bloody eight-year war.

Two decades later, the victory of the liberals over the conservative elite in parliamentary elections in April 2000 signalled a sea change. But the victory was incomplete, and a power struggle between reformers and conservatives dominates the political scene.

The hardliners are represented by the head of state, Ayatollah Khamenei, who is appointed for life. The liberal camp is headed by President Mohammed Khatami. Khatami's first win by a landslide in May 1997 represented a major setback for the conservative clergy. He was re-elected for a second term in June 2001 after winning 77 per cent of the vote. Khatami's support for greater social and political freedoms has made him popular with the young - over 50 per cent of the population is under the age of 25.

Despite the progress in recent years, Iran was on President Bush's "axis of evil" list along with Saddam's Iraq and North Korea. The US State Department calls Iran the world's "most active state sponsor of terrorism" and it provides funding and sanctuary to the Lebanese Shi'ite militants of Hezbollah, which Iran helped to found, and the Palestinian groups, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

It also has a nuclear programme and is building a nuclear reactor with Russian help at the southern port of Bushehr. Tehran insists that the programme is purely for peaceful uses. The US says Iran does not need nuclear energy because it has large resources of gas and oil.

Unlike the US, Britain and EU countries have renewed diplomatic relations and prefer to encourage the reformist elements by engaging with Iran instead of isolating it.

Jordan

JORDAN'S Hashemite monarchy rules over what is left of the kingdom formerly known as Transjordan, now deprived of the West Bank seized by Israel in the 1967 war. Since then Jordan has struggled to accommodate an explosive population mix of Bedouin tribesmen from the east bank of the Jordan and Palestinian refugees from the

CROSSROADS ON ROUTE MAP TO PEACE -2

west bank. Civil war between Palestinian troops and the Jordanian army in 1970 resulted in the expulsion of Palestinian forces from the country. From these unpromising beginnings the late King Hussein built a country that is reasonably prosperous and tolerant by Arab standards.

Jordan has suffered as a result of the war in Iraq. Instinct and economic necessity tied the country to Saddam's regime. With no oil reserves of its own Jordan relied totally on supplies from Baghdad, half of which it received free. During the 1991 war King Hussein came out in support of Saddam. Despite international sanctions, the steady flow of heavy lorries between the Jordanian port of Aqaba and the Iraqi border continued after 1991.

Yet Jordan is a reliable US ally in the region with a moderate and relatively democratic leadership under King Abdullah II and a long-standing peace treaty with Israel.

It has a parliament, but the monarch appoints the prime minister, the Cabinet and the members of the upper house, the House of Notables. The lower house, the House of Deputies, is elected. But the last elections due in November 2001 were postponed by the king and have not yet been held.

But because it has been the linchpin of Middle East peace efforts and a vital buffer between Israel on one side and Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia on the other, its plight is attracting international sympathy. The EU has announced 35m in emergency funds to Jordan. Saudi Arabia has promised it free oil for three months, and sent a first shipment of 100,000 tonnes of crude oil to Aqaba last week.

Turkey

NATIONALIST Kemal Ataturk created the modern Turkish state in 1923 from the remnants of the Ottoman Empire, replacing religious laws with secular ones.

Nowadays Turkey is a democracy, but its elected politicians have to tread carefully. The powerful military sees itself as the guardian of the constitution, and it has deposed elected governments four times - in 1960, 1971, 1980 and 1997.

The Cold War years were good for Turkey. The West overlooked political and human rights abuses because Turkey was a key Nato member and a bulwark against the Soviet Union. But since the end of the Cold War Turkey's human rights record has been subjected to close scrutiny, especially since Ankara began its drive to become a member of the European Union.

Last week was not a good one for Turkey. Prime Minister Abdullah Gul did not attend Wednesday's ceremony in Athens at which 10 EU candidate states signed treaties to join next year. Turkey itself has not yet been given the go-ahead to start accession talks by the EU.

Turkey is bitter that Cyprus, which is represented by the internationally recognised Greek Cypriot government alone, signed the treaty in a major blow to Ankara's long-standing policy of maintaining that the island should not be admitted before its Greek and Turkish communities are reunified.

The Iraqi crisis came at a bad time for Prime Minister Gul's pro-Islamist government, elected last November on an anti-war platform. It already has its hands full trying to grapple with an economic recovery plan and pushing a major domestic reform package to prepare for EU negotiations.

Turkey also fears the resurgence of Kurdish nationalism following Saddam's overthrow. More than 30,000 people died in fighting between Turkish forces and secessionist Kurds in east and south east Turkey in the 1980s and 1990s.

Saudi Arabia

THANKS to its vast oil reserves, Saudi Arabia has gone from a backward desert kingdom to one of the wealthiest nations in the world in just a few decades.

CROSSROADS ON ROUTE MAP TO PEACE -2

Named after the ruling Saud family, who first came to power in the 18th century, the country includes the Hijaz region, the birthplace of the Prophet Mohammed and the cradle of Islam. Saudi Arabia has become identified with the uncompromising application of religious laws, ranging from beheadings and amputations to restrictions on women, such as a ban on driving.

With foreign migrants accounting for 65% of the workforce, there are fears that comfortably-off, idle Saudi youth are being drawn to radical Islamist groups, and especially the cause of Osama bin Laden, himself a wealthy Saudi.

This is why, since the fall of Baghdad, Saudi Arabia has gone into diplomatic overdrive. Its rulers are obsessed with stability, and the massive upheaval that has just been forced on neighbouring Iraq is deeply disturbing to a royal family that cannot tolerate the slightest dissent within its own borders.

Last week Riyadh hosted two major conferences to review the implications of the overthrow of Saddam. Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal flew to Damascus, while Britain's Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, and Sudanese president Omar al-Beshir, were among high-level visitors to the Saudi rulers.

Now that the threat from Iraq has gone, the Saudis have put the US troops who have been on its territory since the 1991 Gulf War on notice to leave.

The Saudi rulers want to be seen in the Arab world as ridding the country of the 'infidel forces', yet the House of Saud is locked into an intimate political, commercial and military relationship with the world's only superpower, which it needs for its own protection.

There is no sign of democracy flowering in Saudi Arabia. After the 1991 war, Washington put pressure on Riyadh to set up a consultative council allowing for broader political participation. But the moves towards judicial and political reform have proved virtually meaningless.

The consultative council has no real power, while beheadings and amputations of limbs remain routine punishments carried out in public in front of the mosques. All political and economic power remains in the hands of the Saudi royal family and its 40,000 princelings.

Afghanistan

AFGHANISTAN'S history is mostly the story of vicious inter-tribal warfare and conflicts against foreign powers. Britain fought three wars in Afghanistan as part of the 'Great Game' to defend India against Russia's expansion into central Asia, but failed to subdue the Afghans. The Soviet Union, which invaded Afghanistan in 1979, also failed to impose its will. Its troops managed to control the towns and the country's few major roads, but were continually harassed by Islamic Mujahedin who were backed and supplied by the US. Among the Mujahedin leaders who benefited from the CIA's largesse was Osama bin Laden.

A third of the population of Afghanistan fled, mostly into refugee camps in neighbouring countries. The exodus continued after the Soviet Union withdrew its troops in 1989 as Afghanistan descended into anarchy, which in turn spawned the Taliban. They imposed the strictest Islamic laws of any country in the world and were notorious for the subjugation of women, forcing them to wear veils in public and denying them education.

After September 11, 2001, the Taliban refused to hand over Bin Laden or close down the al-Qaeda terrorist training camps, and were ousted from power by an American-led onslaught.

Since then life has improved, but not by as much as the Americans hoped. At a Loya Jirga (Grand Assembly) in June 2002, Hamid Karzai, an American choice, was elected president of a transitional authority of a coalition government of leaders from across the political spectrum. It has an 18-month mandate to hold a nationwide Loya Jirga to adopt a constitution and a 24-month mandate to hold nationwide elections.

Women are now free to go outdoors without wearing the veil, and girls are once again being educated in schools. But the country suffers from enormous problems. Regional warlords run their own fiefdoms, and the writ of Karzai's

CROSSROADS ON ROUTE MAP TO PEACE -2

government barely extends outside the capital. There is growing evidence that the al-Qaeda network is re-establishing itself.

There is great poverty, a crumbling infrastructure and a deadly legacy of millions of unexploded land mines. The majority of the population continues to suffer from insufficient food, clothing, housing, and medical care, problems exacerbated by continuing American military operations and political uncertainties. Poppy production for opium, which had been largely stamped out by the Taliban, is now back to its peak.

Political parties are in a state of flux, but as yet there is no sign of democracy on the Western model starting to take root.

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SHIITES IN IRAQ SAY GOVERNMENT WILL BE SECULAR

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Body

With the Shiites on the brink of capturing power here for the first time, their political leaders say they have decided to put a secular face on the new Iraqi government they plan to form, relegating Islam to a supporting role.

The senior leaders of the United Iraqi Alliance, the coalition of mostly Shiite groups that is poised to capture the most votes in the election next Sunday, have agreed that the Iraqi whom they nominate to be the country's next prime minister would be a lay person, not an Islamic cleric.

The Shiite leaders say there is a similar but less formal agreement that clerics will also be excluded from running the government ministries.

"There will be no turbans in the government," said Adnan Ali, a senior leader of the Dawa Party, one of the largest Shiite parties. "Everyone agrees on that."

The decision appears to formalize the growing dominance of secular leaders among the Shiite political leadership, and it also reflects an inclination by the country's powerful religious hierarchy to stay out of the day-to-day governing of the country. Among the Shiite coalition's 228 candidates for the national assembly, fewer than a half dozen are clerics, according to the group's leaders.

The decision to exclude clerics from the government appears to mean that Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, a cleric who is the chief of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, the scion of a prominent religious family and an oft-mentioned candidate for prime minister, would be relegated to the background. The five Shiites most likely to be picked as prime minister are well-known secular figures.

Shiite leaders say their decision to move away from an Islamist government was largely shaped by the presumption that the Iraqi people would reject such a model. But they concede that it also reflects certain political realities -- American officials, who wield vast influence here, would be troubled by an overtly Islamist government. So would the Kurds, who Iraqi and American officials worry might be tempted to break with the Iraqi state.

The emerging policies appear to be a rejection of an Iranian-style theocracy. Iran has given both moral and material support to the country's two largest Shiite parties, Dawa and the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq.

SHIITES IN IRAQ SAY GOVERNMENT WILL BE SECULAR

The conviction that the Iranian model should be avoided in Iraq is apparently shared by the Iranians themselves. One Iraqi Shiite leader, who recently traveled to Tehran, the Iranian capital, said he was warned by the Iranians themselves against putting clerics in the government.

"They said it caused too many problems," the Iraqi said.

The secular tilt comes as Shiite leaders prepare for what they regard as a historic moment: after decades of official repression, the country's largest group now seems likely to take the helm of the Iraqi state. Mindful of that opportunity, and of previous opportunities missed, the Shiite leaders running for office say they are determined to exercise power in a moderate way, which would include bringing Sunnis into the government and ignoring some powerful voices in their own ranks that advocate a stronger role for Islam in the new constitution.

Still, for all the expressions of unity, just how much consensus exists within the coalition is unclear, as is the coalition's very survival beyond the elections. The Shiite leaders, and the rank and file in the Iraqi electorate, represent a wide array of political visions, and those blocs could rise or fall in influence over time.

Important Shiite clerics like Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani already exert considerable influence in the background, although his brand of Islam is thought to be relatively moderate. Shiite leaders like Mr. Hakim will probably continue to use their power behind the scenes; his views are thought to be more conservative.

During the drafting of the country's interim constitution last year, Mr. Hakim and others pushed for an expansive role for Islam in the new state, as well as restrictions on the rights of women.

Some Iraqis expressed concern that the more radical Shiites, notably the followers of Moktada al-Sadr, would be difficult to control once the election is over.

Mr. Sadr, a young firebrand who led a series of revolts against American forces in the spring and summer, has been silenced for now, and 14 of his followers are candidates in the Shiite coalition. But in mosques and in more private communications, Mr. Sadr and his supporters continue to express support for armed rebellion and for a boycott of the election.

The challenge, the Shiite leaders say, will be holding their coalition together after Jan. 30, when the jockeying for power, in what is likely to be a coalition government, begins.

"It was very difficult to bring the coalition together," said Ali Faisal, a leader of Iraqi Hezbollah, a Shiite party that is part of the group. "There is a good chance that it will fall apart."

If the Shiite coalition were to crumble, Shiite leaders fear, they could lose ground to the interim prime minister, Ayad Allawi, a secular-minded Shiite, or to the Kurdish parties, which are unified on a single slate and which will probably benefit from a large turnout.

Kurdish leaders have already begun to talk up the prospect of Jalal Talabani, the leader of the Patriotic Union for Kurdistan, getting the post of president, which would give him enormous power in shaping the composition of the new government.

The Shiite coalition, known as the United Iraqi Alliance, was pulled together under the leadership of Ayatollah Sistani, the country's most powerful Shiite cleric and a native of Iran. Ayatollah Sistani, without formally endorsing any political party, has issued an Islamic edict calling on all eligible Iraqi Shiites to vote.

The Shiite coalition is widely expected to pull in the largest number of votes on election day. Shiites make up about 60 percent of the electorate here, and if, as expected, large numbers of Iraqi Sunnis boycott the election, then Shiites could capture an even larger percentage of the national assembly seats.

The decision to exclude clerics from the senior positions in the Iraqi government has set off a scramble for the post of prime minister. Under the election rules, the prime minister is to be chosen by the party or group that forms a government, presumably by the group that wins the largest number of seats in the 275-member national assembly.

SHIITES IN IRAQ SAY GOVERNMENT WILL BE SECULAR

Among the Shiites, the leading candidates for prime minister are thought to be Adil Abdul Mahdi, the Iraqi finance minister and a leader of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq; Ibrhaim Jofferey, the head of the Dawa Party; Hussein Shahrstani, a nuclear scientist; and Ahmad Chalabi, who marshaled support for the toppling of Saddam Hussein's government in the Bush administration and has since become a pariah. All are candidates for the United Iraqi Alliance.

All four candidates are secular-minded leaders who spent much of their lives in exile. They maintain that they will borrow from Islam's tenets in writing the country's constitution, the main task for the new government, but will ensure that the Iraqi state does not have a religious cast.

Mr. Mahdi, for instance, flirted with communism in his youth, has two master's degrees from French universities and maintains a home in France. Mr. Shahrstani was educated in Canada and is married to a Canadian. Mr. Chalabi, the most overtly secular of the group, has a doctorate in mathematics and spent much of the past 30 years in Britain and the United States. Dr. Jofferey is a medical doctor who lived in London.

Also a contender for the prime minister's job is Dr. Allawi, the current head of the Iraqi government, who was chosen last June by the United Nations envoy, Lakdhar Brahimi, and the American leadership. Dr. Allawi is running for the national assembly as the leader of his own slate of candidates, called the Iraqi List.

Dr. Allawi's chances to remain as prime minister are thought to depend not just on how well his group does at the polls, but on how well the United Iraqi Alliance fares. If Dr. Allawi's group performs well, and the Shiite coalition less well, then Dr. Allawi, Shiite leaders say, could become a leading candidate for prime minister. It was a deadlock between Dawa and the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq last June that allowed Dr. Allawi to become minister.

That principal trend in Iraqi Shiism, known as quietism, rejects the kind of political role for the clergy that it has in Iran. Indeed, some prominent Iraqi Shiite religious leaders note that the Iranian government, after taking power in 1979, marginalized and persecuted Iranian followers of the quietist school in that country.

"It's a completely different concept of government," Mr. Shahrstani said, referring to the Iraqi government. "The Iraqi government and the constitution will seek neither an Islamic government nor the participation of Islamic clerics in the government."

The ayatollahs will not be part of the government in any way or express views on day-to-day governance."

Ayatollah Sistani, though an adherent of the quietest school, has involved himself in every step of the political process here. Though he has stopped short of endorsing political candidates, he has come close to backing the Shiite slate. Earlier this month, some candidates in Dr. Allawi's slate protested that the use of Ayatollah Sistani's picture on the United Iraqi Alliance's election posters violated the ban on the use of religious symbols.

Indeed, some Iraqi Shiite leaders say it will probably fall to Ayatollah Sistani to hold the coalition together once the election is over.

Shiite leaders agree that the biggest task facing the next Iraqi government will be mollifying the Sunni Arabs, who they have displaced as Iraq's dominant group. The Sunnis are a minority in Iraq but a majority in the rest of the Arab world, and some of their leaders have had a difficult time reconciling themselves to a subordinate role.

While Shiite leaders say they intend to reach out to the Sunnis, they will have to overcome no small amount of suspicion. Publicly, that suspicion is usually expressed by making reference to Iran, the powerful Shiite-majority neighbor to the east.

"We're not afraid of the Shia or the Kurds governing Iraq," said Sheik Moayad Brahim al-Adhami, leader of the Abu Hanifa mosque, a Sunni bastion in Baghdad. "But what we're afraid of is a fundamentalist representing a foreign country's interests."

SHIITES IN IRAQ SAY GOVERNMENT WILL BE SECULAR

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos: Iraqis put up a election banner supporting the interim prime minister, Ayad Allawi, in Baghdad yesterday.
(Photo by Shawn Baldwin for The New York Times)

A Shiite election ad, a sandal and a bloodstain at a Baghdad Shiite mosque after a bomb killed 14 on Friday.
(Photo by Joao Silva for The New York Times)(pg. A10)

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WAR IN THE GULF: IRAN: Another challenge awaits

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Body

As it prosecutes the war against Iraq, the Bush administration also faces the challenge of Iran. How that challenge plays out depends on two crucial questions.

The question from Tehran is whether the American invasion of Iraq is directed solely at Saddam Hussein or whether it's a pretense for pursuing American imperial interests in the Persian Gulf.

From Washington, the question is whether Iran should become the next target of a hawkish administration determined to reorder the Middle East.

For the Journal-Constitution

The answer to both questions depends on how long the U.S. occupation of Iraq lasts and whether the Bush administration accurately reads the politics of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In the end, the perceptions of Tehran and Washington are critical to the stability of the Persian Gulf, the intent and direction of Iran's nuclear program and the odds of another American pre-emptive war against a member of President Bush's "axis of evil."

The nature and duration of an American occupation of Iraq depends on the realities on the ground in Mesopotamia. But American relations with Iran depend on understanding the political and psychological legacy of the Iranian Revolution of 1979.

American-Iran relations since the mid-1970s have been shaped by basic misperceptions on both sides. The Iranians saw Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi as a tool of Washington and themselves as the victims of a regime maintained by American military hardware. The United States saw the shah as the linchpin of stability in the Persian Gulf and an enlightened monarch driving his country toward modernization.

Spark of a revolution

The shah probably benefited more from his manipulation of the United States for his own interests than the U.S. gained from its close alliance with the Peacock throne. But the link between the Iranian monarch and Washington

WAR IN THE GULF: IRAN : Another challenge awaits

was a major cause of the Iranian revolution. It exploded in 1979, fed by a combination of resentment against autocracy and the passion of nationalism.

Many of the Iranians who helped topple the shah gathered behind Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini as a charismatic figure laying claim to the sovereignty of Iran rather than as the leader of a theocracy.

In fact, the first post-revolution government was secular. It was two years later, in 1981, that the theocrats finally purged the last of the secularists to establish the Islamic Republic of Iran. Yet the struggle among Iranians to define their state has never really ended.

The constitution that governs the Islamic Republic established a two-track system of governance. On one track is the president and the parliament, or majlis, elected by the people. Together they make the laws and administer the state. But they do so only at the sufferance of the religious authorities.

The second and superior track of the system is held by a "Council of Guardians" that is empowered to veto all laws --- civil, penal, economic, administrative, cultural, military and political --- that fail to meet the exacting laws of Islam as interpreted by the council.

Khomeini's legacy

In turn, the Council of Guardians, with the president and the majlis, submit to the authority of the Supreme Leader, the faqih, or spiritual guide. The constitution recognizes the faqih as possessing a special mystique and aura of infallibility in distinguishing good from evil. As such, he sanctifies politics and requires obedience as a religious obligation.

The whole structure of Iran's government was tailored to a political theology developed by Khomeini. During his lifetime, Khomeini's stature as a revered religious figure and ardent Iranian nationalist enabled him to preside over a system that gave Iranians little choice: they either submitted or they immigrated. It was also a time in which Iran's very existence was challenged by Saddam Hussein, who began the Iran-Iraq war in 1980.

But when Khomeini died in 1989, religious dictatorship and failed economic policies were causing stress fractures in a government run by mullahs. In addition, Khomeini's successor as faqih, Ali Khamini, was widely regarded more as a political hack than a respected religious figure.

Thus by the mid-1990s, the promises of political freedom and economic justice sounded in 1979 had evaporated. In their place was a government stained by social coercion, political repression and economic hardship. Furthermore, a population in which two-thirds were under the age of 25 remembered neither the regime of the shah nor Iran as anything but a sovereign state.

In August 1997 Muhammed Khatami, a cleric outside the circle of political mullahs in control of the country, took office as president, promising extensive reform of the political system. He was elected with 70 percent of the vote, delivered largely by women and the young. The majlis that came in with him contained a large number of reformers. But real reform did not happen. The Council of Guardians continued to vet candidates for office, block laws passed by the majlis, shut down opposition newspapers and jail dissidents.

Students in the streets

As the faqih, Ayatollah Khamini routinely overruled President Khatami. By Khatami's second term, student demonstrators had taken to the streets. It appeared that it was only a matter of time before the hard-liners were ousted --- either by an orderly amending of the constitution or by civil defiance. The Iranians were on the verge of defining the state to the specifications of the moderates, who no longer represented slavish devotion to Ayatollah Khomeini or visceral hatred of the United States.

Even before the students took to the streets, the Clinton administration in its last years had begun to relax U.S. policy toward Iran. The Bush administration appeared likely to continue to inch toward renewed relations with Tehran. Then came Sept. 11 and the war on terrorism.

WAR IN THE GULF: IRAN : Another challenge awaits

In his 2002 State of the Union speech, President Bush declared the "axis of evil." The reformers were stunned. The hard-liners received new life. The growing rapprochement between the U.S. and Iran began to sputter. With the invasion of Iraq, it is in danger of dying.

With U.S. troops occupying Iraq, the perception that will unite most Iranians is American imperialism in the Persian Gulf. The reformers, who need American support, will have a difficult time protecting themselves from the hard-liners. Riding the wave of Iranian nationalism, the mullahs will probably revive the Khomeini era.

Consequently, the bitter adversarial relationship between the United States, in need of stability in the Persian Gulf, and the Iranians, who demand unchallenged sovereignty, could be reborn in the American occupation of Iraq.

Still unanswered are those crucial questions: Will the Iranians convert their nuclear energy program into a nuclear weapons program to gain leverage against American military power in the Gulf? Will the United States launch yet another pre-emptive war against a perceived enemy?

Atlanta resident and journalist Sandra Mackey's latest book is "The Reckoning: Iraq and the Legacy of Saddam Hussein" (2002). She is also the author of "The Iranians: Persia, Islam and the Soul of a Nation" (1996).

Graphic

Photo: An Iranian woman holds an antiwar placard as other women listen to an address on World Women's Day at a park in Tehran this month. / VAHID SALEMI / Associated Press; Photo: Sandra Mackey; Graphic: GOVERNMENT: Who's in charge

Supreme leader -- Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is the supreme leader, or faqih. He commands the armed forces, can declare war and can dismiss the president under certain circumstances. He also appoints leaders of the judiciary, the state media and six of the 12 members of the Council of Guardians.

Assembly of Experts -- Similar to the Vatican's College of Cardinals, these clerics are elected by the public to eight-year terms. They elect the supreme leader from their ranks.

Council of Guardians -- Six clerics appointed by the supreme leader and six jurists nominated by the judiciary (appointed by the supreme leader), this is the most influential body in Iran. It must approve all legislation passed by Parliament and it also approves presidential and parliamentary candidates.

President -- Mohammad Khatami, in his second four-year term, is the second highest-ranking official in Iran. Although elected by popular vote, the president is subordinate to the supreme leader. The president sets economic policies.

Parliament -- Members of the Majlis are popularly elected for four-year terms and have legislative authority. Reformists currently dominate the Majlis; the speaker is Medhi Karroubi.

Expediency Council -- Created in 1988 to mediate between the Majlis and the Council of Guardians, it is led by former President Hashemi Rafsanjani and dominated by conservatives. The council is seen as a means of retaining power for the clerics if they lose control of the Majlis. (metro only); Photo: Ali Khamenei; Photo: Mohammad Khatami; Photo: Medhi Karroubi; Photo: Hashemi Rafsanjani; Graphic: POLITICAL TIMELINE

1979 --- The Islamic Revolution replaces the Pahlavi monarchy with an Islamic republic and a secular state with a quasi-theocracy.

Jan. 16 --- The Shah flees Iran.

Feb. 1 --- Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini returns from exile and takes power.

Nov. 7 --- Iran takes 66 Americans hostage at the U.S. embassy in Tehran, holding 52 of them for 444 days.

January 1980 --- Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, a moderate adviser to Khomeini, elected president

September 1980 --- Iraq invades Iran, touching off the Iran-Iraq War

WAR IN THE GULF: IRAN : Another challenge awaits

June 1981 --- Khomeini removes Bani-Sadr as commander in- chief; Bani-Sadr is dismissed as president by the Assembly in late June. In July, he flees to Paris and forms the exile National Resistance Council

October 1981 -- Ali Khamenei elected president

1985 --- The Iran-Contra affair unfolds. It becomes known that the United States offered secret arms deals in exchange for release of American hostages in Lebanon.

1988 --- The United Nations mediates a cease-fire, followed by peace negotiations in Geneva to end the Iran-Iraq War.

June 1989 --- Ayatollah Khomeini dies; President Khamenei designated his successor as supreme leader by the Council of Experts

July 1989 --- Hashemi Rafsanjani, a reformist speaker of the Majlis (parliament), assumes the presidency. Iranians approve constitutional changes that effectively split powers between the president and the supreme leader. However, Khamenei remains the ultimate authority over all branches of government.

October 1990 --- Rafsanjani supporters win a majority of seats to the Council of Experts in nationwide elections.

June 1993 --- Rafsanjani re-elected to a second four-year term, reflecting a continuing power struggle between conservatives and moderates.

1996 --- President Clinton signs a bill imposing sanctions against Iran and Libya for terrorist activities and support of groups including the Hezbollah in Lebanon.

May 1997 --- Mohammad Khatami, a moderate cleric, is elected president, with support from women, students, the urban middle class and other moderate voters.

1999 --- Students engage in pro-democracy marches (above). More than 1,000 are arrested.

June 2001 -- President Khatami is re-elected by those seeking continued reforms

July 2001 -- U.S. Congress votes to extend for five years sanctions against Iran that were imposed in 1996.

--- Compiled by staff researcher Alice Wertheim; Photo: Ruhollah Khomeini; Photo: 1999: Students in Iran engage in pro-democracy marches. / KAMRAN JEBREILI / Associated Press

Load-Date: May 14, 2003

WORLD REPORT

Windsor Star (Ontario)

April 5, 2004 Monday Final Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. C2; News; Brief

Length: 1833 words

Dateline: London; Bayonne, France; Frankfurt, Germany; Dortmund, Germany; Ljubljana, Slovenia; Bratislava, Slovakia; Jerusalem; Cairo, Egypt; Kigali, Rwanda; Hong Kong; Colombo, Sri Lanka; Rio De Janeiro, Brazil; Denver; Detroit

Body

UK minister confirms 'no limits' migrant policy

London

Tony Blair was fighting Sunday to prevent the political row over immigration spiralling out of control after ministers confirmed that the government was operating a "no limit" policy on the number of immigrants entering Britain to work.

Patricia Hewitt, the trade and industry Secretary, said Britain's labour shortages meant more immigrant workers were needed. She rejected the idea of imposing any limit or quota as "old-fashioned central planning".

The Conservatives accused the government of setting the hurdles for entering Britain low so that potential immigrants no longer had to pose as asylum seekers. Downing Street announced that Blair would be launching a "cross-government assault" to tackle abuse of the system with an immigration "summit" at No. 10 Tuesday.

Compiled from Star News Services

Queen aims to rekindle Entente Cordiale today

London

Queen Elizabeth travels by Eurostar to Paris today for a state visit designed to rekindle the century-old Entente Cordiale with France after the long disagreement over the war in Iraq.

Launching a year of commemorations of the entente's centenary, the Queen will be welcomed by President Jacques Chirac on the Champs Elysees, which has been dressed up with Union flags and the tricolour.

The British and French governments have made a show of overcoming their differences over Iraq to co-operate on other pressing issues such as the European Union constitution, the creation of a European defence force and attempts to curb Iran's nuclear programme.

Police find explosives and arms cache near border

Bayonne, France

WORLD REPORT

Police swooped on a clandestine workshop used by the Basque separatist group ETA to make bombs and rocket launchers, arresting an alleged member of the group and seizing weapons and arms, police officials said.

Police identified the suspected ETA member as Zeberio Aierbe, 38. He was armed and carrying false papers, police said. They identified him with his fingerprints.

The workshop was located in an outbuilding of a house in Saint-Michel, a Pyrenean village close to France's southwest border with Spain and the town of Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port. Police raided the house Sunday morning after surveillance confirmed that Aierbe was there.

Also arrested was a sheep farmer who owns the house. Bomb disposal experts examined the workshop. Police said rocket launchers used in ETA attacks in Spain and bombs were made there.

DaimlerChrysler will alter its executive pay system

Frankfurt, Germany

DaimlerChrysler AG plans to change the way it pays its top executives starting next year, but details aren't yet available, a spokesman said Sunday.

"We have already said we want to change the way we remunerate our top executives from March 2005 onward, but there is no concrete plan available as of yet," DaimlerChrysler spokesman Thomas Froehlich said.

Froehlich said it is "likely" that chief executive Juergen Schrempp will address the issue at the company's annual shareholder meeting in Berlin Wednesday.

High-speed train strikes metal, but does not derail

Dortmund, Germany

A high-speed train carrying 200 passengers hit six metal slabs attached to tracks near this western German city, but it did not derail after the driver applied the brakes, authorities said Sunday.

None of the InterCityExpress train's passengers were injured in the incident, which happened early Saturday. The 17-kg metal slabs had been screwed on to tracks between the towns of Kamen and Nordboegge on a line linking Cologne and Berlin.

Slovenes choose not to restore minority rights

Ljubljana, Slovenia

Slovenes voted overwhelmingly Sunday against restoring legal resident rights to thousands of members of ethnic minority groups who were deleted from the country's population register after Slovenia declared its independence 12 years ago.

The non-binding referendum has ignited nationalist sentiment in this small Alpine country, wedged between the Alps and the Balkans, of two million people. The official returns showed that 95 per cent of voters opposed reinstating permanent residency and other rights to the more than 18,000 people --mostly Bosnians, Croats and Serbs -- who were erased from state records under an administrative decision made after Slovenia declared independence from the old Yugoslav federation in 1991.

Former PM, one-time ally to face off in Slovak vote

Bratislava, Slovakia

A former authoritarian prime minister and his one-time ally will face one another in a runoff election that decides who will be the Slovak leader as it joins the European Union, according to election results Sunday.

WORLD REPORT

Vladimir Meciar's first place finish in Saturday's presidential ballot comes only weeks before Slovakia joins the EU. The smooth-talking nationalist and his opponent and former right-hand man, Ivan Gasparovic, finished one and two to eliminate the favourite, Foreign Minister Eduard Kukan. Turnout was only 47.94 per cent.

Since no candidate won 50 per cent or more of the votes, Slovak election law calls for the top two candidates to vie in an April 17 runoff.

Sharon says promise not to harm Arafat invalid

Jerusalem

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said his pledge to the United States not to harm Yasser Arafat no longer holds, declaring that the Palestinian president and the head of Lebanon's Hezbollah are potential targets for assassination.

In an interview set for broadcast today by Israeli army radio, Sharon also said for the first time that under his plan to leave the Gaza Strip, evacuated Jewish settlements would not be destroyed.

Sharon said that three years ago he promised President George W. Bush that Israel would not harm Arafat, but since then circumstances had changed.

"Arafat was (then) given red carpet treatment everywhere in the world. Today it is clear to the United States and to everyone just who Arafat is," Sharon said.

Israel and the United States are boycotting Arafat, charging that he is responsible for Palestinian violence.

March 22, Israel assassinated Sheik Ahmed Yassin, founder and leader of the violent Islamic Hamas movement and officials said Israeli forces would mete out similar treatment to others.

Summit must be held, but not before May: Mubarak

Cairo, Egypt

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, trying to revive last month's postponed Arab summit, said Sunday the leaders should meet in May and that he doesn't care where they gather.

Tunisia, the host of this year's March 29-30 meeting of the Cairo-based Arab League, called off the gathering 48 hours before it was to begin, citing disagreements among members on key agenda items such as a U.S. reform plan for the region and a two-year-old Arab peace initiative for Israel.

Mubarak met Syrian President Bashar Assad and Sudanese President Omar el-Bashir in Cairo Sunday for consultations on rescheduling the Arab summit.

Rwanda's survivors gather to remember genocide

Kigali, Rwanda

Survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda gathered in Kigali Sunday with foreigners who witnessed the slaughter, researchers and academics to discuss the consequences of the tragedy and how to prevent it being repeated elsewhere.

The three-day conference marks the start of official commemorations of 10th anniversary of the beginning of the genocide on April 7, 1994 and is also intended to raise global awareness about the killing.

More than 500,000 Tutsis and political moderates from the Hutu majority were killed in the 100-day slaughter, which was orchestrated by the extremist-Hutu government then in power in the central African country.

WORLD REPORT

"It is 10 years after the genocide and the world's awareness to what happened here is extremely limited," said Joseph Nsengimana, an adviser to President Paul Kagame.

Activists mourn victims of crackdown by China

Hong Kong

Hong Kong activists marked the traditional Chinese tomb-sweeping festival Sunday with a tribute to victims of the bloody crackdown on protesters in Beijing's Tiananmen Square nearly 15 years ago.

As tens of thousands flocked to local cemeteries to leave offerings for deceased loved ones, some local legislators laid white wreaths -- the traditional Chinese colour of mourning -- and bowed at a makeshift monument engraved with the inscription "Democracy's heroes are immortal."

Sri Lankan president wants talks with Tigers

Colombo, Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's president, whose political alliance won the most seats in parliamentary elections, plans to make a resumption of peace talks with Tamil Tiger rebels her "top priority," her chief aide said Sunday.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga's United Peoples Freedom Alliance took 105 seats in the 225-member Parliament in Friday's vote -- just eight short of an absolute majority -- and was in discussions with minor parties to join it to form a government.

Rabid vampire bats kill 13 in the Brazilian Amazon

Rio De Janeiro, Brazil

Rabies spread by vampire bats has claimed 13 lives on an Amazon river island, Brazilian news media reported Saturday.

The deaths occurred over the last 21 days on Portel Island, O Liberal newspaper reported. The island is about 2,400 km northeast of Rio de Janeiro.

In all, 19 people have been infected with rabies. Of those infected, 13 have died and six remain in hospital, two in very critical condition, the newspaper reported.

Since March 9, some 300 people have reported being bitten by the bats but most of them were vaccinated against rabies, O Liberal reported.

Health officials are working to immunize people and cattle to contain the disease's spread.

Quebec lynx released into wilderness of Colorado

Denver

Biologists released six Canadian lynx into the Colorado wilderness on a snowy day Saturday with high hopes they would soon make themselves at home.

Last winter, six **females** from groups released earlier had kittens, a major success for a five-year-old program that started off with four of five transplanted lynx dying.

Todd Malmsbury, spokesman for the state wildlife commission, said three males and three **females** captured in Quebec last winter were released Saturday, all wearing radio and satellite collars. The collars allow biologists to keep track of their movements and determine whether they are mating.

Three die, one wounded on Detroit's west side

WORLD REPORT

Detroit

A shooting on the city's west side early Sunday left three people dead and a fourth wounded, police said.

The victims had just left a party about 12:30 a.m. when they were followed by another vehicle, Officer Glen Woods said. Someone in the other vehicle opened fire, Woods said and then drove off.

Woods said a 22-year-old man, a 22-year old woman and a 21-year-old woman died. The survivor, a 21-year-old woman, was taken to a local hospital where she was listed in temporary serious condition. The shootings occurred on the eve of a planned citywide day of prayer against violence.

Police told television station WXYZ that the shooting stemmed from a dispute earlier at another location.

Graphic

Democracy sought in Nepal: Riot police charge supporters of Nepal's six largest political parties Sunday during a demonstration against King Gyanendra in Katmandu. Police fired tear gas and swung batons to disperse about 30,000 protesters demanding that the king allow a democratic government. AP photo: Binod Joshi

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Sunday Telegraph (Sydney, Australia) (Sydney, Australia)

February 20, 2005 Sunday

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Body

A torturous path for our defence forces

THE so-called Defence Force torture training of which Simon Kearney wrote (ST, 13/2) is designed to make troops aware of what might be in store for them if captured by the current enemy.

The course has been in operation for at least 40 years.

It was introduced after the Korean war, during which Wilfred Burchett, the darling of the Australian Left, collaborated with Chinese communists in the mental and physical torture of Australian and UN troops.

I have been both a student and an instructor on such courses. That small segment of the course -- usually two days -- of which Kearney writes is only the first

phase, designed to replicate the shock of capture and

the kind of treatment

that hard intelligence informs us is likely.

MATP

The training is carried out by experienced instructors and is carefully monitored and supervised. Any trainee who shows signs of abnormal physical or psychological stress is withdrawn.

Most trainees have a fair idea of the sort of experience they will undergo -- if only because, after 40 years, the nature of the course is so well known in the ADF.

During the second phase, trainees, with the instructors, reflect on the experience and how they might cope in a real-life situation.

Later phases deal with forms of resistance to torture and interrogation.

This course is designed to deal with a world where the enemy has contemptuously rejected the laws of combat binding our own people.

MICHAEL O'CONNOR, AM

East Doncaster, Vic

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Longing for the rule of law

AUSTRALIA is becoming a very violent place, and it's fair to say this is particularly so in places where there are large Middle Eastern communities.

Yet all we hear from the multicultural lobby is that the police are racist or the community feels marginalised.

People who hang around in gangs of 20 at the local Westfield, making sexual comments to young girls as they walk past, don't feel marginalised -- they are grossly over-confident and feel untouchable by the law.

BENJAMIN BURNS

Mardi

We must save the Earth

AUSTRALIA needs to sign the Kyoto Protocol now.

In NSW, we are in the midst of a long-term drought. The rest of Australia is also suffering.

Temperatures keep on rising.

We are destroying our planet in the name of profit.

DOMINIC SCUTELLA

Wattle Grove

Howard thrashed with a feather

THE same old Kim Beazley, thrashing the Government with a feather duster -- one in detention here, another possible terrorist in detention there, and a paltry \$1 million roort.

Where is Labor's concern for the 1.5 million Australians below the poverty line? Where is exposure of the facts of deforestation and the degeneration of soil and air -- and what about Kyoto?

Where is Beazley's tax reform, his welfare modification, his infrastructure plans, his Medicare restoration policies, his sounder education management ...

He'd rather attack Howardism with jejune matters and picayune affairs. So a week was lost in parliament over an unprovable, \$1 million ministerial mis-spend. Maybe Kim has the ticker, but has he got the gumption?

FRANK HAINSWORTH

Burleigh, Qld

Misguided vitriol

WHAT a travesty of freedom of speech to refer to Christians as "besotted followers", as expressed by Bill Priest (Talkback, 13/2).

Even further, to refer to Christians as a "threat to our free will ... as anything thrown against us by Islamic fundamentalists," is reprehensible. While it is true that some misguided Christians once persecuted those that did not believe their way, this is not God's way.

I do not consider Bill an enemy. I "love" him and will pray that God will forgive him his vitriol.

WJ STAFFORD

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Cooranbong

Scrub Scruby from TV screens

WITH the furore over North Sydney Council's decision to impose higher parking permit fees for 4WD vehicles, who do we see but Harold Scruby,

from the so-called Pedestrian Council, on television.

Every time 4WDs are mentioned, we see Scruby commenting on TV or being quoted in a newspaper.

I have no axe to grind about 4WDs; I have no interest in them, nor do I own one. But we should be told more about the Pedestrian Council and Harold Scruby.

What qualifications does Scruby have to comment on the relative dangers of 4WDs? Are there any other members of the council besides Scruby? If so, what are their qualifications?

And how long is Scruby's tenure? It seems it may be indefinite.

GEOFF BUWALDA

Killara

Selective silence

WITH the murder of Lebanon's former prime minister, it's only a question of time in the Arab world when Israel will somehow be blamed.

Israel, however, would not be happy about Rafik Hariri's murder. Hariri was virulently against his country being occupied by Syria, which supports the terrorist group Hezbollah.

The Arab world is so obsessed with Israel's alleged occupation of Palestine that we have never heard them complain about Syria's occupation of Lebanon.

MICHAEL BURD

Toorak, Vic

Hooray for Habib's courage

CONGRATULATIONS to Mamdouh Habib for courageously speaking out about the torture and ill-treatment he received at the hands of agents of America.

Three years of imprisonment without any charge or conviction requires a lot of compensation.

Given the record of the US, Habib is far more credible than the weasel words of our own politicians who lied about the "children overboard" and "weapons of mass destruction".

It's far more likely that Australian citizens will suffer attacks from our paranoid government's "terrorist" squads than from any overseas parties.

DAVID LYONS

Hallidays Point

A tortured process

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

IS the investigation into the torture of Mamdouh Habib at Guantanamo Bay going to be like the investigation into the unlawful imprisonment of Cornelia Rau at Baxter?

That is, a whitewash investigation pursued by the same people who imprisoned and tortured Habib?

Will they, in the end, find themselves completely innocent, and the allegations completely baseless?

My guess is yes. They have in the past, and they will again.

The Prime Minister has already found Amanda Vanstone innocent, so why would her secret inquiry find any different?

There will be no justice for Mamdouh Habib and there will be no justice for Cornelia Rau unless there is an independent investigation into both cases.

GAVIN DATE

Marleston, SA

Camilla is not an animal

AS a new arrival in Australia, I have noted the recent publication of a spate of vitriolic letters against Prince Charles, and especially against Camilla Parker Bowles.

These would surely raise questions that would be fascinating to human behaviourists. Just what is it that these people, with their lamentably childish, crass humour, are trying to say?

Among the familiar names we see some new ones who have most probably been trying for years to get their scratching recognised in letters pages, but have now found fame where their level of intelligence can excel.

That is, in trying to outdo one another in insulting another person who is in no position to defend herself.

I can tell you they don't give the image of Australian intelligence any credit whatsoever.

SHEREEN ZAILANEE

Coolbellup, WA

TALKBACK

CAN the Labor Party find no criticism for the Howard Government's apparent acquiescence in torture, other than that it has tainted the evidence?

It has tainted all of us.

SCOTT POYNTING

Newtown

I CALL on you, as the editor of the largest-selling newspaper in Australia, to pull the plug on Piers Akerman's column.

One should reasonably expect your newspaper to present a balanced and objective coverage.

One must wonder if any thinking person could possibly take Akerman's articles seriously. I can assure you that I have wasted my time reading his column for the last time -- unless, that is, it's appropriately moved to the comics section.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I voted for the Liberals at the last election, but I'm not foolish enough to believe they can do no wrong.

WAL SIMMONS

Greta

OKAY, perhaps journalists and simple arithmetic aren't the best of friends, but this is ridiculous.

The caption under the photo of a young couple looking at a house for sale (ST, 13/2) read: "Mortgage repayments are expected to increase by 0.25 per cent."

Oh, really? If, as expected, the Reserve Bank jacks up the interest rates by one quarter of a per cent, the rate on the average loan will increase by 0.25 per cent -- but the repayments will go up by about 10 times as much.

ENZO PRATA

North Ryde

AS an avid reader of many years, I would like to know why you insist on wasting pages with the so-called "social set" every Sunday.

Surely to goodness you do not believe that anyone past the Harbour Bridge would be interested in looking at the wannabes buzzing around, living off their parent's expense accounts and lover's credit cards?

SUZANNE ELLIOT

Leumeah

I AM writing to express my utter distaste at the article written by George Pell (ST, 13/2).

Being married to a Catholic, I am aware of certain abnormalities in the Church's beliefs, but I cannot understand why people who are not Catholics should not be allowed to take communion.

All people who are Christians have some understanding of what it means to take communion. As a member of the Anglican Church, I am a communion-taker and believe it to be an honour and a privilege to take part in this ceremony.

I would like to remind Cardinal Pell that other religions believe Jesus is represented in the wine and bread of the eucharist, and that just because we haven't undergone your tests doesn't mean we have no right to take communion.

Your church, sir, is not the only representative of Christianity, and you would do well to remember this.

Your views have something to do with the fact that my children have not set foot inside a Catholic church since their baptism.

ANGELA THOMPSON

South Windsor

THREE cheers for Mark Ashcroft's letter (ST, 13/2) about his amazement at the constant exploitation of women in our society.

When a male is prompted to write to a newspaper on this topic, it highlights just how bad the exploitation and degradation of women is.

I agree with Mark that young women need to be taught to respect themselves first.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

But this task is extremely difficult when the persistent messages given to young women, from Australian society and the media, are that females must always be attractive, painfully thin and should constantly flaunt their sexuality to be of any use as human beings.

And then we are all so shocked when a high percentage of males blatantly disrespect females and generally regard them as second-class citizens.

M. JONES

The Entrance

LETTERS TO: The Editor, The Sunday Telegraph, Box 4245, GPO Sydney 2001

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My twenty years of terror

Sunday Times (London)

September 30, 2001, Sunday

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Section: Features

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Byline: Michael Sheridan

Body

Michael Sheridan tells the poignant story of the victims he has met in his years reporting the war with Islamic extremists

In the last weeks my thoughts have returned again and again to a cold Christmas in Rome 20 years ago and a bright little girl playing happily in her home.

Victor Simpson and his wife Daniela had invited me over. I was young and single and on my first overseas posting; some seasonal warmth was more than welcome.

Victor worked for a rival news agency but he was famously good natured; we drank wine and ate well while Natasha, his seven-year-old daughter, played with her brother, entertaining us all.

Four years later Natasha's life was over. On December 28, 1985, the family were checking in at Rome airport for a flight home to New York when a group of Abu Nidal's gunmen started shooting at passengers. Amid screams and chaos, the Italian police fired wildly while a few El Al security guards shot dead all but one.

Natasha was fatally wounded. Victor cradled her in his arms as she lay on the floor. She was one of 19 innocent people who died that day in simultaneous attacks on Rome and Vienna airports.

If you think the war between the industrialised democracies and the most extreme elements in the Islamic world began on September 11, 2001, think again. In fact, it has been going on since the revolution in Iran in 1979, an event which Sir Anthony Parsons, Britain's last ambassador to the court of the Shah, compared in importance to the French and Bolshevik revolutions.

For some of us, the past two decades have been punctuated by the personal knowledge of violence, pain and loss among our friends and colleagues. Only now, alas, are we collectively aware of the price we have paid for failing to stand up to governments that sanction acts of war against our citizens.

Parsons's analogy with Russia is well put, because the "Islamists", to give them a convenient tag, are the Bolsheviks of our time. Implacable, physically brave, unscrupulous in the quest for political power and convinced of their righteousness. They drew inspiration from the Iranian revolution that transcended sects, borders and race.

By 1983, when I was sent to report in Beirut, the outlines of this modern war had already emerged. As the most junior correspondent in the Reuters bureau, I was packed off to write stories about the American marines deployed

My twenty years of terror

around the airport. At around my own age of 25, they were confident, disciplined, flew helicopters, walked foot patrols in south Beirut and were masters of their weapons. I felt humbled.

That summer, I got to know many of their names and faces, sheltering with them from shellfire and rocket attacks. Then, on the morning of October 23, 1983, a suicide lorry bomber crashed through the gates of the barracks and killed 241 sleeping marines.

I was on assignment in Syria that day but I remember with nausea my call on a fat, giggling government official in Damascus who could hardly conceal his glee. It was nothing to do with Syria, of course (giggle). All those dead? Really! (Giggle.) Over his shoulder, out of the window, I saw three Syrian helicopters hovering above a distant airbase. "I do hope," I said to him, pointing, "that those are not American helicopters out there." The man choked, paled and whirled round. America's vengeance was truly feared.

It never came.

Instead, the Reagan administration withdrew the surviving marines and abandoned its muddle-headed policy in Lebanon, leaving anarchy behind. That long, chill winter I was sent to Tehran, where I found the functionaries of the regime exultant in their unpunished triumph over the United States, 52 of whose diplomats had been held hostage for 444 days, dooming the Carter presidency.

The culture of impunity enabled four states -Libya, Syria, Iraq and Iran -to allow or to encourage the murder of western civilians for political ends. Next came the bitter cycle of kidnappings in Beirut, with its litany of squalid bargains and human wretchedness.

Terry Anderson, another American friend and colleague, was the longest held of all the hostages. For seven years his friends and family endured the unimaginable.

Late in 1987, I was staying with Terry's sister, Peggy Say, at her home in America, when the phone rang. It was Oliver North, calling from the White House. Had Peggy any idea why Terry Waite was off to Beirut again? She had none, she said. It was Waite's last trip.

"Ollie" sometimes knew -and we knew that he knew -where the hostages were. But it was always impossible either to risk a raid or strike the right bargain. Peggy asked North why the United States couldn't emulate the KGB, which secured the return of a group of Russians by the simple expedient of abducting relatives of the kidnappers and shooting a couple of them? He grew red with anger. "The United States could never do that!" he replied.

In fact, the CIA got into the solo retribution game in a dreadfully botched manner. A car bomb aimed at Sheikh Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah, the spiritual head of Hezbollah, slaughtered 85 Lebanese civilians and missed its target: the act may have led directly to Anderson's abduction.

Only when Reagan bombed Libya did the United States take direct conventional action against a state because of its proven guilt. But apart from Britain, few nations stood beside America. The powerful means of compulsion that modern industrial states have at their disposal are weakened without unified action but too often it was sacrificed for the expediencies of trade.

As a result, the guilty have gone unpunished. Fadlallah still orates from his pulpit in Beirut. Imad Mugniyeh, the mastermind of the Beirut kidnappings, has lived in Iran for years. Colonel Gadaffi is talked of as a force for stability. Then there is le Carre-land. This is not the place to dwell on the hideous ironies of our anti-Soviet crusade in Afghanistan. But it is tragically evident that out of mediocrity our security services went on fighting the cold war too long.

Sometimes we do not need intelligence to track down the guilty. Libya's state media, for example, were foolish enough to praise the actions that claimed the life of Natasha Simpson. The major powers have enough information to understand that crimes such as the Lockerbie bombing were the work of men tied to several regimes.

My twenty years of terror

The American public is also now aware that some of our supposed friends, such as Saudi Arabia, harbour men committed to violence against us. A generation of radical Arab nationalists has been supplanted by zealots who want a divinely ordained war against every western value.

The Bush administration realises that the task is complex. That is why I find am disconcerted by glib dismissals of President Bush's war on terrorism -a word, you will notice, that I have been careful not to use here. The semantic dissection of that word has served as a tool for commentators who try to place the United States on an equivalent moral level to its global enemies. It is also useful for advocates who cannot wait to introduce another word I have not used so far: Israel.

It has become easy to claim that American support for Israel is central to the issue, thus insidiously identifying the victim as the guilty party. But let me be clear. Most of us who have spent any time reporting from the Middle East believe that a terrible injustice has been done to the Palestinian people, who were made to pay the price for the crimes of modern Europe.

Yet no modern European could sit, as I did, in a roomful of orthodox Jewish families wearing gas masks against Saddam Hussein's missiles in 1991, and not glimpse our own dark shadows.

At that moment, those long forgotten Cambridge tutorials with Norman Stone on Weimar German history seemed all too relevant. Once you have lived and worked both in Beirut and Jerusalem, absolute moral advantage is hard to arbitrate. The difficult fact for propagandists is that the dispute between Jews and Arabs over the strip of land between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean is ultimately a quarrel over territory that could be resolved by a negotiated settlement. Difficult, but possible.

The global movement of "Islamist" politics that took root after 1979 is different. It is a much broader conflict. It is actually a battle over the future of Islam itself.

Certainly the Israel-Palestine dispute can act as a detonator and inflame the Middle East. But it does not explain why "Islamist" guerrillas cut the throats of Muslim peasants in Algeria or why Muslim women in Pakistan have acid thrown in their faces. It does not explain the horrific scene I encountered last summer on Sulawesi, in the Spice Islands of Indonesia, when The Sunday Times sent me to investigate communal massacres.

I found a hospital full of shattered human beings, survivors who had fled from a neighbouring island after white-robed killers, chanting Koranic slogans, came out of the jungle night to burn their village.

Almost mute with fear, they allowed us to ask questions. The villagers, easy-going Christians with a strong streak of magical animism, had lived peacefully with their neighbours for years. But a group called Laskar Jihad had sent a contingent of outsiders to start a holy war in the Spice Islands.

They roused local Muslims, bribed soldiers, gave people machetes and guns, then led them on the rampage to "cleanse" the island of infidels.

Laskar Jihad drew its money from sympathisers in the Gulf Arab states, its plan from politicians in Jakarta and some of its recruits from the Afghan wars. It was the same evil pattern reproduced in the Balkans, Chechnya, Algeria, Kashmir and other laboratories for the militant "Islamist" project.

They cared nothing for the interests of the local people. Like all such revolutionaries, they merely sought another battleground in a global war.

I have never written in personal terms about these things before. For years I have preferred to cling to the correspondents' maxim dinned into me by the old hands at the Commodore hotel bar in Beirut: we are there to report the story, not to be the story.

But this is an exception. It seems that almost everybody knows a victim now. Millions of people, I am sorry to say, now understand that sensation of chilling fear that seizes your guts when unexplained gunfire erupts in the night.

My twenty years of terror

Perhaps we have been shocked into recognising once again that the United States is the best friend that freedom has in the world and that disagreements among friends don't spell division. Has it taken the first mass atrocity of the 21st century to make it so?

Graphic

Terror in America

Load-Date: October 1, 2001

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A mixture of Muslims Politics and clerics, limousines and burquas - Islam has been adopted in strikingly different ways around the world

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Byline: Eric Talmadge The Associated Press

Body

Islam in the grinding poverty of Afghanistan is harsh, its justice unforgiving.

For a woman found guilty of adultery, the punishment is death - which turbaned religious leaders carry out with stones. For ancient Buddhist statues deemed by the ruling Taliban to inspire idolatry, explosives did an equally thorough job.

In the holy lands of Saudi Arabia, Islam shows another face.

The Saudi constitution consists of the Koran, the Muslim holy book, and its accompanying traditions, and all legislation must conform to the Shariah, or Islamic law.

Still, a royal family, not clerics, rules the land. There are limousines in the streets; families watch satellite TV in their homes. In the capital, Riyadh, young men in jeans or white robes and women swaddled in black cloaks flock to a glitzy shopping mall to hang out.

As the terrorist attacks on the United States and the response have shown, the Muslim world is no monolith. Afghanistan's extremism and alleged ties to the terror have made it a pariah among the leaders of fellow Muslim nations. Even the government of Pakistan, previously one of the Taliban's only friends, has offered support for Washington.

"There is a contemporary perception of Islam in the West that is misinformed, because many people still believe that Muslims across the world are angry, primitive and fanatical," said Salahuddin Ayub, a Malaysian ustaz, or religious instructor for Muslims.

"But they should understand that there should not be stereotypes, that there is great diversity among Muslim countries in different regions."

Islam was born in the Middle East. But it has grown beyond its origins, physically and spiritually.

In countries around the world, it has been adopted in strikingly different ways. From sub-Saharan Africa to the steppes of Central Asia and the Malay archipelago, the world's "other Muslims" have endowed it with a stunning diversity - and a complexity born of conflict and compromise.

How much secularism?

A mixture of Muslims Politics and clerics, limousines and burquas - Islam has been adopted in strikingly different ways around the world

On Fridays in Cairo, worshippers spill out of storefront mosques onto sidewalks just down the street from the McDonald's. It is a commonplace scene; few give it much thought.

In Saudi Arabia, Christmas decorations, considered blasphemous, are appearing in stores other than U.S.-style supermarkets. They include cards designed in Saudi Arabia showing a reindeer and camel rubbing noses.

Even in countries where Islam is deeply established and Muslims are the majority, today's mixture of cultures and economies, and the looming ideals of Western democracy, present a difficult choice.

The question is asked throughout the Muslim world: How much secularism can Islam take?

Politicians in Egypt and Jordan have tried to assimilate secular freedoms while co-opting fundamentalists, recognizing their influence over a broad range of people feeling the strain of the demands of modern economies.

But to the fundamentalists, secular policies can rapidly become a threat to Islam, and the swings from one pole to the other continue to reflect that deep tension throughout much of the Middle East, and Muslims throughout the world.

Solutions do not come easily.

In Shiite and Persian Iran, Muslims are grappling with the legacy of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's 1979 revolution that toppled the shah and made Khomeini the first supreme leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Under reformist President Mohammad Khatami, himself a cleric, some of the more rigid restrictions on cultural and social activities in Iran have been relaxed or removed. Women dress more freely and are allowed to sing in public and act on stage. Music concerts have been revived.

The most daring Iranian reformists are questioning whether Khomeini's successor, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, should have the supreme political control he now holds, or whether he should be strictly a religious leader.

Hard-liners who want no retreat from their definition of an Islamic state have fought back from a powerful position - they control the courts and have Khamenei's support.

Prayers and discos

Mecca and the Middle East will always be at the heart of Islam. But Asia may be where its future is shaped. Here, away from the Arab world, there are other difficulties, and other tensions.

More than half the world's Muslims live east of Karachi, Pakistan, and Asia is home to the four countries with the largest Islamic populations: Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India.

In the globe's most populous Muslim nation, Indonesia, muezzin call the faithful to evening prayers while throngs of the young head to discos for nights of drink and dance. This year, a woman was chosen president.

Here, too, the pressures on Muslims are intense.

Calls are strengthening in Asia for stricter observance of conservative Islamic ideals. Women in parts of Malaysia have been ordered to wear headscarves, and local Indonesian authorities closed nightspots last New Year's to avoid a backlash from Muslims in the holy month of Ramadan.

Muslim unrest from Chechnya eastward gnaws at the southern fringes of post-Soviet Russia. In China, which views all religion with suspicion, it is one more ingredient adding to the wrenching transition of a communist giant. For three decades, a Muslim minority in the Philippines has been fighting an insurgency against the largely Roman Catholic majority.

A mixture of Muslims Politics and clerics, limousines and burquas - Islam has been adopted in strikingly different ways around the world

Since the attacks on New York and Washington, Islam in Asia has been reduced in the eyes of many Westerners to a terrorism emanating from the hills of Afghanistan.

But the story of Asia's Islam is above all one of a faith that swept a continent - by conquest on the Indian subcontinent, by peaceful trade and mysticism across the Malay archipelago - and adapted to the multitude of beliefs it encountered there.

Faithful vs. flexible

At the demographic center of the Islamic world - Islamabad, Pakistan - female models stream down a runway, the outlines of their bodies clear under sheer blouses.

Working the fashion show audience, Muslim waiters steal glances at the women and compete for the task of carrying refreshments backstage.

In Islamabad lives the divided soul of Asian Islam, split between a religion that imposes ironclad restrictions on the faithful and a more flexible creed that embraces tolerance and diversity.

The backdrop is the enduring struggle of Muslims worldwide to maintain a religious identity and culture while confronting the economic, social and political forces of Westernization.

This is true both in places left behind, like Afghanistan, and in more industrialized Asian nations like Indonesia and Malaysia.

Predictions about which way the region is headed are precarious. But no one can deny the growing strength of orthodox Islam, despite Asia's long history of diversity and tolerance.

"Between the more accommodating and modern Islam and the more fundamentalist Islam, I would say the recent gains have tended to be made by the fundamentalists," said Ng Kam Weng, a religion expert at Kairof, a think tank in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

"What you want to ask is whether these gains are permanent. I think the jury is still out."

Toe the Taliban line

Afghanistan is just across the border from Pakistan. But it is a world away.

After years of struggle, first to repel Soviet troops and then of civil war, the Taliban religious militia emerged to impose an Islamic regime so severe that even other conservative Muslims call them extremists.

Guided not only by Islam, but also by Afghan tribal society and a history of poverty, the Taliban have banned videos, TV and music. Girls cannot go to school after age 8. Women may not work and must wear head-to-toe coverings called burquas. Men must have untrimmed beards. Violators have been whipped in the streets.

Through the 1980s and '90s, Islamic radicalism was most closely associated with the minority Shiite branch of Islam, through the Iranian revolution and the Hezbollah guerrilla war against Israeli troops occupying southern Lebanon. Because of the centuries-old Islamic split between Shiites and Sunnis, this radicalism resonated less with the Sunnis.

Attention is turning to what inspiration the Taliban - and alleged terrorist mastermind Osama bin Laden - may provide to Sunnis elsewhere.

An exile from his native Saudi Arabia, bin Laden is believed to have found a haven in Afghanistan that has allowed him to set up a training ground for terrorists. Though not a part of the Taliban, his relentless militancy and calls for a holy war against America and the Jews have made him a symbol of the extremism the Taliban promotes.

A mixture of Muslims Politics and clerics, limousines and burquas - Islam has been adopted in strikingly different ways around the world

"If you look at where radicalism and the dangers of radicalism are occurring, you have the Taliban and the export of a Taliban outlook and mentality," said John Esposito, a specialist in Asian Islam at Georgetown University. "When we talk about militancy in the first part of the 21st century ... [it's] going to come out of the Sunni experience."

The export of those ideals is steaming ahead.

Pakistan's president has promised to back U.S. efforts to find and punish Bin Laden, but support for the Taliban remains strong there. Crowds of protesters have burned effigies of President Bush. Some villages follow restrictions on dress and entertainment modeled on Taliban rules.

The threat goes further.

Islamic separatists fighting in Kashmir, western China and the former Soviet republics in Central Asia draw inspiration - and, allegedly, training in weaponry and terrorism - from Taliban teachers.

Indonesian melting pot

But the road of the Taliban remains a lonely one.

Indonesia is also poor. It has also struggled through political upheaval. Sectarian skirmishes and bloodshed continue. But it has chosen a much different course than that of the Taliban.

Call it the Muslim melting pot. Islam is the religion of 85 percent of the country's 210 million people, but its more than 13,000 islands also encompass large pockets of Christians, Hindus and ethnic Chinese practicing Buddhism.

Perhaps mixing is inevitable, and the Islam practiced there is hardly uniform. Strict Islamic mores rule in Aceh province on Sumatra, for example, while Muslims elsewhere practice a faith strongly tinged with remnants of Hindu and animist rituals that predate Islam.

Flash points are many, with ethnic bloodshed flaring recently on several islands. But the diversity also brings openness and flexibility. The country's major Muslim group, the Nahdlatul Ulama, once hired sorcerers to drive evil spirits from a meeting hall, something Muslims elsewhere might consider blasphemous.

That broad tolerance has helped put Indonesia in the vanguard of a growing movement in the Muslim world: democratic Islam.

Indonesia's first democratically elected president, Abdurrahman Wahid, a Muslim cleric, reached out to religious and ethnic minorities and refused to promote strict Islamic law.

It was a bumpy start. Wahid was accused of incompetence and corruption and ousted this year. But he has been succeeded by a leader seen as even more democratic and reformist - Megawati Sukarnoputri, daughter of the founder of modern Indonesia.

Secularity shows

That is a significant fact.

In Saudi Arabia, women are expected to cover themselves head to foot before going out in public. They cannot drive, and when traveling must be accompanied by a male chaperone.

East of Afghanistan, Islam imposes fewer restrictions on relations between the sexes.

"When it comes to issues of dress, of people meeting in public space, of work ... by and large, Asian Islam has been far more pluralistic in outlook," said Georgetown's Esposito.

A mixture of Muslims Politics and clerics, limousines and burquas - Islam has been adopted in strikingly different ways around the world

Pakistan has had a woman leader. So has Bangladesh, a predominantly Muslim nation of 126 million where women run small businesses and are the key workers in textiles, the top export industry.

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Body

Link had conflict of interest on SBC vote

I find it of great interest that despite concerns over higher phone rates, SBC got its wish, permitting it to charge rivals more for using its phone lines.

The new law is tantamount to a hidden consumer tax that benefits SBC and inevitably will lead to higher phone bills for residential and business customers. When you have a major piece of legislation that is opposed by every consumer group in the state, as well as every other phone company other than SBC, that is a strong indicator that SBC is on the wrong side of the issue.

It is important to point out that this legislation could not have been passed without strong support from state Sen. Terry Link, a Vernon Hills Democrat, who, as the Sun-Times reported, "cast aside questions about a possible conflict of interest." His wife, Susan Link, is a registered lobbyist for SBC. He did not abstain. Nor did Sen. Link publicly disclose his wife's relationship with SBC. Link was quoted as saying, "I don't see any conflict. I was voting for my district."

Please, Senator Link, give the voters of your district some credit for thinking on their own. Would you be kind enough to tell us who, in your district, supports higher phone rates?

Carson Florio

Waukegan

Syria differs from Iraq only in degree

Secretary of State Colin Powell's trip to Syria this month was a mistake, bestowing respect on an undeserving, thuggish regime differing only in degree, but not in kind, from Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

Syria is a clone of Iraq, occupying neighboring Lebanon, just as Iraq occupied Kuwait. Syria is a ruthless occupier of what used to be a model of freedom and democracy in the Middle East. Posing as liberator, Syria has defied U.N. Resolution 520 and refused to honor the Taif Accord obliging it to withdraw. It has entrenched itself, using military force and terror against the Lebanese, especially its Christian community.

Its jails and torture chambers rival those of Hussein, according to evidence presented by Free-Lebanon groups-in-exile around the world.

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Syria suppresses dissent and oppresses its people as ruthlessly as Hussein. In 1982, Syrian troops laid siege to the city of Hama for 27 days, bombarding it with heavy artillery and tanks, then invading, slaughtering up to 40,000 men, women and children.

The 30,000 Syrian troops illegally in Lebanon openly supply and protect two fanatic terrorist groups, Hezbollah and Hamas, transshipping weapons from Iran for these two groups. Hezbollah was directly involved in the bombing that murdered 241 U.S. Marines in their barracks.

Damascus is a Club Med for terrorists, home to several of the world's most notorious terrorist organizations, including Hezbollah, Hamas, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command and Palestine Islamic Jihad.

Syria has a choice, as Iraq did. It can join the community of civilized nations, or it can continue to be a state sponsor of terror. It can turn over the Iraqi war criminals who sought safe harbor there or it can face the "serious consequences."

Daniel John Sobieski

Chicago

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Change sweeps 'Arab street'

The Ottawa Citizen

November 21, 2001 Wednesday

Final EDITION

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Body

'Optimism' is not my middle name, but in reading what I can of Arab and Muslim media and government pronouncements (i.e. the part that is in English or translation) over the past few weeks, and especially over the past few days, I have found it hard to tamp down. It is still only a vague and general impression, but I think a change may be coming, a pan-Arab change of attitude on a scale beyond what we have already seen in Russia and Pakistan, and indeed in Europe.

The Americans have led, decisively, and the world, on balance, has been inclined to follow. Governments and whole peoples who were deeply skeptical of U.S. motives and strategy are, individually and collectively, thinking again. Partly it is the shocking speed with which the situation in Afghanistan was turned around, the speed at which the Taliban has been collapsing.

And partly it is the tone struck by the Bush administration: especially by Donald Rumsfeld, but also by Colin Powell, and of course President George W. Bush himself. There has been straight talk from them, there have been no games, and little media posturing. Or, so far as there has been posturing -- in Mr. Bush's reiterations that this is a war against terrorism, as if Islam had nothing to do with it; in his convening of the iftar banquet for Muslim ambassadors on Monday -- it has been a fine posture.

The Ottawa Citizen

For he is determined not to grant the "battle of civilizations" that Osama bin Laden has declared; that is the *raison d'etre* of the Islamist madrasas. He will take the high road, and he will make it pay dividends.

With the United Nations floundering, as is its wont, over the brokering of an interim Afghan government, Mr. Powell's state department went to work. There were moments on the weekend when it appeared that the whole effort was a shambles, when it seemed that the old and hated government of Burhanuddin Rabbani would simply reinstall itself, and the lines would be drawn for yet more interminable civil wars in Afghanistan, Uzbeks versus Tadzhiks, both versus Hazars, the Shia versus the Sunni, Pashtuns versus all.

And we are not yet home free. But Mr. Powell, acting behind the scenes with force and authority, succeeded in knocking all heads together, and the conference will proceed near Berlin. He did this at a time when the UN negotiator, Lakhdar Brahimi, was throwing his hands up in despair. (This seasoned Algerian diplomat walked out of this job once before; he is almost too western to cope with the eccentric demands of Afghani tribal warlords.)

Change sweeps 'Arab street'

Mr. Powell's secret would seem to be an ability to put the whole weight of U.S. power behind his understated requests. It is the charm that brought Pakistan's military dictator, Pervez Musharraf, to an about-face. But it is not pure brinkmanship. It works because Mr. Powell is able to say, "This is what we want, and this is why we want it."

He is able to convey not only what is the U.S. interest, but what is not. The U.S. has no desire whatever to run Afghanistan, the way the Soviets tried to run it; or any other way, so long as it does not shelter international terrorists. The U.S. long-term interest in the peace of the region, and therefore in its prosperity, is reasonably transparent. There is a freedom from innuendo; the payoffs are frank and over-the-table; there are no promises the U.S. can't keep.

I am spelling this out, because there is a game going on in the U.S. media, on the right-hand side of the political spectrum. Mr. Powell is presented as the "coalition-builder," the pacifist who would sell out U.S. interests if he possibly could -- the man who persuaded George Bush the Elder not to march on Baghdad in 1991 for fear of the "Arab street." And Mr. Rumsfeld is presented as the man who gets the dirty job done. Only the latter proposition is true.

The reality is that the younger Bush is making policy now, as his father was before him; they are much different presidents. Both secretaries are now acting within a new context and within a strong team. Mr. Powell's job is to build the coalitions, without which the United States could not enforce its will; Mr. Rumsfeld has the simpler task of delivering the punches. Each has been, so far, remarkably successful, in his own distinct task. They, and the tasks, are all necessary to each other.

Mr. Powell's address Monday on the Israel/Palestine issue was unprecedented for its candour. Never before had an American statesman said aloud what he was prepared to say. He said if they want peace, both sides must stop dreaming. The Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza must be on the table -- all, not some.

The very security measures by which Israel has tried to defend itself from the intifada and suicide bombers -- the humiliating checkpoints and body searches that have put poison in the hearts of a whole generation of Palestinians -- are intrinsic to the problem. If there is to be a Palestinian state, the option of "hot pursuit" must be surrendered.

But more crucially, the approach that has been taken by Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian leadership has been intrinsic to the problem. They do not, will not, grasp that if you want peace you must cease to demonize the enemy. That you cannot talk peace in English, then speak of suicide bombers as "martyrs" in Arabic. That if you want the Israeli checkpoints to come down, you must remove the reason for them, which means arresting the Palestinian terrorists yourself, and facing down the consequences. That if you want Israel to recognize the legitimacy of a Palestinian state, then Palestine must recognize the legitimacy of the Israeli state, with no ambiguity.

The Palestinian leadership, whatever it is to be, must also find common cause with Israel in defeating Hamas, Hezbollah, and all other organizations that continue to question Israel's very right to exist. There is no half-way to such a position.

I do not myself see how it is possible to create a Palestinian state, given the difficulties that must be overcome, though I am willing to believe in miracles. There is no reservoir of trust between the sides, no matter how shallow. Neither Mr. Arafat nor Ariel Sharon seems the man for the hour.

And the Palestinian people are trapped between two false hopes, both of them now fully deflated. On the one hand are the explicitly terrorist organizations, which purvey a fraudulent dream of redemption through violence. On the other is Mr. Arafat, who is as corrupt and sleazy and as uninterested in democracy as any of the autocrats who currently bless the region. What use, to the Palestinians, is a Palestinian state under a government that treats them no better than the Israelis did, and which continues to nurture a culture of grievance, because that is the only thing it knows how to do?

If there is to be a miracle it begins in Afghanistan, and most likely continues in Iraq, with the destruction of the Baathist regime of Saddam Hussein. (The reader will remember I have argued previously that a U.S. attack on the

Change sweeps 'Arab street'

Iraqi regime is a question of when, not if.) Paradoxically, while it appears that peace between Israel and Palestine is a condition of U.S. operations elsewhere, the reverse is more likely true.

We must look again at that "Arab street" in the light of what has already happened in Afghanistan. Some weeks ago, I was writing about the anti-American and "anti-Zionist" demonstrations of the first Friday after the U.S. bombing began. It seemed possible, then, that this would grow with the passing weeks; but it did not.

With each successive week the number of demonstrations, and the size of them, has diminished, everywhere from Morocco to Indonesia, with the single exception of Iran. And as I said above, the anger, the stridency, the outrage, likewise seems to be abating throughout the Arab media, both official and unofficial.

And this, before that "Muslim world" had begun to look at what the U.S. attack on Afghanistan has accomplished: the destruction of a very evil regime, the restoration of traditional freedoms after a generation of warfare, a change of heart in the factions and a willingness to coalesce, the delivery of desperately needed humanitarian aid. The Afghans themselves are now telling the Muslim world what it feels like to be liberated from the likes of Mullah Omar and Osama bin Laden.

Though this must sound like a Leonard Cohen song, "democracy is coming, through a hole in the air." And while it never comes to any country in a single evening, in a single year, the possibilities for great change, for something approaching the fall of the Berlin Wall, is suddenly there, is suddenly being discussed.

I sense this in my own correspondence with various Muslim friends, this sometimes dizzying atmosphere when a taboo is breached, when a kind of fatalism is overthrown. In the words of one correspondent, "If this can happen in Afghanistan, what else can happen?" Very big changes: though impossible to predict, to control, even to measure.

And it could all end horribly, in the unexpected use of weapons of mass destruction, by some vicious tyrant under mortal threat. But what if it suddenly seemed, to so many who had never previously entertained the possibility, that the U.S. was actually on the side of the angels?

Consider this. Almost uncovered by the western media, among those demonstrations in the past two months, some of the largest have been in Iran, both in Tehran and other cities. They consisted of students and other young people protesting against the regime of the ayatollahs -- in their thousands. The demonstrations were put down brutally, but they occurred. And do you know that some of these students were waving U.S. flags? For that, more than any symbol, is what you use to stick it to the ayatollahs.

The unfolding victory in Afghanistan is changing the terms of the debate, far afield. What if, instead of "Islamist" purity, with its oppression of women, minorities, music, barbers, and kites, what the Muslims really wanted was freedom?

What if, in other words, everything we have ourselves been told by such as our faculties of Middle Eastern studies, the many politically correct, self-styled authorities on the attitudes and resentments of the Islamic world, were proved as wrong as their predictions of what would happen if the U.S. began to drop bombs on Afghanistan? The fact that these experts have been consistently wrong in all previous predictions gives reason for hope.

Again, within limits. History does not repeat itself, and the background conditions in the Middle East in no way resemble those in central and Eastern Europe before the Soviet fall; there are many autocratic power centres, not one huge totalitarian one. But we do not know what the limits are. Only, from our experience of the Berlin Wall, that when something very big happens, it tends to happen quickly.

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WEST TO RESCUE BALKAN PEACE

SKOPJE, Macedonia -- Top European Union and NATO officials are heading to Macedonia to rescue the faltering peace process they have been sponsoring between the government and ethnic Albanian rebels.

International pressure on the former Yugoslav republic is mounting after a week of foot-dragging by Macedonian members of parliament who have balked at making concessions to minority Albanian grievances.

The EU's foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, and NATO Secretary-General George Robertson are due in the capital Skopje tomorrow.

More rebels lay down arms

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone -- Hundreds of rebels in Sierra Leone turned up to disarm in one of their main strongholds yesterday, giving fresh impetus to a peace process aimed at ending the West African country's decade-long civil war.

Some 600 rebels including women and children soldiers have laid down their weapons since Monday. A cease-fire signed by the rebels and the government in November has broadly halted fighting, allowing the United Nations to deploy its troops -- currently its biggest peacekeeping force anywhere.

Since May, some 16,500 rebel and pro-government combatants have disarmed.

Violence in Nigeria

KANO, Nigeria -- President Olusegun Obasanjo toured city blocks destroyed by Muslim-Christian riots, and appealed yesterday to Nigerians not to avenge their losses with more violence.

At least 18 people were killed and 40 seriously injured in the northern city of Kano the past weekend. Several churches and mosques were destroyed during the rampage, which began a day after a demonstration Friday by fundamentalist Muslims.

Obasanjo, who is Christian, said Islam does not condone terrorism, and he equated the violence here with terrorist attacks.

No Headline In Original

Hezbollah suspect

VANCOUVER, British Columbia -- A Vancouver area man is scheduled to appear in Canadian court today following his arrest at the request of U.S. authorities, who have accused him of links to the Mideast guerrilla group **Hezbollah**.

Ali Adham Amhaz was arrested Friday nearly seven months after his indictment.

U.S. authorities say Amhaz, 35, had links to a North Carolina-based cell of **Hezbollah** that raised money for the organization by smuggling cigarettes across state lines in the United States. He was one of four people indicted in the case. He is accused of using money earned from the smuggling operation to purchase materials such as night-vision goggles in Canada.

'Immortality Auction'

LONDON -- Best-selling British novelist Ken Follett bid 2,200 pounds (\$3,185) at a London charity auction yesterday to appear in another author's next book.

The millionaire thriller writer was taking part in the 'Immortality Auction' -- a charity event which allows members of the public to pay to star in a bestseller. Follett won the right to appear in the next book by British cult fantasy writer Terry Pratchett, whose "Discworld" series dominated a recent survey of Britain's best-selling books of all time.

Also in the world . . .

Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh plans to visit his Saudi counterpart Ali al-Naimi today to discuss a drastic slump in oil prices . . . Road-building crews in northern Greece accidentally unearthed a hoard of rare antiquities dating back to Mycenaean times, the Greek Culture Ministry said yesterday. A late Mycenaean grave dating to around 1,100 BC and containing a copper sword with an ivory handle was among the finds near the town of Ioannina.

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End of Document

Africa's peace seekers: Betty Bigombe

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 01

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Byline: By Abraham McLaughlin Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: GULU, UGANDA

Highlight: Betty Bigombe spends her days talking to rebels and Army officers in Uganda's bush country. She is one of Africa's peace seekers - individuals willing to leave loved ones behind, shrug off personal threats, and even spend significant amounts of their own money to end some of the continent's most intractable conflicts. Part 2 of three.

Body

It was a CNN "breaking news" flash that first caught her eye.

On the chilly morning of Feb. 22, 2004, Betty Bigombe was racing around her cozy condo in Chevy Chase, Md. She was focused on paying bills, packing for a business trip, and hoping to squeeze in a workout.

Walking past her bedroom TV, she suddenly froze. In her native Uganda, the anchor said, the Lord's Resistance Army had just massacred more than 200 villagers. They had forced entire families to stay inside huts - then set the houses alight, shooting anyone who ran out. Ms. Bigombe remembers whispering, "Oh, my God, I can't believe it's still happening."

Her own picture appeared on the screen. The reporter explained that Bigombe, a former government minister in Uganda, was the one person who'd ever gotten the rebels and the government close to peace. But that was back in 1994.

Now the ongoing barbarity in her homeland filled her with shame. Standing there in her nightgown, she was deeply torn. Should she go back to Uganda to help? Could she afford to lose her well-paying job at the World Bank? Could she stand to leave her college-age daughter alone in the US? After hours of pondering, she concluded, "Maybe ... maybe I can give it another try."

* * *

That February day marked Bigombe's reluctant reentry into an elite group at the center of efforts to end this continent's most-intractable conflicts. They are Africa's peace seekers. And these days they're increasingly successful: Last year, the number of major conflicts in Africa (six) hit its lowest level since 1997, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), which tracks global conflicts. It spiked in 1998 and 1999 to 11, but has since trended downward.

The geopolitical reasons for the shift include the end of the cold war and the proxy conflicts it spawned in Africa, the rise of democracy on the continent, and the new peacemaking strength of African regional organizations. But the

Africa's peace seekers: Betty Bigombe

change also springs from individuals such as Bigombe - peace seekers who are willing to leave loved ones behind and strike out on quests others have failed to finish. They often work 20-hour days, endure sleepless nights, and even spend significant amounts of their own money. Some have succeeded. Others, like Bigombe, are pushing hard.

There's been a recent "surge in willingness" of individuals and regional groups in Africa to "be responsible for getting out of the mess" that has long pervaded their continent, says Sharon Wiharta of SIPRI. These people and organizations, she says, "have been more and more successful in negotiating the end of conflicts."

* * *

Little did Bigombe know her initial "maybe" would turn into 18 months of grueling work. She's mostly been camped out at a one-story motel in rural northern Uganda. It's a far cry from Chevy Chase. The sheets are so scratchy that Bigombe swears she'll bring her own set next time. Order chicken in the motel's dining room, and the staff goes out back to kill a squawking bird.

Bigombe says she has spent about \$ 8,300 of her own money on the peace effort - on things like calls to rebels' satellite phones. In the past year, she has seen her daughter, Pauline, for only a handful of days - and once nearly had to pull her out of college because money was so tight. Bigombe is on leave from the World Bank - and isn't getting a salary. Sitting in jeans and a white T-shirt at a plastic garden table on the motel lawn, she sighs, and adds with a laugh: "Three weeks - I thought I would be here three weeks" before a peace deal was struck.

When she arrived last year, two months after the February massacre, she began her one-woman peace effort with no official position or outside funding - just a history of trust among all sides. Hopes were high. The rebels seemed desperate - and willing to negotiate. International pressure was building on the government to end the war. But today, 1-1/2 years later, despite some near successes, the 19-year conflict rumbles on between essentially three factions: The rebels who've been branded terrorists by the US, and who've killed more people than Al Qaeda, Hamas, and Hizbullah combined; Uganda's headstrong president; and profiteering Army officers who apparently manipulate their commander in chief to prolong the war.

To some, her style seems organic, even haphazard. One day, she'll be poring over maps with government soldiers to establish the boundaries of a cease-fire zone. Other days, she'll joke and flirt with a commander to persuade him to delay a counterattack long enough to let her get between the two sides. At times, she's the target of expletives and even death threats.

"Oh, what I have to put up with," Bigombe says with an exasperated smile.

* * *

The thump-thump-thump of a borrowed British helicopter echoed over the scrub-brush of her native land. In December 2004, Bigombe was flying to meet with the rebels. She had a peace offering.

With the wind and dust still swirling after the landing, a sealed, 40-pound bag of rice from the World Food Program was unloaded. Bigombe ordered it deposited in front of the rebel officers, who were standing sternly in their crisp military uniforms. Twenty or so child soldiers in torn T-shirts were nearby, fingers on rifle triggers. They gazed longingly at the rice.

"Take it," Bigombe recalls telling the rebels.

But no one moved in the hot sun. "It might be poisoned," the top officer said.

He ultimately refused the rice. At first, Bigombe thought it was a setback. But her willingness to bring the food - even if they didn't take it that day - turned out to be a breakthrough on one of the most important elements of peacemaking: trust.

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The rebels already knew Bigombe as a member of their ethnic group, the Acholi. They knew that in 1994 she got them closer than they'd ever been to peace. And, after the rice-bag offering, they figured they could rely on her for supplies.

"We're hungry," one skinny rebel whispered at a subsequent meeting. With her own money, she bought sugar, coffee, cooking oil, and salt at local markets. Then she began arriving with cartons of soap and other supplies. The more they have, she explains, the fewer deadly raids they make on local villages.

Furthermore, as she brought supplies, the often-elusive rebels began contacting her more regularly, willing to talk peace. Some analysts worry the LRA is just manipulating Bigombe for their own gain. Regardless, outside observers say one of her great talents is building and keeping the trust of the warring parties.

Of that day with the rice, she says, "They were trying to see if they could trust us."

* * *

The LRA is a mystical group led by Joseph Kony, a recluse who claims he's a spirit medium. He reportedly wants a Ugandan government based on the Ten Commandments. In recent years, he's apparently been holed up across the border in southern Sudan - and hasn't issued any formal demands.

The LRA used to enjoy support among northern villagers, who complain of economic marginalization by Uganda's central government. But its brutality has turned villagers against it. Lately, the LRA has just been trying to survive, say analysts.

During village raids, LRA soldiers seek supplies and young recruits. They mutilate civilians who don't cooperate. Captured girls are forced to be sex slaves to LRA commanders. Sometimes boys are made to kill their parents before being turned into LRA soldiers. The UN estimates that 80 percent of LRA soldiers are children.

Independent estimates are that 100,000 people have died in the conflict, 20,000 children have been kidnapped, and 1.6 million people have fled their homes.

As one Western diplomat in Kampala puts it, the LRA represents "a different order of magnitude of evil" than most African rebels.

Bigombe has seen the LRA's brutality first-hand. In 1995, when she was a government minister, she was the first outsider on the scene of one of its bloodiest massacres. Rebels attacked a town and captured about 220 men, women, and children. The villagers were marched several miles to a riverbank and all methodically executed.

Yet sometimes Bigombe sees glimmers of humanity, too. Once, one LRA commander grew pensive during a conversation. He wondered how his fellow northerners would perceive him after all the terrible things the LRA has done. He asked plaintively, "Can I ever go home again?"

* * *

"Do you want to pamper these killers?" shouted Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni. It was 6 a.m., the time he often calls Bigombe. On this November morning he was seething.

"Hello, Mr. President," she answered in her gravelly voice.

The tirade continued. Mr. Museveni had declared a unilateral cease-fire to give rebels time to move toward peace. But his patience was wearing thin. Bigombe wanted an extension. He implied he was ready to end the cease-fire and loose the military on the rebels.

At first, Bigombe responded quietly, trying to soothe: "Do you want the killing to stop?"

But he continued, ending with: "Don't you ever ask me again for an extension" of the cease-fire.

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So she just remained silent. Bigombe spends hours every day talking on her two cellphones - coaxing, encouraging, and scolding the Army commanders, President Museveni, and rebels. But sometimes one of her most powerful tools is not talking at all. In the ego-heavy circle of guerrilla commanders, Ugandan military officers, and heads of state, she says, silence works wonders.

After a few quiet moments, Museveni said, in a slightly repentant tone, "OK, Betty." Then he began listening. He eventually extended the cease-fire from its original seven days to 47.

This episode "shows the president is patient," says his spokesman, Onapito Ekomoloit, even though he's skeptical the rebels want peace. "They have never been serious," he says. "They have never been sincere."

Rebel commanders also call Bigombe from their satellite phones in fits of rage, she says. They demand, for instance, that Uganda's Army withdraw fully from the north.

Bigombe goes quiet. After a while, the commander often asks, "Are you still there?"

Eventually he barks, "I'll call you back in 30 minutes." When he does, she says with a knowing smile, he's "much more reasonable."

"When I go silent, they know I'm not pleased," she explains. It sends a simple message: "Do you want to blow it all up - or move toward peace?"

* * *

Several recent changes, experts say, have improved the prospects for peace.

* Donor nations are pressuring Museveni to end the war. After largely ignoring the conflict for years, outside powers now worry about the scale of the humanitarian crisis and its destabilizing effects on the region. The US is providing "nonmilitary" support to Uganda's Army. But that's not enough, argues John Prendergast of International Crisis Group in Washington: "The lack of a direct American role - when both sides of the equation care more about the Americans than any other government - tells you the peace process is going to have tremendous limitations" despite Bigombe's efforts. He urges President Bush to appoint a high-level envoy, as he did in Sudan, to support Bigombe.

* The tactics of Uganda's long-ineffective Army have improved, in part because of US help. Fresh battlefield victories make Army commanders, now in a stronger position, more supportive of talks. Yet there's an economic incentive to prolong the war. The Acholi Inn where Bigombe stays, for instance, is owned by a top army commander. The war helps keep the motel full of diplomats, aid workers, and others. Commanders "deliberately misinform the president" to extend the war, says one source who requested anonymity.

* The LRA has lost most support from its long-time patron, the government of neighboring Sudan, whose leaders had long accused Uganda of backing Sudanese rebels in their 21-year civil war. So tit for tat, Sudan supported the LRA. But when Sudan signed a peace deal with its rebels in January, it no longer needed the LRA.

Last December, amid these changes, Bigombe engineered the first face-to-face talks between the government and the LRA in a decade. Hopes were high for a full cease-fire and a start to formal peace talks. But at the last minute, the deal collapsed. Both sides blame each other, and the fighting continues today.

The setback revived concern that Bigombe isn't tough enough to pull off peace. "She needs to be able to say, 'No!' to the government," says Sheikh Musa Khalil, a local religious leader.

It may be a matter of outside support. "A mediator must have leverage," says Paul Omach, a professor at Uganda's Makerere University. As an independent peace seeker, he argues, Bigombe has none. Whether it's her or someone else, "You need somebody with authority and power," he says.

* * *

Africa's peace seekers: Betty Bigombe

To ask for help or not?

In January 2005, the rebels wanted more food - more than Bigombe could buy herself. She could have turned to one of the donor-nation embassies, which are supporting her - paying her cellphone bills, lending her helicopters, and more. But there's a downside. "I could go to [one embassy] and get the food tomorrow," she says. "But if I did, the others would complain that I hadn't gone to them."

Despite a desire to help, she says, diplomats often complicate negotiations by jostling for the glory of supporting the peace effort. It's a common problem mediators face.

Sometimes diplomats "are like a bunch of jealous wives," Bigombe says in exasperation. Recalling her own divorce with a laugh, she adds, "I know - I was one."

In the end, she got the food from Museveni. "Everybody agreed it would send a better message if it came from the government," she says. It underlines her approach of putting Ugandans at the center of any solution here.

Yet she now faces the biggest outside intervention yet: The International Criminal Court in the Hague is expected to indict LRA leaders as early as this month.

The ICC's role in Uganda is controversial. Outsiders say Kony must be brought to justice, but locals worry indictments will make him feel cornered and less willing to end the war.

If the ICC indicts, it will end this phase of Bigombe's work, she says, and send her "back to the drawing board." But she won't give up: "I'll keep looking for opportunities for peace."

* * *

When the peace process hit a lull in May 2005, Bigombe made a five-day dash to the US. The last thing she wanted to do was see "Hotel Rwanda," a film about the 1994 genocide. But her daughter insisted. Pauline wanted her mom to see how the film's success in US theaters shows that Americans are capable of caring about Africa - about the kind of work Betty is doing. "It was important for her to see that people are paying attention," Pauline says.

So they went. Pauline watched her mom wince at several scenes. She'd been in Rwanda after the genocide - even to Hotel des Milles Collines, where the movie is set. People "can be so cruel to each other for no reason," Pauline remembers her mom saying, "and not even understand what they're doing." Such brutality "affects her deeply," Pauline says, and keeps her working hard for peace.

My Mom, the negotiator

Most of the time, Pauline Bigombe lives the normal life of a college junior studying history in Washington, D.C. But when people ask about her mom - where she lives and what she does - it gets a little weird.

"The joke with my friends is that no one knows what my mom does," she says. "I never quite know how to explain it." Her friends know Pauline sees her mom only a few times a year - and that Betty is usually off in Africa. "They just figure she's in the mafia," she laughs.

But there are unexpected moments when someone recognizes her mom's work.

At a Borders bookstore in D.C. recently, Pauline handed the clerk her mom's credit card. He glanced at the name, glared at her, and started yelling: "You're not Betty Bigombe."

He accused her of impersonation and credit-card theft. It turned out he's from Gulu, Uganda - the very town Betty is working in. Pauline finally convinced him that Betty is her mom. She promised to ask Betty to e-mail him. He beamed.

And there was the time she caught a ride with an Ethiopian cab driver. "Oh, you have problems there," he said of her native Uganda. But then he mentioned "the woman they're always talking about" who's making peace there.

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"I'm pretty sure that's my mom," Pauline said quietly.

Astounded, he tried to refuse payment for the ride. She smiled, and paid anyway.

"I miss her a lot," Pauline says. "But I'm so proud of her."

Bigombe Biography

1954 Born in northern Uganda

1981-84 Became corporate secretary of the Uganda Mining Corporation

1986 Elected to parliament

1988 Appointed minister of state for pacification of northern Uganda

1993 Named Uganda's 'Woman of the Year' for her peace efforts

1997 Received master's degree from Harvard

1997 Appointed senior social scientist at postconflict department of the World Bank

Children: Pauline and Emmanuel

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Beirut: glamour from the ground up

Sunday Times (London)

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Byline: Jim Keeble

Body

Beautiful people, wild parties -the Paris of the Middle East is back. Jim Keeble tries to keep up.

As I jog past the hotel where Terry Waite stayed the night before being kidnapped, I almost run over a small woman in hijab headscarf and Nikes. I apologise, she smiles, we both jog on. So it is in the new Beirut. The pursuit of ecclesiastical hostages has given way to the pursuit of the body beautiful.

I head onwards, dodging carts selling freshly baked flatbreads, corncobs and cigarettes, past the rows of arching fishing poles like giant wands casting spells into the sea, and on through the happy tide of humanity that throngs the promenade -women in full chador, women in skimpy tank tops, young men ogling the tank top girls, old men putting the world to rights. All colours and creeds are here, drawn by the slow slink of the sun. On this Thursday evening, the Beirut Corniche feels like the centre of ... what? The Middle East? The Mediterranean? The world? Please excuse this burst of lyricism. It comes from the buzz of finding a place you really like. Somewhere that makes you feel, yes, the world is good, it can work, it can be a beautiful place after all.

I hadn't expected to like Beirut so much. To be honest, I was a little nervous coming here. In the current political climate, a long weekend in Lebanon seemed about as sensible as getting into a Jacuzzi full of crocodiles.

But from the moment I landed, my heart soared. The gargantuan lobby of my hotel, the magnificently marble Phoenicia (home to half the world's press during the bad old days) was packed -UN soldiers, diplomats, wealthy Kuwaitis, even wealthier Saudis, and beautiful, tiny Lebanese women with big laughs.

Perhaps it's the legacy of 16 years of civil war (1975-1991), during which death stalked every mundane corner, from shop to schoolyard, but Beirut in the new millennium feels completely and utterly alive. The late-1990s rebuilding boom continues unabated. The Phoenicia will soon have competition from a spanking new Four Seasons and Hilton.

Apartments on the waterfront go for \$ 3m.

The greatest symbol of rebirth is the downtown Solidere district. This pedestrianised quarter is the latest in a long line of Lebanese miracles (beginning with St George dispatching the dragon at the gates of Beirut in AD200).

Thanks to the Solidere consortium, headed by wealthy Lebanese businessman and current prime minister Rafiq Hariri, an area the size of London's West End rose from deep rubble in the 1990s. Today, some complain about its bland Disneyfied appearance, but I think the renovated Ottoman arcades are elegant, housing chic cafes, bars and

Beirut: glamour from the ground up

designer boutiques (including that of the rising Lebanese fashion star Ellie Saab, creator of Halle Berry's 2002 Oscar dress).

By day, the numerous cafes welcome strollers sipping cafes blancs (not coffee at all, as I discover painfully, but boiling rose-water). By night, Solidere buzzes with alfresco revellers, all dressed to impress. It's Boston meets Barcelona, only cleaner, thanks to a small army of boiler-suited Syrian street-sweepers with ostrich-feather dusters.

Behind the main precinct of Rue al-Maarad is perhaps the only place in the world where a TGI Friday backs on to a Roman market -or at least a large pit strewn with columns and pedestals, uncovered during the rebuilding. I try to get a better look, but in 2004, Beirut archeological restoration seems to take second place to the creation of prime real estate. There's no entrance.

Instead I admire the enormous St George Cathedral, originally built by the crusaders, which stands right next door to the scaffolding-clad Omani mosque, still under reconstruction. Everywhere I go in Beirut, churches and mosques are being built, often alongside each other. After all, this has always been a city of contrasts -old and new, Christian and Muslim, European and Arab, sacred and profane.

I pause on chic Rue Weygand, admiring the rooftop bar of the vast Virgin Megastore, the soaring Omani minarets, the gleaming glass Microsoft headquarters, and, across the road, a huge vacant shell of a building, riddled with bullet hole acne. It's a striking summary of Beirut in 2004 -a city accelerating forward, while trying to heal the wounds of the past.

I am driven around town by my guide, Hassan (Beirut driving is only for the professional or the criminally insane). "We don't have rules here," he smiles, a good slogan for a city in which red lights mean slow down, look, then accelerate at speed, horn blasting. As we charge through traffic, I admire numerous billboards that seem to suggest Beirutis have two obsessions in life -further education and hair removal. One of the few that doesn't offer diploma or depilatory success depicts Syrian President Al-Assad, stating: "Syria remains at the heart of Arab nations." "Syrians are snooty know-alls," laughs Hassan. He suggests that even Muslim Lebanese would be happy to see them go (as proposed by the recent UN Resolution 1559 demanding the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon).

It's hardly surprising Beirutis want to be left alone. The evidence of foreign interference still scars every street of this city. We drive down the former Green Line, Rue de Damas, where Christian and Muslim militias pounded each other for more than a decade. The old Ottoman mansions are mere husks supported by skeletal columns; architectural ghosts seeking to remind the living of a fateful past.

Adorned with weeds and bougainvillea, they are perversely beautiful, like ancient tombs.

Later that day I swim in the Phoenicia's fabulous spa, only to find myself enjoying a massage shower while staring into someone's shattered home. The contrast of pristine new glass and marble alongside the crumbling destruction is acute. Personally, I think some of these bombed-out buildings should be preserved, as memorials to their former inhabitants.

But who can blame Beirutis for wanting to forget? The National Museum represents the way forward. Once occupied by militia snipers, situated at Beirut's bloodiest wartime intersection, it has now been rebuilt as one of the world's most stylish museums, with display cases to render a Gucci store jealous. It's all the more impressive with the knowledge that many exhibits were hurriedly encased in concrete at the beginning of the war, and only recently exhumed.

Over the two floors, I trace Lebanese history from Phoenician, Persian, Roman, to Arab, marvelling at the influences that have laced this country together. My favourite exhibit is a case of chubby marble babies, sculpted in the 5th century BC to thank the gods for delivering them from illness. As I leave, I am serenaded by the joyful singing of two young museum guards as they nonchalantly clack their worry beads.

Music and song are everywhere in Beirut. The journalist Robert Fisk talks of a Lebanese "belief in happiness", a belief that is most evident after dark. Beirut nightlife was famed in the 1960s (it was "the Paris of the Middle East", if

Beirut: glamour from the ground up

you believe the travel agents), attracting stars such as David Niven and Brigitte Bardot. From what I see, it's getting its groove back. The food is fabulous. I have three meals that beat anything I've tasted recently in London - a sumptuous Lebanese banquet in the walled courtyard of Al Mijana; more intimate meze at Al Balad, downtown; and, most memorably, exquisite sashimi and steak at uber-chic Asia, the sleekest rooftop restaurant in the Middle East, if not the Mediterranean.

And the drinking is Manhattanesque. I get half-drunk in Liquid, a red-clad Solidere mojito-hole, where girls are dancing around the bar; three-quarters drunk at the funky District (it looks like a Calder sculpture, good luck finding the door), where girls are dancing around the barman; and wholly and majestically drunk at Crystal, a madcap club on madcap Rue Monot, where girls are dancing on the bar (and possibly the barman, for all I can see in the scrum). Champagne bottles topped with showering sparklers zip between tables and everyone shrieks to whatever God they please.

The next day I leave Beirut to clear my hangover. Lebanon is so small, you can see much in a couple of day trips. Forty-five minutes up the coast is Byblos, one of the oldest towns in the world (7,000 years of continuous settlement), where I admire the crusader castle and casually dangling bright-red pomegranates. I shelter in the ancient coolness of the 12th-century church, before enjoying a fish lunch at Bal el Mina, on the harbour where Marlon Brando once caroused.

Down the coast, I am seduced by a dip at La Voile Bleue, a consummately glitzy beach club of sculpted torsos and bosoms that their owners weren't necessarily born with. I recall something Hassan said: "We only have rich and poor. Before, we had the in-betweens, but they left."

On my last day, I meander east through stone-clad hilltop villages that resemble Provence (no wonder the French felt at home in Lebanon) and into El Chouf, a hilly region of cedar and pine forests, and the 19th-century palace of Beiteddine, built by Italian architects for a Druze prince in the 1780s. It has been restored into a place of almost Buddhist tranquillity, with silent cloisters and trickling fountains. In stables that once housed 500 horsemen, exquisite Byzantine mosaics are displayed, depicting native animals and the geometric ponderings of early Christianity. Outside, where Israeli paratroopers once battled Druze militia, couples hold hands and gaze down to the golden Mediterranean.

My "road to Damascus" moment comes, appropriately enough, on the road to Damascus. Heading out on one of the world's more exotic Sunday drives, towards the spectacular Roman temples at Baalbek, near the Syrian border, through the fertile Bekaa Valley and its biblical landscapes (punctuated by the occasional Dunkin' Donuts outlet), past Bedouin encampments, Syrian checkpoints, **Hezbollah** banners and markets selling monkeys, I realise that I feel safer in Lebanon than in Leamington Spa. It's a strangely reassuring sensation. Maybe there's hope for the world after all.

Jim Keeble travelled as a guest of Kuoni.

Travel brief

Tour operators: Kuoni (01306 747008, www.kuoni.co.uk) has five nights, room only, at the InterContinental Phoenicia Hotel in Beirut from £739pp, including flights with British Airways from Heathrow and transfers. UK regional add-ons are free from many airports.

Or try Cox & Kings (020 7873 5000, www.coxandkings.co.uk), Original Travel (020 7978 7333, www.originaltravel.co.uk), or Explore Worldwide (0870 333 4001, www.exploreworldwide.com).

Getting there: British Airways (0870 850 9850, www.ba.com) and MEA (Middle East Airlines) fly nonstop from Heathrow from £328. Or Travelselect (0871 222 3213, www.travelselect.co.uk) has fares from Heathrow, Manchester, Edinburgh and Glasgow from £280, with Lufthansa via Frankfurt. Or try Travelocity (0870 111 7061, www.travelocity.co.uk) or Flight Centre (0870 499 0040, www.flightcentre.co.uk).

In Ireland, Ebookers (01 488 3507, www.ebookers.ie) has fares from Dublin from £423, with Alitalia via Milan.

Beirut: glamour from the ground up

Where to stay: the InterContinental Phoenicia (00 961 1-369100, www.ichotelsgroup.com) is the glitziest hotel in town and overlooks the Corniche; doubles from £109. More modest is the Mayflower (340680, www.mayflower.com).

lb), which also has a pool, with doubles from £42.

Where to eat: the Al Mijana (Rue Abel Wahab el-Inglizi; 328082) occupies a period Ottoman house with an outside area, and serves Lebanese cuisine at its best. Mains from £5. Al Balad (Rue Ahdab; 985375) has great Lebanese meze in the heart of downtown, from about £2.

Best guidebook: Syria & Lebanon (Lonely Planet £13.99).

When to go: autumn is a great time to visit Beirut, as temperatures are in the 20s until December. Otherwise, wait till March, as it often rains on the coast in winter. Summers are hot.

Further information: www.destinationlebanon.com or www.rediscoverlebanon.com, or, for what's on, www.whatsuplebanon.com.

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Graphic

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Debate Finished, Candidates Race Back to Campaign

The New York Times

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Dateline: DAVIE, Fla., Oct. 9

Body

President Bush and Senator John Kerry stumped Saturday through four critical states, using increasingly acerbic language as they tried to capitalize on what they saw as the other's weak spots in a second debate that did not appear to give either man a clear edge.

First in Iowa, then at a sprawling rally in Chanhassen, Minn., Mr. Bush repeated his refrain from Friday night's matchup, saying that Mr. Kerry "can run but cannot hide" from his legislative record. The crowd began to shout the phrase back at the president, who declared "I could barely contain myself" when Mr. Kerry said he had never changed positions on Iraq.

"He must think we're on a different planet," Mr. Bush said, to huge cheers.

At an afternoon rally in the Cleveland suburb of Elyria, Ohio, before flying to Florida, Mr. Kerry asserted that Mr. Bush's stubborn unwillingness to acknowledge errors of judgment prevented him from fixing them, starting in Iraq.

"Do we want leadership, as it is called, that can't face reality and admit mistakes, or do we want leadership that sees the truth and tells the truth to the American people?" Mr. Kerry asked a crowd of more than 10,000. He was referring to Mr. Bush's vague response at the debate that he had "made some mistakes in appointing people" to a woman who had asked him to specify three mistakes of his administration.

"If George Bush can't see the problems," Mr. Kerry said, "and he's not willing to admit the problems, and he can't talk to America about the problems, you can't lead America to solve the problems."

The battleground back-and-forth reflected the tension in two campaigns that, about three weeks before Election Day, can both sniff victory. With several national polls showing a dead-heat race before the second debate, Republicans expressed confidence that Mr. Bush's improved showing on Friday would stem the slippage from his angrier performance in the first meeting.

But Democrats, buoyed by a week of developments that undercut Mr. Bush's claims of vigorous job growth and his main justification for invading Iraq, said they would not lose the momentum heading into the final debate, in Tempe, Ariz., on Wednesday.

Debate Finished, Candidates Race Back to Campaign

An Associated Press survey published Friday, just before the debate, showed Mr. Kerry leading Mr. Bush 50 percent to 46 percent, reversing Mr. Bush's 52 percent to 45 percent lead from two weeks before. The margin of error was three percentage points. Time magazine has the two deadlocked at 45 percent, with Mr. Bush having lost a six-point lead, and Mr. Kerry with a strong advantage among women.

"A week ago we were dead," one top Democrat said in a hotel bar in St. Louis before the debate. "What a business we're in."

But Mr. Bush may have stopped the slippage in the polls, or so his small army of aides and spinners argued as they followed him across the states that will most likely decide the election. An instant ABC poll of viewers of the Friday debate found that 44 percent said Mr. Kerry had won and 41 percent gave the advantage to Mr. Bush, with 13 percent saying it was a tie. The margin of error was 3 percentage points. In the first debate, viewers surveyed by ABC favored Mr. Kerry by a nine-point margin, 45 percent to 36 percent.

Starting with a breakfast in St. Louis this morning, then moving on to Iowa and Minnesota -- both states he lost by narrow margins four years ago -- Mr. Bush built on the critique of Mr. Kerry's Senate years that he began in the debate.

"Much as he tried to obscure it, on issue after issue, my opponent showed why he's earned the ranking, the most liberal member of the United States Senate," Mr. Bush said at the breakfast for Matt Blunt, the Republican candidate for governor of Missouri. "Senator Kerry was asked to look into the camera and promise he would not raise taxes for anyone who earns less than \$200,000 a year. The problem is, to keep that promise, he would have to break almost all of his other ones."

In Minnesota on Saturday, he tried a self-deprecating reference to the first debate, saying, "After listening to his litany of complaints and his dour pessimism, it was all I could do not to make a bad face."

Here on the outskirts of Fort Lauderdale on Saturday night, Mr. Kerry made an appeal to the heavily Jewish population, tacking onto his typical presentation a story about his visit to an Israeli air base and his aerial tour, saying the upside-down view during a loop in a small jet had given him a better understanding of the tiny country's vulnerabilities.

"Our job, Mr. President, is to hold those Arab countries accountable that still support terrorists -- Hamas, Hezbollah, Al Aksa Brigades," he shouted. "And I will not give one inch in our efforts to do that."

The candidates planned slower Sundays, with Mr. Bush relaxing at his Texas ranch and Mr. Kerry attending church in Miami before flying to New Mexico to prepare for the last debate. Mr. Bush next heads to Colorado.

Both sides said they were determined to detour from their weeks-long tussle over the Iraq war into more discussion of domestic issues. But Mr. Bush, at least, could not stop himself from returning to the question of Iraq again and again, insisting anew that the report issued last week by Charles A. Duelfer, the top C.I.A. weapons inspector in Iraq, proved that Saddam Hussein was a "gathering threat."

Many Democrats and independent experts say that interpretation of the report is close to misleading: The report said that Mr. Hussein dismantled his stockpiles of biological and chemical weapons, and all but gave up on his nuclear program. His powers weakened after 1991, it concluded, although the report speculated he was holding out hope of reviving his weapons programs once United Nations sanctions were lifted.

On the stump today, Mr. Bush said that the report proved Mr. Hussein was trying to "game the system" to destroy United Nations sanctions, and that once those sanctions were riddled with holes, he intended to re-start his weapons programs. That justified the war, he said.

Mr. Kerry's aides argued that the report showed there was plenty of time for diplomacy, and that a pre-emptive strike, defined in international law as a strike against a power about to lash out at another state, was not justified in March 2003.

Debate Finished, Candidates Race Back to Campaign

With the next debate devoted to domestic issues, just four days hence, both sides said Iraq would finally yield center stage.

"The president also has to deal with a lot of domestic issues every day in office, Congress and bureaucracies and regulations," noted Andrew Card, the president's chief of staff. "So he is able to walk and chew gum at the same time and do it well."

Speaking on a perfect autumn afternoon in Ohio from a stage festooned with hay bales and fresh apples and pumpkins, Mr. Kerry joked that he, too, thought Mr. Bush had made some mistakes in appointing people. He said the country needed "not a single-minded leader, but a clear-headed leader, not a headstrong leader, but a well-reasoned leader."

"You've seen the four years and you can measure them," he said of Mr. Bush's tenure. "You've seen the lost jobs, the lost health care, the lost opportunity, the lost respect in the world. You've seen lives that have been lost because of decisions that have been made that weren't the right ones."

For his part, Karl Rove, the president's chief strategist, was using Iraq for his own purposes to combine the charge that Mr. Kerry flip-flops with new attacks on his record. He showed up in a press tent in Waterloo, Iowa, to mark the second anniversary of Mr. Kerry's appearance on the floor of the Senate, where the Senator warned of what would happen if Mr. Hussein obtained weapons of mass destruction.

"I want to lay to rest any thought that Karen Hughes and Mike Gerson had anything to do with writing that speech," Mr. Rove said with a smile, referring to Mr. Bush's longtime adviser and his chief speechwriter. "The senator's a smart man, and I'm sure he wrote his own stuff."

Ms. Hughes, working the other side of the tent, said that Mr. Bush's task in the next few days was to tie Mr. Kerry's contradictions "to the realization that he really is a liberal who is out of touch with mainstream America," and pointed to his response Friday night to a query about why stem-cell research could not be conducted without further destruction of embryos.

"He seemed genuinely surprised that someone could have questioned the morality of stem cell research, one of the great moral issues of our time," Ms. Hughes told reporters after the president's rally in Waterloo. "He was uncomfortable, he didn't know how to answer."

Indeed, though the Democrats' advertising has already been dominated by domestic themes for the past week, Mr. Kerry nonetheless devoted nearly half his speech at the rally in Ohio to Iraq. Michael D. McCurry, a top strategist, said the core argument about credibility was the same, and that American voters are "ambidextrous -- they can actually keep two thoughts in their head at once."

Mary Beth Cahill, Mr. Kerry's campaign manager, said the Democrats would go after ***female*** voters by having Mr. Kerry talk about issues like stem-cell research, and with surrogate tours of swing states by military mothers and Sept. 11 widows. She said Mr. Kerry would hold town-hall meetings and large-scale rallies, and would probably also give some single-issue speeches, including one on energy policy.

One remaining question is how negative the campaigning will be, particularly for Mr. Kerry, who is still struggling to win the living-room test of likability.

"They're losing and they're going to get tougher," Steve Elmendorf, the Democrat's deputy campaign manager, predicted of the Bush campaign. "What they know how to do is distort John Kerry's record, and they're going to do more of it, and we're going to have to hit back hard."

As the past few roller-coaster weeks of the campaign have shown, the two campaigns' plans may be upended by news developments here and abroad; Mr. Kerry was handed powerful ammunition for his arguments last week with the Duelfer report on Iraq's weapons and a report showing weak job growth.

Debate Finished, Candidates Race Back to Campaign

"Those are gifts, but remember that underneath them are the wrong policy choices that we're talking about, they come about and land in our lap because of the policy and choices that the president made that were wrong," Mr. McCurry said. "We've got very strong arguments to make that don't rely solely on bad news dropping from the heavens every day."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos: President Bush and his wife, Laura, at a rally in Waterloo, Iowa, one of several campaign stops the president made yesterday in the Midwest. He began the day in St. Louis, where Friday's debate was held. (Photo by Doug Mills/The New York Times)

Senator John Kerry addressing supporters in Lorain, Ohio. He campaigned in Ohio and Florida yesterday. (Photo by Stephen Crowley/The New York Times)

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War can get uglier when soldiers take to city streets; Casualties sure to skyrocket when house-to-house combat renders precision high-tech weapons useless

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Body

Each battered highrise becomes a sniper's aerie, each deserted thoroughfare an ambush zone.

In this kind of warfare, advances and retreats are measured in blocks or half-blocks, or even just houses.

In the calculations of battle, the shield of technology gives way to human failings and human skills -- speed and deception, knowledge of streets and alleys.

From Stalingrad and Berlin in the Second World War to the U.S. assault on Hue, Vietnam, in 1968 and on to the war zones of Beirut or Nablus, Belfast or Mogadishu, urban warfare has become a central part of the underdog's arsenal -- a fight without scruples for the high ground of propaganda that exploits civilian losses and denies the intruder's superior might.

And it is precisely that messy, manipulative and murderous kind of fighting between conventional forces and elusive defenders that could greet Americans as they approach Baghdad.

New York Times News Service

'CLOSE AND DIRTY'

"The Iraqis will want to fight close and dirty, with Iraqi tanks darting in and out of garages and buildings; they will conduct small-scale offensive actions with dismounted soldiers supported by mortars," wrote Gen. Wesley Clark, the U.S. former commander who led NATO forces during the Kosovo campaign.

"The fighting will be full of the tricks we have already seen and more: ambushes, fake surrenders, soldiers dressed as women, attacks on rear areas and command posts," he said in an article in the Times of London.

"The Iraqis will be prepared to conduct high-risk missions of a kind we would not consider."

Although all coalition commanders in Iraq have expressed outrage at what they see as dishonourable tactics, urban warfare has always set its own rules of guile and deceit, from the use of a wooden horse to break the siege of Troy over 3,100 years ago to modern times, when war is broadcast live 24 hours a day.

War can get uglier when soldiers take to city streets; Casualties sure to skyrocket when house-to-house combat renders precision high-tech weapons useless

And in this post-Cold War era of asymmetric warfare -- the fight between overwhelming conventional forces and zealous adversaries seeking the chinks in the hi-tech Western armour -- the fight has come to mean a contest to disable the technology that enables American forces to contemplate killing without losses of their own.

That was evident enough in Mogadishu, Somalia, in 1993 when sophisticated Black Hawk helicopter gunships were brought down by crude, shoulder-fired Soviet-era RPG-7 rocket propelled grenades, a standard item in the kit of guerrilla armies around the globe, along with AK-47 assault rifles, landmines and hand grenades.

The downing of the helicopters was more than a small victory for the lightly equipped Somali street-fighters. It also led to humiliating American casualties that hastened the U.S. withdrawal -- just as images of wounded and slain U.S. marines at Hue and other battle zones of the Tet offensive in Vietnam turned American opinion against the war. Those memories underscore the perils of street-fighting that face allied troops in Iraq.

And history offers little solace.

In recent decades, urban warfare has taken many forms, with many aims.

When battle-hardened Soviet troops pushed into Berlin in 1945 against the last feeble remnants of the Third Reich, lofting the Red Flag over the battered Reichstag, their intention was clearly conquest, not the liberation Washington says it seeks in Iraq.

In Beirut in the mid-1970s, by contrast, Palestinian and other Muslim forces fought Christian militias across a line of faiths whose incongruous initial markers were luxury seafront hotels -- the St. Georges and the Phoenicia, the Palm Beach and the Normandie, won and lost in room-to-room fighting.

The weapons were generally low-tech shoulder-fired antitank grenades, assault rifles and mortars, pickup-mounted machine-guns that put a premium on stealth and mobility. But when American marines intervened in Lebanon, an equally crude weapon -- a suicide truck bomb -- killed more than 230 of them in 1983.

In Berlin and Beirut -- as in successive waves of Russian assaults on the Chechen capital, Grozny -- the fighting reduced urban areas to rubble. But it is precisely the familiarity of the urban terrain to those who live there that enables them to use it to the advantages of ambushes, surprise attacks and rapid redeployment.

"Urban warfare usually benefits the defender," said Clifford Beal, the editor of Jane's Defence Weekly, a leading publication on military matters. Not only that, urban warfare "will negate the technological advantage of the coalition."

He added: "The Iraqis will be jumping in and out of alleyways. It tends to become a low-tech, house-to-house situation and that kind of combat can become very costly for combatants and others."

A war depending on low technology and high numbers of combatants and casualties is precisely the opposite of what the modern American army is trained to do. And the British army, even with three decades of experience fighting the Irish Republican Army in Northern Ireland, would not be familiar with the Iraqi terrain in cities such as Basra or Baghdad or with the much greater firepower that Iraqi troops could use in urban areas.

Indeed, said Tom Clonan, a military analyst in Dublin, a more likely comparison for allied troops in Iraq would be the humbling experience of Russian troops fighting Chechen separatist forces in Grozny.

"There are striking similarities between Grozny and Baghdad," he said.

"For example, Saddam's Republican Guard, equipped with the same weaponry as Chechen separatists in Grozny, might well mimic their modus operandi in the streets of Baghdad."

"Low-tech weapons would form a formidable arsenal in the narrow alleys and back streets of Iraq's capital," Clonan said.

War can get uglier when soldiers take to city streets; Casualties sure to skyrocket when house-to-house combat renders precision high-tech weapons useless

Others draw comparisons with house-to-house fighting in Hue, which not only sent home bloody images of American casualties but also forced U.S. commanders to loosen the rules of engagement in a way the Pentagon says it is seeking to avoid in the Iraq war.

That reflects the differences in the role of public opinion for defenders and attackers in any urban warfare in Iraq, where irregulars and ultra-loyal forces would have few qualms about civilian casualties or, indeed, using civilians as human shields. The United States and Britain face opinion at home that may prove fickle, constraining their ability to use overwhelming force, military analysts said.

'URBAN WARFARE TAKES LONGER'

"The allies are fighting with kid gloves on, but it'll be very difficult to keep it this clinical if urban warfare ensues," said Beal at Jane's Defence Weekly. "Urban warfare takes longer. It can bog down large numbers of troops. This war is being fought on a clock. And the longer it goes on, the more carnage is seen, the more difficult it is for the Bush administration to continue."

The pressure, therefore, could be to unleash a huge strike, despite the ostensible war aims of keeping civilian casualties and damage to a minimum.

"If such force were to be applied in the indiscriminate manner required of high-intensity urban warfare in Baghdad," Clonan said in Dublin, "military casualties would be eclipsed by the certain destruction of the Iraqi capital and the annihilation of its citizens."

In the region's recent history, there are some ominous parallels.

When Israeli troops invaded Lebanon in 1982, for instance, they evicted Yasser Arafat from Beirut, only to find him depicting his departure as a victory, validated simply by the same ability to survive superior force as Saddam Hussein displayed after the Persian Gulf war in 1991.

And, as the Economist magazine recalled last week, the Israelis' welcome was short-lived.

"When Israel invaded here in 1982 we met them with showers of rice and roses," a spokesman for Lebanon's **Hezbollah** Shiite Muslim militia was quoted as saying. "One hundred days later we blew up their headquarters."

FIGHTING IN THE STREETS

A coalition forces advance in Iraq, they are increasingly faced with the inevitability of fighting in cities. Urban combat poses specific challenges in communicating, travelling and isolating enemies from noncombatants. Tall buildings and underground tunnels stretch the dimensions of the combat zone and shorten the range of engagement, making warfare even more unpredictable.

EYE IN THE SKY (circle/square)

Satellites play a vital role in ground operations, transmitting reconnaissance photos and routing some voice communications and data transfers.

MOVEMENT (triangle)

Navigating a maze of unfamiliar streets and buildings

RISK (diamond)

Aspects of an urban area that present special dangers

INTELLIGENCE AND SURVEILLANCE (circle)

War can get uglier when soldiers take to city streets; Casualties sure to skyrocket when house-to-house combat renders precision high-tech weapons useless

Knowing the battlefield and the enemy

COMMUNICATIONS (square)

Co-ordination amid chaos

PREPARATION (circle/square)

Because urban combat zones are so complex and dynamic, excellent intelligence is critical

Strategists use intelligence to identify areas of interest, optimal corridors for movement and to assess potential threats.

Once the operations begins, command control must react to a constant flow of status reports from the field. A city's terrain can change quickly during a battle, with streets becoming impassable because of rubble or large crowds of civilians.

Soldiers are briefed on objectives before each mission.

TARGET RESTRICTIONS

Targeting is complicated by the proximity of restricted buildings, such as schools and places of worship.

HELICOPTERS (diamond/circle/triangle)

used mainly for troop movement, surveillance and fire support, Vulnerable to rocket-propelled grenades. Tall objects on the ground, such as towers or telephone polls, can complicate low-altitude flying and landing.

SWEEPING BUILDINGS (triangle)

Rooftop entry allows any enemy personnel inside to be flushed out to the street, where they are vulnerable, rather than face a desperate standoff. Also, ground entrances are likely locations for booby traps.

TANK-INFANTRY CO-ORDINATION (triangle/square)

Because tank crews have a limited field of vision, soldiers on foot act as eyes nd ears, directing movement and assigning targets. Forces must rely on nonverbal signals if radio communication is hindered by intense noise or other factors.

"HIGH" PRIORITY (square/circle)

Securing tall buildings can be useful for surveillance purposes and planting radio transmitters for wireless communications.

TANKS AND ARMOURED VEHICLES (triangle)

Stay close to one side fo the street when possible, providing cover for the opposite side.

BUILDINGS (diamond/square)

Pose several problems. They offer snipers concealed points from which to shoot. There is also a danger of falling debris or collapse. Areas of dense development can interfere with radio communications.

SMALLER ARMOURED VEHICLES (triangle)

Provide support on streets too narrow or too littered with rubble for tanks to pass.

War can get uglier when soldiers take to city streets; Casualties sure to skyrocket when house-to-house combat renders precision high-tech weapons useless

TANK POSITIONS (triangle)

Can be taken inside buildings to provide fire support from a protected location. tanks can also create smoke screens to conceal troop movements.

REAR TANKS (triangle)

Fill in to secure advancing positions. Increased distance from targets allows them to shoot higher than forward armour, since tanks' main guns have a limited trajectory.

UNDERGROUND TUNNELS (triangle/diamond/circle)

Offer concealed avenues for troop movement. Infrastructure for utilities such as water and electricity often is located underground.

GOING INSIDE

Forces only enter buildings when absolutely necessary because of the danger it entails. An analysis should be done prior to entry, using whatever information is available. A building's material is relevant because its structural integrity can be compromised by the rigours of war. Floor plans with mobility corridors are valuable, but often unavailable.

Marking territory

Rooms and buildings are marked with tape, spray paint or chalk as they are cleared. markings point out safe entry points, dangerous areas or signal that medic is needed within.

Surprise entry

Buildings are cleared from the top down, when possible. If forces do enter at ground level, they might demolish a wall, rather than using a door or window.

Concealed risk

The threat of enemy fire penetrating walls, floors and ceilings heightens risk.

SOURCES: U.S. Army "Street Smart: Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield for Urban Operations" by Jamison Jo Medby and Russell W. Glenn

N. RAPP, P. SANTILLI, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Graphic

Graphic: N. RAPP, P. SANTILLI, ASSOCIATED PRESS; FIGHTING IN THE STREETS

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WORLD REPORT

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Body

Brits not impressed with new Conservative leader

The selection of Michael Howard as new leader of the Conservative party has had little immediate impact on the opposition party's standing with the public, a new opinion poll suggests.

Prime Minister Tony Blair's Labour party was six points ahead of the Conservatives -- unchanged since the previous month at 36 per cent approval to the Tories' 30 per cent -- according to the survey.

It was the first major poll to be carried out entirely after Howard was chosen last week as the sole candidate to replace Iain Duncan-Smith.

The Liberal Democrats had the support of 25 per cent, down one point, with other parties at eight per cent, the poll said.

Some 30 per cent of Tory voters said replacing Duncan Smith and handing the leadership to Howard had eliminated the main reason people would not back the Conservatives.

Seven per cent of those who described themselves as swing voters agreed.

Howard's time as a cabinet minister in John Major's government was one of his key attractions to Tory legislators who found Duncan-Smith too inexperienced.

Human body parts found in leaking FedEx package

FedEx workers discovered a shipment of two human legs and an arm when a boxes was found leaking at a company depot in Missouri, police said.

A Las Vegas donor research company sent the limbs to a man who sells body parts to doctors for use in research projects, Kirkwood police spokeswoman Diane Scanga said. The FBI, state agencies and local police determined no laws were broken, she said.

The shipment was discovered Wednesday when one of the boxes was found leaking at a FedEx depot in nearby St. Louis. Workers learned each package contained a limb, wrapped in dry ice.

Police refused to identify the man, who was issued a warning for apparently operating an unlicensed home business.

WORLD REPORT

It is against FedEx policy to ship body parts, said Howard Clabo, a spokesman for the Memphis-based company.

Royal granddaughter 8th in line for throne

The Countess of Wessex, wife of the youngest son of the Queen, has given birth to a baby girl by emergency caesarean section, Buckingham Palace said Sunday.

The palace said the baby, who was born just before midnight, several weeks prematurely, weighed four pounds, nine ounces.

Doctors at Frimley Park Hospital south of London said mother and daughter were "stable."

The former Sophie Rhys-Jones, 38, married Prince Edward, the Queen's fourth and youngest child, in 1999. The couple's first baby is eighth in line to the throne.

The palace said the baby had been moved from the hospital, near Edward and Sophie's rural home, to the neonatal unit of St. George's Hospital in London as a precaution.

Prince Edward, 39, flew back from an official visit to Mauritius, arriving at Frimley Park Hospital shortly after 7:45 p.m. Sunday.

After an hour's visit with his wife, he said he was "thrilled to bits" at the birth.

"First of all, I am rather shocked and delighted at the news, obviously very sorry that I was not able to be part of it," he said.

"I have seen Sophie. She is doing well."

Edward's eldest brother, Prince Charles, said he was delighted at the news.

"I'm thrilled to hear that my sister-in-law has given birth to a baby girl. I know how much this means to both her and my brother and I could not be more delighted," the prince said during an official visit to Oman.

The countess' parents, Christopher and Mary Rhys-Jones, visited their daughter in the hospital.

Miss Afghanistan wins 'beauty for cause' award

Manila, Philippines

Miss Afghanistan Vida Samadzai, condemned in her homeland for parading in a bikini at the Miss Earth contest, won the pageant's first "beauty for a cause" award on Sunday.

The 23-year-old Samadzai, the first Afghan in three decades to take part in a beauty contest, failed to make it to the contest's semifinals.

But judges announced that, for the first time, they were handing out a "beauty for a cause" prize. They awarded it to Samadzai for "symbolizing the newfound confidence, courage and spirit of today's women" and "representing the victory of women's rights and various struggles."

Total lunar eclipse thrills everyone but Australians

Cincinnati

Skywatchers in every continent but Australia revelled in the relative rarity of a total lunar eclipse Saturday night -- but as stargazers have noted for centuries, it was a matter of celestial perspective.

"From the moon, they're having a solar eclipse," said Dean Regas, an astronomer at the Cincinnati Observatory Center.

WORLD REPORT

A lunar eclipse occurs when the moon, Earth and sun are in alignment and the moon passes through the planet's shadow. In a solar eclipse, the Earth is in the moon's shadow.

The Cincinnati Observatory, which claims to be the oldest in the United States, was founded in 1842 and has been in its current location on the city's east side since 1871.

It had one of its biggest nights ever Saturday, as officials estimated about 800 people stood in line for a chance to peer through the observatory's telescope.

"It's a good one, because the sky is so clear," he said, adjusting the focus on his new \$500 rig.

Gore says government attacking civil liberties

Washington

Former Vice-President Al Gore accused President George W. Bush on Sunday of failing to make the country safer after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and using the war against terrorism as a pretext to consolidate power.

"They have taken us much farther down the road toward an intrusive, 'big brother'-style government -- toward the dangers prophesied by George Orwell in his book 1984 -- than anyone ever thought would be possible in the United States of America."

Gore, who lost the disputed 2000 presidential election to Bush, said terrorism-fighting tools granted after Sept. 11 amount to a partisan power grab that have led to the erosion of the civil liberties of all Americans.

He brought the crowd to its feet when he called for a repeal of the Patriot Act, which expanded government's surveillance and detention power, allowing authorities to monitor books people read and conduct secret searches.

Ailing pontiff beatifies 19th century Europeans

Vatican City

Leading a long, solemn ceremony in St. Peter's Square, Pope John Paul put more faithful on the path toward sainthood Sunday, beatifying five 19th-century Europeans to give fresh inspiration to his flock.

The voice of the ailing pontiff sounded strong as he presided over the two-hour beatification ceremony from the canopied altar on the steps of St. Peter's Basilica.

While in most public appearances lately, the Pope has remained practically immobile in a chair, John Paul knelt in prayer for several minutes Sunday. Aides held on to his arms as they guided him out of his chair until he was resting firmly on a kneeler.

However, he read only the opening and closing sentences of his homily, letting aides read the bulk of the speech in Spanish, French and Italian.

Although slowed by Parkinson's disease and knee and hip ailments, the 83-year-old Pope has largely resisted his doctors' advice to lighten his schedule and he has insisted on continuing with the elaborate ceremonies to give his church a wide variety of role models, many of them from modern times.

Illegal Wal-Mart workers launch discrimination suit

Freehold, N.J.

Nine illegal immigrants who worked as janitors at Wal-Mart until they were arrested during federal raids last month have sued the company, accusing it of discrimination.

WORLD REPORT

The nine say they were paid lower wages and offered fewer benefit because they are Mexicans and they accuse Wal-Mart and its cleaning contractors of failing to pay for overtime, withhold taxes or make required workers' compensation contributions.

Their lawsuit, filed Wednesday in Superior Court in Freehold, seeks more than \$200,000 US in back pay.

The plaintiffs, who now face deportation, were among 250 people arrested in an Oct. 23 federal immigration crackdown at 60 Wal-Mart stores in 21 states. This is the first lawsuit among the immigrants arrested.

According to the lawsuit, Wal-Mart employed cleaning contractors "with full knowledge" that they paid illegal immigrants less than legal workers.

Formula may be linked to death of 3 Israeli babies

Jerusalem

An Israeli company partly owned by food giant H.J. Heinz Co. has recalled a kosher infant formula after three babies died of nervous disorders and 10 others were hospitalized.

The announcement by Remedia Ltd. set off a wave of hysteria and prompted a special religious ruling allowing the notification of ultra-Orthodox Jews on the Sabbath.

The recall also affected Orthodox Jewish communities in the U.S. where the soy-based formula is sold.

Remedia, whose baby products are found in virtually every Israeli supermarket, said it had slightly altered the makeup of the formula in June to bring it into "accordance with the scientific developments in the field."

Anguished debate ends with prison swap deal

Jerusalem

Israel's cabinet narrowly approved a prisoner swap with Hezbollah after eight hours of anguished debate Sunday, overriding warnings that the deal could signal weakness and encourage more kidnappings of Israelis.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon lobbied hard for the swap, which excludes Israel's most famous missing serviceman, air force navigator Ron Arad, who was shot down over Lebanon 17 years ago. The vote was one of Sharon's toughest leadership tests in three years.

The deal for the swap could still collapse -- and the Lebanese guerrilla group threatened Sunday to kidnap more Israelis if that happens.

Under the deal, about 400 Palestinians and other prisoners will be released in exchange for Israeli businessman Elhanan Tannenbaum and the bodies of three Israeli soldiers.

Moscow city authorities may ban public kissing

Moscow

Don't kiss and tell -- and certainly don't tell the police in Moscow, where city authorities are reportedly considering levying fines for public displays of affection.

As part of an effort to "improve morals" in the Russian capital, its government is working on an order that would prohibit kissing in subways and other public places, the newspaper Stolichnaya Vechernyaya Gazeta reported on its website. It said the ban was being considered at the request of police and the city's education committee.

WORLD REPORT

"Children do not need any sexual education classes in school ... they get amoral lessons every day when they see what goes on around them," the newspaper quoted committee member Tatyana Maximova as saying. "People are making out even on the escalator in the metro. Something must be done about this."

Koizumi's coalition keeps majority in parliament

Tokyo

Despite big gains by the opposition, Japan's ruling coalition declared a slim majority in Sunday's nationwide parliamentary elections and vowed to stand by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's political and economic reforms.

"We'll be able to continue with a stable administration. I'm relieved," Liberal Democratic Party Secretary General Shinzo Abe said after results showed his party and its two junior partners had clinched control.

Together, the ruling coalition took 275 seats, enough to keep a majority in the 480-member lower house and name all committee chairs, according to official polling centre results collated by public broadcaster NHK after all constituencies had reported.

Yet the total fell short of the coalition's previous 287 seats.

Graphic

Queen a granny again: The British Royal family is now bigger by one. Prince Edward, above and Sophie Rhys-Jones, left, the Countess of Wessex, are the parents of a baby girl, born Saturday. Edward flew home from Mauritius, but missed the baby's arrival.; Pedalling to world record: Randall Jones, a professional extreme sport bike rider, rides a 12-foot 2-inch bicycle at the Bentwood Skate Park in Warner Robbins, Ga., Saturday. Jones is a candidate for a Guinness World Record for riding the tallest bicycle. To build the bike, Jones used two frames, golf cart steering parts and skateboard wheels. Six spliced bicycle chains connect the two frames, with another two chains between the bike's 26-inch mountain-bike wheels. Jones expects to hear from Guinness officials within a month. Macon Telegraph photo: Matt Roth; Miss Afghan: Vida Samadzai

Load-Date: November 10, 2003

**A NATION AT WAR: HOUSE TO HOUSE; Urban Warfare: Long a Key Part of
an Underdog's Down-to-Earth Arsenal**

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Byline: By ALAN COWELL

Dateline: LONDON, March 26

Body

Each battered high-rise becomes a sniper's aerie, each deserted thoroughfare an ambush zone. In this kind of warfare, advances and retreats are measured in blocks or half-blocks, or even just houses. In the calculations of battle, the shield of technology gives way to human failings and human skills -- speed and deception, close knowledge of streets and alleys.

Since Stalingrad and Berlin in World War II, to the American assault on Hue in Vietnam in 1968 and on to the war zones of Beirut or Nablus, Belfast or Mogadishu, urban warfare has become a central part of the underdog's arsenal -- a fight without scruples for the high ground of propaganda that exploits civilian losses and denies the intruder's superior might.

It is precisely that messy, manipulative and murderous kind of fighting between conventional forces and elusive defenders that could confront the Americans and British as they try to enter Baghdad, despite their much-publicized reluctance to engage in a close urban brawl.

"The Iraqis will want to fight close and dirty, with Iraqi tanks darting in and out of garages and buildings; they will conduct small-scale offensive actions with dismounted soldiers supported by mortars," wrote Gen. Wesley Clark, the American former commander who led NATO forces during the Kosovo campaign in 1999.

"The fighting will be full of the tricks we have already seen and more: ambushes, fake surrenders, soldiers dressed as women, attacks on rear areas and command posts. The Iraqis will be prepared to conduct high-risk missions of a kind we would not consider," he said in an article for the Times of London.

For all that allied commanders in Iraq have expressed outrage at what they see as such dishonorable tactics, though, urban warfare has always set its own rules of guile and deceit -- from the legendary use of a wooden horse at Troy over 3,000 years ago to modern times when war is broadcast live 24 hours a day.

In this post-cold-war era of asymmetric warfare -- the conflict between conventional forces and zealous adversaries seeking the chinks in the high-tech Western armor -- the fight has come to mean a contest to disable the technology that enables American forces to contemplate killing without losses of their own.

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That was evident enough in Mogadishu, Somalia, in 1993 when sophisticated Black Hawk helicopter gunships were brought down by crude, shoulder-fired Soviet-era RPG-7 rocket propelled grenades -- a standard item in the kit of guerrilla armies around the globe along with AK-47 assault rifles, land mines and hand grenades. Indeed, similar tactics were popularized by the Afghan guerrillas who battled the Soviets in Afghanistan in the 1980's, courtesy largely of more sophisticated American-supplied Stinger missiles.

The downing of the helicopters in Mogadishu not only seemed a victory for the lightly equipped Somali street fighters. It also led to humiliating American casualties, 18 dead, that hastened the United States withdrawal -- just as images of wounded and slain United States marines at Hue and other battle zones of the Tet offensive in Vietnam turned American opinion against the war.

Those memories underscore the perils of street fighting that face allied troops in Iraq. History offers little solace.

In recent decades, urban warfare has taken many forms, with many aims.

When battle-hardened Soviet troops pushed into Berlin in 1945 against the last feeble remnants of the Third Reich, lofting the Red Flag over the battered Reichstag, their intention was clearly conquest, not the liberation Washington says it seeks in Iraq.

In Beirut in the mid-1970's, by contrast, and in Sarajevo in the 1990's, cities were divided along lines of faith. In Sarajevo, it was a Serbian siege against Muslim-led defenders. In Beirut, the fighting between Muslim and Palestinian forces and Christian militias began with an incongruous war for luxury seafront hotels -- the St. Georges, the Phoenicia, the Palm Beach and the Normandie, won and lost in room-to-room fighting.

The weapons were generally low-tech shoulder-fired antitank grenades, assault rifles and mortars, machine guns mounted on pickup trucks that put a premium on stealth and mobility. But when American marines intervened in Lebanon, an equally crude weapon, a suicide truck bomb, killed more than 230 of them in 1983.

In Berlin, Beirut and Sarajevo -- as in successive waves of Russian assaults on the Chechen capital, Grozny -- the fighting reduced large urban areas to rubble. But it is precisely the familiarity of the urban terrain to those who live there that enables them to use it to the advantages of ambushes, surprise attacks and rapid redeployment.

In Iraq, urban warfare "will negate the technological advantage of the coalition," said Clifford Beal, the editor of Jane's Defense Weekly, a leading publication on military matters. "The Iraqis will be jumping in and out of alleyways, he added. "It tends to become a low-tech, house-to-house situation, and that kind of combat can become very costly for combatants and others."

A war depending on low technology and high numbers of combatants and casualties is the opposite of what most of the modern American army is trained to do. Even the British Army, with three decades of experience fighting the Irish Republican Army in Northern Ireland, would not be familiar either with the Iraqi terrain in cities like Basra or Baghdad or with the much greater firepower Iraqi troops could use in urban areas.

Indeed, said Tom Clonan, a military analyst in Dublin, a more likely comparison for allied troops in Iraq would be the experience of Russian troops fighting Chechen separatist forces in Grozny. "There are striking similarities between Grozny and Baghdad," he said. "Low-tech weapons would form a formidable arsenal in the narrow alleys and back streets of Iraq's capital."

Others draw comparisons to house-to-house fighting in Hue in 1968, which not only sent home bloody images of American casualties but also forced United States commanders to loosen the rules of engagement in a way the Pentagon says it is seeking to avoid in the Iraq war.

That reflects the differences in the role of public opinion for defenders and attackers in any urban warfare in Iraq, where ruthless irregulars and ultra-loyal forces would have few qualms about civilian casualties or using civilians as human shields. The United States and Britain face opinion at home that may prove fickle, constraining their ability to use overwhelming force, military analysts said.

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"The allies are fighting with kid gloves on, but it'll be very difficult to keep this clinical if urban warfare ensues," said Mr. Beal of Jane's Defense Weekly. "Urban warfare takes longer. It can bog down large numbers of troops. This war is being fought on a clock. And the longer it goes on, the more carnage is seen, the more difficult it is for the Bush administration to continue."

In the region's recent history, there are some ominous parallels. When Israeli troops invaded Lebanon in 1982, they evicted Yasir Arafat from Beirut, only to find him depicting his departure as a victory, validated simply by his ability to survive superior force.

Moreover, as The Economist magazine noted last week, the Israelis' welcome was short-lived. "When Israel invaded here in 1982, we met them with showers of rice and roses," a spokesman for the Hezbollah Shiite Muslim militia in Lebanon was quoted as saying. "One hundred days later, we blew up their headquarters."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo: A United States Marine Abrams tank patrolled Mogadishu, Somalia, without incident in January 1993. But in October of that year, two American Black Hawk helicopters were downed by guerrillas using relatively unsophisticated weapons, illustrating one of the dangers of urban warfare. (Associated Press) Chart/Diagram: "Soldiers in the Streets" United States Army and Marine Corps doctrine recommends isolating and bypassing urban areas when possible, because cities are difficult, dangerous and costly to fight in. Still, most soldiers undergo some form of training in the very complicated business of urban combat. If American forces must fight in Baghdad, here are just a few of the thousands of special considerations they may need to keep in mind as they hit the streets.

DOUBLE COLUMN -- The double column is the preferred method for moving along an urban street. It provides 360 degrees of security and allows for overlapping coverage.

WINDOWS AND DOORS -- A common danger is passing by windows and doors without being aware. One technique is to pie off the opening. Using the near wall for cover, a pointman aims along the edge of the window or door while another soldier covers his back. Both soldiers cross the opening as the pointman pivots completing a 180 degree sweep of the opening.

URBAN BATTLEFIELD: PHYSICAL FEATURES The blend of horizontal and vertical geometry, and the variety of surfaces and spaces make urban areas vastly more complex than a similarly sized piece of natural terrain. Some of the dimensions:

Airspace The area usable by aircraft and aerial munitions. It is broken up at low levels by manmade structures.

Interior space The unseen battle space behind the exteriors.

Exterior space The visible battle space.

Supersurface areas The roofs, balconies, and upper floors that can be used for movement and advantage.

Surface areas Streets, alleys, parks, fields that follow the natural terrain and are broken up by manmade features.

Subsurface areas Sewers, drains, subway tunnels and other underground corridors that provide a concealed means of movement and engagement.

TARGET MARKING AND FRIENDLY POSITIONS Support from aircraft, artillery and other combat elements is critical in urban warfare, so locating and marking friendly positions and enemy targets is important. Soldiers can use a number of techniques to mark buildings, but the simplest methods are often best. Sometimes spray paint or bed sheets hung out of windows is enough. Flares, strobes, smoke and mirror signaling or even laser pointer devices might also be used.

CORNERS -- The urban landscape is full of corners, each a potential hazard. A technique called popping the corner puts the soldier near the ground, where enemy fire is less likely to hit. The weapon is short stocked (see weapon carrying techniques below) to hide the muzzle.

WALLS AND HOLES -- Walls may provide cover or present obstacles. They should be crossed by rolling quickly over the top, keeping a low silhouette. In urban warfare, doors should rarely be used. Soldiers must seek alternate ways to enter buildings.

EXPOSURES NEAR THE GROUND -- It can be easy to pass by basement windows or stairwells without noticing, exposing a soldier's legs to enemy fire. Staying close to the walls, soldiers must be careful to either step or jump over these low-lying hazards.

Ready to Fire The hallmarks of urban combat are the proximity of the enemy

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(very close) and the amount of time a soldier has to react to an enemy action (very little). Soldiers are therefore trained to hold their weapons in ways that maximize reaction time while moving through city streets. At right, four basic weapons carries for urban combat. TACTICAL CARRYUSED: When an immediate threat is presentPermits control of the rifle while moving; still allows quick engagement. The stock is placed at hip level and the barrel is angled upward at 45 degrees. ALERT CARRYUSED: When enemy contact is likelyStock placed against shoulder; muzzle angled downward at 45 degrees. As needed, rifle is snapped into firing position with front sight post aligned on target. READY CARRYUSED: When enemy contact is imminent.Stock placed against shoulder; muzzle pointed outward in direction of enemy. Alignment of the front sight on the enemy is made as the shot is fired. SHORT STOCKINGUSED: In enclosed spaces or to conceal the muzzle.Stock is positioned above the shoulders, with hand guard near the cheek. The index finger or thumb is used to pull the trigger. (Sources: "Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain," U.S. Marine Corps; Joint armed services publications "Multiservice Procedures for Aviation Urban Operations" and "Doctrine for Joint Urban Operations")

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Don't press Israel to negotiate with Arafat

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Body

I greatly desire to support my nation and its leaders 100 percent, but when our national policy turns toward the bizarre, I lose confidence. What sense is there in encouraging Israel to negotiate with Yasser Arafat when the Palestinian nationalism movement he leads is blowing up Israeli children, women and seniors on a nearly daily basis?

How can the world take America seriously when it says it is against terrorism, but then rewards Palestinian terrorism by forcing Israel to treat with Arafat even as he repeatedly pulls the terrorist trigger against Israeli citizens?

What sense does it make for America to bow to pressure from Saudi Arabia and Egypt to pressure Israel to negotiate with the PLO, when Saudi Arabia and Egypt can't even tell their own citizens that the Sept. 11 attacks were wrong?

America lost Vietnam because its leaders failed the American soldiers who killed a million enemy in the field and won every significant engagement. World War I caused World War II because the leaders of the victorious nations failed to deal with the militaristic nationalism that caused both wars. For over a decade, America has been conducting military strikes in the Middle East because leaders during the Gulf War failed to cause the downfall of Saddam Hussein, even in the teeth of his total defeat.

LETTERS

Can we expect the "war on terrorism" to be "won," if we are among those who reward Palestinian nationalism - the oldest active terrorist organization just now reaching new heights of terrorist activity? How can our leaders believe that they are not encouraging terrorism itself with one hand, while swatting against it with the other? What do we stand for?

Doug Bevins, Dade City

U.S. must broker a peace

Re: Sharon loses again, by David Ignatius,

March 24.

Ignatius wrote a very insightful article on Ariel Sharon. When the Israeli voters selected him as their prime minister, they sent a clear message to the Palestinians that an increase in violence was forthcoming as the ultimate solution to Israel's security problems. As the voters opted for a strong, militaristic reply but of short duration, the Palestinian

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Authority had no choice but to seek military assistance from all of its people, including the fanatic branches of Hamas and Hezbollah.

The radical elements on both sides of this conflict are responsible for the human carnage currently in force. The Israelis have gone from a decrescendo in violence with the much respected Yitzak Rabin to a crescendo with Ariel Sharon.

An integral part of the solution to this conflict is a very painful one for the U.S. government. It requires the necessary ingredient of any world leader to be effective on the world scene, namely, impartiality. Only the Bush administration can broker a peaceful solution to the Middle East conflict. Partiality has no place in the peace process.

Arthur J. Hebert Jr., Largo

The only realistic solution

Re: This is the only way America will gain any support for Middle East policy, by Thomas L. Friedman, March 21.

Remarkable! Amazing! Incredible! Someone actually got it right! The Times is to be congratulated for publishing Friedman's column.

I wonder how many other so-called Mideast experts have arrived at the only realistic solution there is to the ongoing war between the "Israelis and the Palestinians (who) do not have the resources, or mutual trust, ever to find their way out of this problem alone - not after the collapse of (the) Oslo (accords)." If you don't think we are not becoming the world's policeman, you obviously missed the events that have unfolded since Sept. 11.

To the "worry-warts" who rail at the United States getting militarily involved, just wait! When the Israeli and the Palestinian conflict escalates to the point where the Palestinians or their supporters finally lay their hands on, and use, a weapon of mass destruction and Israel retaliates by using its nuclear arms . . . well, the proverbial you-know-what will hit the fan.

Roy Shepard, Largo

What if the situation were reversed?

There isn't a day that goes by without reading about the tragic situation in the Middle East. It is sometimes hard to comprehend that humanity is capable of such hatred. Both the Israelis and the Palestinians have become completely intractable in what they claim is their ordained existence. Both can vehemently argue their sovereign claims, and perhaps each claim is valid. But in reflecting on the Arabs' demand that Israel return all of the land won in the June 1967 Six-Day War and grant full statehood to the Palestinians, I can't help posing this question to the Arab world:

If Israel had lost the war, would there be an Israel today? And if not, would there be a world outcry to return the land that the Arabs had won to the Israelis? I think not.

W.W. Whited, Spring Hill

Columnist needs attitude adjustment

Re: America needs to change its attitude to be the best global citizen it can be, by Thomas L. Friedman, March 19.

My blood started boiling when I read the piece by Thomas L. Friedman of the New York Times suggesting that America needs to change its attitude. There is no other country in this world where the people work harder and give more to others who are less fortunate. Friedman is critical of President Bush and foreign aid even though President Bush just approved a \$ 5-billion increase in foreign aid. Friedman does not want us to have tax breaks or a missile defense system. Nor does he want drilling in the wilderness areas of Alaska. Why doesn't he poll the American

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people and see what we think? Personally, I want a tax break and a missile defense system. Why shouldn't we drill in Alaska and also encourage farmers to grow corn for making fuel?

America supports hundreds of countries in the world with our tax money and for the most part, they hate us. We don't want to be part of the Kyoto treaty because it would limit our industry in America. If we have to support all of these people in the world, of course we are going to consume 25 percent of the world's energy. I think Friedman needs an "attitude adjustment," not the American people! I am getting sick of the New York Times and the Washington Post - why can't you print pieces from some of the other reputable newspapers?

Liz Hagan, Clearwater

Guarding democracy through protest

Re: Difficulty in trying to oppose the war, March 22.

Charles Krauthammer's recent column intends to discredit any questioning of the president's war posture. Krauthammer says that we are "blessed with a cadre of thinkers" whose refusal to abjectly support this policy of open-ended conflict without questioning is "moral idiocy." He lists several examples of "liberal" protest: a questioning of why they hate us; guarding a loss of civil liberties; accounting for Afghan civilian casualties; treatment of al-Qaida prisoners; media coverage of the trials of John Walker Lindh, et al; and the questioning of the open-ended conflict of the war on terrorism.

He states (rightly so) that Afghanistan is liberated. He also asks why the Democrats have asked for an "exit strategy," when this is not a "war of choice." Whose war of choice was it for the millions who were drafted while the privileged ones stayed home? In this matter, President Bush is no different than Bill Clinton. They used different strategies for getting out of the Vietnam War, but the outcome was the same.

Bush certainly never interfered, either as a participant, or as a protester. I did both, as strongly as I served in Vietnam to do the best I could, so did I protest on my return. The president was in Texas, Alabama, and then back to school, making nary a twitter or a ripple. I should have been so lucky.

While I in no way demean his sincerity, I believe that Bush wants a blank check to continue his policies without question, from his war without end to his choices for the courts. But the system of checks and balances includes not only the executive branch, which he wants to make ever stronger; it also includes Congress, the courts and, finally, the American people.

In calling for protest to guard our own democracy, the left is not waiting "forlorn and flailing," as Krauthammer puts it. It is the way of those of us who love our country and have shown that in the past with our hearts as well as our brains.

The flag belongs to me also. I earned it and will not let Krauthammer's latest barrage against the "left" - more simplistic stereotyping that wants to imply our ineffectiveness - go unanswered.

James Willingham, St. Petersburg

To fight evil

Re: Difficulty in trying to oppose the war, by Charles Krauthammer.

I was a young woman when the U.S. Congress declared war on Japan and Germany in 1941. As a pacifist at the time, I wondered how to justify in my own mind our government's planning to kill other human beings.

I consulted a friend of mine, a highly religious, intelligent and kind older woman. I shall never forget her answer: "We have to fight evil with the weapons that evil understands."

Alean Charles, Largo

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Choosing the easier street name

Re: Street's signs point to hollow excuses, by Elijah Gosier, March 26.

I can tell Elijah Gosier why I still refer to Ninth Street instead of Dr. M.L. King Street. One of the best things about St. Petersburg is the ease of finding my way to some place I've never been before. The grid system of numbered streets and avenues means that most of the area is easy to navigate. I know where Ninth Street is. It's between Eighth and 10th streets. I can find it. I wouldn't know where Dr. M.L. King Street would be located. It could be anywhere.

At the time the name was changed, I thought it was a mistake. It would have made more sense to change a named street. Central Avenue would have been a good choice. It is a prominent street and changing the name wouldn't have affected the grid system.

Buffalo Avenue in Tampa doesn't compare. I didn't know where Buffalo was, so changing the name didn't cause any hardship. I don't know where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard is either.

Driving in Tampa is an ordeal. Driving in St. Petersburg, for the most part (always excepting areas like Lakewood Estates, Snell Isle, Shore Acres, Coquina Key - a very small part of the city) is routine.

Another reason I don't use the name Dr. M.L. King Street: It's too long, especially for casual conversation. King Street would be better, but would undoubtedly be considered disrespectful. Ninth Street is short, easily understood and easy to say.

When I moved here in 1959, people referred to Tangerine and Lakeview avenues South. How many people now have ever heard of them? They're known as 18th and 22nd avenues S - because that makes more sense, because that's easier to find and to remember.

Mr. Gosier, not everything that's not to your liking is racist. Sometimes it's just easier.

Jeanne A. Embry, St. Petersburg

Share your opinions

We invite readers to write to us. Letters for publication should be addressed to Letters to the Editor, P.O. Box 1121, St. Petersburg, FL 33731.

They can be sent by e-mail to letters@sptimes.com or by fax to (727) 893-8675.

They should be brief and must include the writer's name, address and phone number. Please include a handwritten signature when possible.

Letters may be edited for clarity, taste and length. We regret that not all letters can be published.

Graphic

CARTOON, DON ADDIS; A man utters profanities as he drives his car over a huge speed bump labeled "Gas prices".

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Islam is diverse, complex; West is misinformed: Some countries strictly follow Quran, treat women poorly

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

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Byline: ERIC TALMADGE

Body

Islam in the grinding poverty of Afghanistan is harsh, its justice unforgiving.

For a woman found guilty of adultery, the punishment is death - which turbaned religious leaders carry out with stones. For ancient Buddhist statues deemed by the ruling Taliban to inspire idolatry, explosives did an equally thorough job.

In the holy lands of Saudi Arabia, Islam shows another face.

The Saudi constitution consists of the Quran, the Muslim holy book, and its accompanying traditions, and all legislation must conform to the Shariah, or Islamic law.

Still, a royal family, not clerics, rules the land. There are limousines in the streets; families watch satellite TV in their homes. In the capital, Riyadh, young men in jeans or white robes and women swaddled in black cloaks flock to a glitzy shopping mall to hang out.

As the terrorist attacks on the United States and the response since have shown, the Muslim world is no monolith. Afghanistan's extremism and alleged ties to the terror have made it a pariah among the leaders of fellow Muslim nations. Even the government of Pakistan, previously one of the Taliban's only friends, has offered support for Washington.

"There is a contemporary perception of Islam in the West that is misinformed, because many people still believe that Muslims across the world are angry, primitive and fanatical," said Salahuddin Ayub, a Malaysian ustaz, or religious instructor for Muslims.

"But they should understand that there should not be stereotypes, that there is great diversity among Muslim countries in different regions."

Islam was born in the Middle East. But it has grown beyond its origins, physically and spiritually.

In countries around the world, it has been adopted in strikingly different ways. From sub-Saharan Africa to the steppes of Central Asia and the Malay archipelago, the world's "other Muslims" have endowed it with a stunning diversity - and a complexity born of conflict and compromise.

Islam is diverse, complex; West is misinformed: Some countries strictly follow Quran, treat women poorly

On Fridays in Cairo, worshippers spill out of storefront mosques onto sidewalks just down the street from the McDonald's. It is a commonplace scene; few give it much thought.

In Saudi Arabia, Christmas decorations, considered blasphemous, are appearing in stores other than U.S.-style supermarkets. They include cards designed in Saudi Arabia showing a reindeer and camel rubbing noses.

Even in countries where Islam is deeply established and Muslims are the majority, today's mixture of cultures and economies, and the looming ideals of Western democracy, present a difficult choice.

The question is asked throughout the Muslim world: How much secularism can Islam take?

Politicians in Egypt and Jordan have tried to assimilate secular freedoms while co-opting fundamentalists, recognizing their influence over a broad range of people feeling the strain of the demands of modern economies.

But to the fundamentalists, secular policies can rapidly become a threat to Islam, and the swings from one pole to the other continue to reflect that deep tension throughout much of the Middle East, and Muslims throughout the world.

Solutions do not come easily.

In Shiite and Persian Iran, Muslims are grappling with the legacy of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's 1979 revolution that toppled the shah and made Khomeini the first supreme leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Under reformist President Mohammad Khatami, himself a cleric, some of the more rigid restrictions on cultural and social activities in Iran have been relaxed or removed. Women dress more freely and are allowed to sing in public and act on stage. Music concerts have been revived.

The most daring Iranian reformists are questioning whether Khomeini's successor, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, should have the supreme political control he now holds, or whether he should be strictly a religious leader.

Hard-liners who want no retreat from their definition of an Islamic state have fought back from a powerful position - they control the courts and have Khamenei's support.

Mecca and the Middle East will always be at the heart of Islam. But Asia may be where its future is shaped. Here, away from the Arab world, there are other difficulties, and other tensions.

More than half the world's Muslims live east of Karachi, Pakistan, and Asia is home to the four countries with the largest Islamic populations: Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India.

In the globe's most populous Muslim nation, Indonesia, muezzin call the faithful to evening prayers while throngs of the young head to discos for nights of drink and dance. This year, a woman was chosen president.

Here, too, the pressures on Muslims are intense.

Calls are strengthening in Asia for stricter observance of conservative Islamic ideals. Women in parts of Malaysia have been ordered to wear headscarves, and local Indonesian authorities closed nightspots last New Year's to avoid a backlash from Muslims in the holy month of Ramadan.

Muslim unrest from Chechnya eastward gnaws at the southern fringes of post-Soviet Russia. In China, which views all religion with suspicion, it is one more ingredient adding to the wrenching transition of a communist giant. For three decades, a Muslim minority in the Philippines has been fighting an insurgency against the largely Roman Catholic majority.

Since the attacks on New York and Washington, Islam in Asia has been reduced in the eyes of many Westerners to a terrorism emanating from the hills of Afghanistan.

But the story of Asia's Islam is above all one of a faith that swept

Islam is diverse, complex; West is misinformed: Some countries strictly follow Quran, treat women poorly

a continent - by conquest on the

Indian subcontinent, by peaceful trade and mysticism across the Malay archipelago - and adapted to the multitude of beliefs it encountered there.

At the demographic center of the Islamic world - Islamabad, Pakistan - female models stream down a runway, the outlines of their bodies clear under sheer blouses.

Working the fashion show audience, Muslim waiters steal glances at the women and compete for the task of carrying refreshments backstage.

In Islamabad lives the divided soul of Asian Islam, split between a religion that imposes ironclad restrictions on the faithful and a more flexible creed that embraces tolerance and diversity.

The backdrop is the enduring struggle of Muslims worldwide to maintain a religious identity and culture while confronting the economic, social and political forces of Westernization.

This is true both in places left behind, like Afghanistan, and in more industrialized Asian nations like Indonesia and Malaysia.

Predictions about which way the region is headed are precarious. But no one can deny the growing strength of orthodox Islam, despite Asia's long history of diversity and tolerance.

"Between the more accommodating and modern Islam and the more fundamentalist Islam, I would say the recent gains have tended to be made by the fundamentalists," said Ng Kam Weng, a religion expert at Kairos, a think tank in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

"What you want to ask is whether these gains are permanent. I think the jury is still out."

Afghanistan is just across the border from Pakistan. But it is a world away.

After years of struggle, first to repel Soviet troops and then of civil war, the Taliban religious militia emerged to impose an Islamic regime so severe that even other conservative Muslims call them extremists.

Guided not only by Islam, but also by Afghan tribal society and a history of poverty, the Taliban have banned videos, TV and music. Girls cannot go to school after age 8. Women may not work and must wear head-to-toe coverings called burqas. Men must have untrimmed beards. Violators have been whipped in the streets.

Through the 1980s and '90s, Islamic radicalism was most closely associated with the minority Shiite branch of Islam, through the Iranian revolution and the Hezbollah guerrilla war against Israeli troops occupying southern Lebanon. Because of the centuries-old Islamic split between Shiites and Sunnis, this radicalism resonated less with the Sunnis.

Attention is turning to what inspiration the Taliban - and alleged terrorist mastermind Osama bin Laden - may provide to Sunnis elsewhere.

An exile from his native Saudi Arabia, bin Laden is believed to have found a haven in Afghanistan that has allowed him to set up a training ground for terrorists. Though not a part of the Taliban, his relentless militancy and calls for a holy war against America and the Jews have made him a symbol of the extremism the Taliban promotes.

"If you look at where radicalism and the dangers of radicalism are occurring, you have the Taliban and the export of a Taliban outlook and mentality," said John Esposito, a specialist in Asian Islam at Georgetown University. "When we talk about militancy in the first part of the 21st century ... (it's) going to come out of the Sunni experience."

The export of those ideals is steaming ahead.

Islam is diverse, complex; West is misinformed: Some countries strictly follow Quran, treat women poorly

Pakistan's president has promised to back the United States' efforts to find and punish Bin Laden, but support for the Taliban remains strong there. Crowds of protesters have burned effigies of President Bush. Some villages follow restrictions on dress and entertainment modeled on Taliban rules.

The threat goes further.

Islamic separatists fighting in Kashmir, western China and the former Soviet republics in Central Asia draw inspiration - and, allegedly, training in weaponry and terrorism - from Taliban teachers.

But the road of the Taliban remains a lonely one.

Indonesia is also poor. It has also struggled through political upheaval. Sectarian skirmishes and bloodshed continue. But it has chosen a much different course than that of the Taliban.

Call it the Muslim melting pot. Islam is the religion of 85 percent of the country's 210 million people, but its more than 13,000 islands also encompass large pockets of Christians, Hindus and ethnic Chinese practicing Buddhism.

Perhaps mixing is inevitable, and the Islam practiced there is hardly uniform. Strict Islamic mores rule in Aceh province on Sumatra, for example, while Muslims elsewhere practice a faith strongly tinged with remnants of Hindu and animist rituals that predate Islam.

Flash points are many, with ethnic bloodshed flaring recently on several islands. But the diversity also brings openness and flexibility. The country's major Muslim group, the Nahdlatul Ulama, once hired sorcerers to drive evil spirits from a meeting hall, something Muslims elsewhere might consider blasphemous.

That broad tolerance has helped put Indonesia in the vanguard of a growing movement in the Muslim world: democratic Islam.

Indonesia's first democratically elected president, Abdurrahman Wahid, a Muslim cleric, reached out to religious and ethnic minorities and refused to promote strict Islamic law.

It was a bumpy start. Wahid was accused of incompetence and corruption and ousted this year. But he has been succeeded by a leader seen as even more democratic and reformist - Megawati Sukarnoputri, daughter of the founder of modern Indonesia.

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That is a significant fact.

In Saudi Arabia, women are expected to cover themselves head to foot before going out in public. They cannot drive, and when traveling must be accompanied by a male chaperone.

East of Afghanistan, Islam imposes fewer restrictions on relations between the sexes.

"When it comes to issues of dress, of people meeting in public space, of work ... by and large, Asian Islam has been far more pluralistic in outlook," said Georgetown's Esposito.

Pakistan has had a woman leader. So has Bangladesh, a predominantly Muslim nation of 126 million where women run small businesses and are the key workers in textiles, the top export industry. The government encourages girls to get educated.

Islam is diverse, complex; West is misinformed: Some countries strictly follow Quran, treat women poorly

Bangladesh is ruled by secular not Islamic law - and it shows. Women don't have to wear veils. They are encouraged to work and are given loans to start businesses or go to school. Almost 1.3 million women work in garment factories that earn 70 percent of the country's export income.

Parliament in 1998 passed a law allowing women to run for village council. Tougher laws have been passed against rape and other attacks on women.

Graphic

A boy sells Islamic charms near the mosque of Bahauddin Naqshband, an Islamic mystic who lived in the 14th century, outside Bukhara in Uzbekistan in this photo taken last year.

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Israel calls up 'sleeper warriors' to hunt down Mombasa killers

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Byline: Jon Swain, Mombasa and Uzi Mahnaimi, Tel Aviv

Body

AS SOON as he had been informed of last Thursday's terrorist attacks in Kenya, Ariel Sharon, the Israeli prime minister, summoned Meir Dagan, the head of Mossad, to a meeting that promises to have momentous consequences for the conduct of the war on terror.

"War has been declared on the state of Israel by the global Islamic terror syndicate," Sharon told Israel's top anti-terrorist expert. "Change your priorities and get them one by one."

Sharon's blunt order on the day of his re-election to the leadership of his right-wing Likud party compelled Mossad - the institute for intelligence and special operations - to resort to counter-measures that it has not taken for 30 years.

According to a well informed source, the service has alerted sleeper agents in Saudi Arabia and Yemen to hunt down the planners of the attacks on an Israeli-owned tourist hotel and an Israeli passenger plane at Mombasa. Codenamed "Warriors", these highly trained agents who volunteer to live under cover in Arab countries normally remain dormant except in wartime, when their mission is to undermine Arab preparations for strikes against Israel.

The last time such a serious order was given was in 1972. Then the prime minister, Golda Meir, ordered Mossad to kill the Palestinians involved in the murder of the Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics.

All but one were eliminated over six years. Dagan is a veteran of such operations and is reputed to have killed more than 30 Palestinian terrorists in Gaza during the 1970s.

Sharon's equally forceful reaction last week illustrates how seriously he views the twin terror attacks in Mombasa. "This is a wake-up call from hell by Al-Qaeda," said an Israeli government official sent to Kenya to fly out victims.

The Israelis have little doubt that the attacks are the first by Osama Bin Laden's organisation against the Jewish state. An unknown group, the Army of Palestine, claimed responsibility, and a possible link to a fundamentalist organisation such as Hezbollah has not been ruled out in Washington.

The detention of 12 suspects provided few clues. An American woman and her Spanish husband were released yesterday and Julius Sunkuli, Kenya's minister of internal security, said no link had been found between Al-Qaeda and 10 other prisoners - six Pakistanis and four Somalis.

However, in the absence of any clear evidence to the contrary, Israel and Kenya both blamed Al-Qaeda. "The line connecting September 11 to Bali to Mombasa is a direct line," said Gilad Milo, the Israeli official.

Israel calls up 'sleeper warriors' to hunt down Mombasa killers

Two Mossad teams were sent to fortify the organisation's Nairobi station and to pursue potential targets in east Africa.

Within Mossad, Israel's dramatic entry into the war against Bin Laden had a mixed reception. "If Bin Laden was involved in the Kenya attack, this man is a walking corpse," said one agent. "The price tag on Jewish blood is very high."

Others criticised Mossad's decision to activate the Warriors as "overkill". One source said: "Muslim terrorism is not a critical threat to the state of Israel. We should keep these people for an all-out war."

Time will doubtless tell whether Israel is squandering the most extraordinary weapon in its intelligence arsenal. None of the Israeli tourists who endured last week's horrors think so, however. They believe that with the twin missile attack on the Arkia airliner and the suicide bombing of the Paradise hotel, the terrorists have crossed a new threshold.

To the hundreds of Israeli citizens visiting east Africa each week - and the thousands more who favour destinations from Turkey to Thailand - the devastation has shown their acute vulnerability.

THE last thing any of the 235 Israeli holidaymakers expected as they checked into the Paradise 15 miles up the coast from Mombasa on Thursday morning after a 5A-hour overnight flight from Ben Gurion airport, Tel Aviv, was trouble. They thought they had left Israel's nightmare world of suicide bombings behind and were looking forward to a week free from fear and anxiety.

The beach-front hotel was down a bumpy dirt road leading nowhere. The sea was a vivid blue. The Kenyans were welcoming and the hotel had seen no crime since a robbery some months before.

After opening two years ago under the direction of Yehuda Sulami, a wheelchair-bound Israeli, the Paradise catered exclusively for Israelis seeking inexpensive holidays in the sun.

The arrivals sang and laughed as they boarded buses at Mombasa airport to take them to the fully booked 146-room hotel. The buses had just unloaded 261 Israelis at the end of their holiday.

Arkia flight IZ582, with the departing tourists aboard, took off for Israel as their compatriots were arriving at the Paradise. But just as the Boeing 757 lifted off, a white Pajero vehicle was seen cruising along the airport perimeter fence.

Two missiles streaked towards the plane when it was only 500ft up in the air. They were fired from a field 100 yards from a police booth and one flew over a wing, missing by an estimated 3ft.

Some experts have speculated that the jet was equipped with a device that emitted signals to send the missiles off-course. Such equipment is carried by some Israeli planes on sensitive routes.

The most likely explanation, however, seemed to be that the terrorists were using shoulder-fired heat-seeking missiles that must travel more than 500ft to arm themselves. As a result the missiles sped by harmlessly.

While the homeward bound Israelis had a lucky escape, the new arrivals at the Paradise were about to be hit by three suicide bombers.

Justin Mundu, a security supervisor guarding the gate, had been on duty since 6am and had sent one of his staff to fetch a cup of tea. Then he noticed a dark-coloured Pajero pass the front of the hotel. A few minutes later it returned at speed.

He had just enough time to see that the three people inside were "Arab-looking types" when the vehicle accelerated and crashed through a wooden boom across the hotel entrance and careered towards the crowded lobby. One man jumped out, ran in among the tourists and blew himself up. The car exploded in a fireball which engulfed the hotel.

Israel calls up 'sleeper warriors' to hunt down Mombasa killers

Amid the fire, smoke and screams, Israeli and Kenyan survivors staggered towards the beach shrieking for water. Some had gaping wounds. The bombers' vehicle had disintegrated in a smoking crater. Charred bodies lay in the lobby and scattered on the ground outside were human body parts - a hand here, a skull like a burnt cobblestone there.

Two of the three Israelis killed were Dvir Anter, 14, and his brother Noy, 12. Their mother Ora was critically injured and their eight-year-old sister Edva suffered burns to her hands. One of the enduring images of the horror is of their father Rahamin wailing in grief as he searched for his daughter.

Two sisters - Rachel Dadash, 9, and Meyrav Dadash, 15 - had just checked in and gone to their room with their father. Their mother was still in the lobby when the bombs exploded. "It felt like an earthquake," they said. "The whole building shook and everything in the room fell on top of us."

So began a 14-hour ordeal for the children. Taken first to another hotel and then to the airport, they knew their mother had been badly hurt but had no idea which hospital she was in or whether she was still alive.

Sharon sent his personal jet and four Israeli army transport planes to bring home the survivors. Desperately the girls waited at the airport as each ambulance arrived with more casualties for the flights.

They kept jumping up to the windows to see if their mother was there. Each time they were disappointed. Finally she arrived on the last ambulance, her head swathed in bandages, accompanied by her husband who had gone to find her.

Two male drummers and three women dancers of the local Griama dance troupe, who had gone to perform at the Paradise from their village half a mile away, were dead in the lobby. Safari Yaa, 55, leader and creator of the troupe, had said goodbye to his wife Aysha, who is eight months pregnant. "He left with a kiss, saying he would be back later with money to feed our babies and that was the last time I saw him," she wept.

Aysha has four children. She was so poor that she could not afford to hire two young men to dig her husband's grave on Friday. "No matter how hard I try I cannot understand how other Muslims could do this to us," she wailed. She, too, was a Muslim.

IF the atrocity was the handiwork of Al-Qaeda, then it has once again shown its ability to strike at soft civilian targets at will - despite a huge onslaught from America since the September 11 attacks last year.

Four years ago Kenya was shaken by Al-Qaeda's attack on the American embassy in Nairobi. Some 219 people were killed. Twelve others died in a simultaneous attack in neighbouring Tanzania.

America and Israel both helped the pro-western Kenyan government of Daniel arap Moi to beef up its security. But four years later nobody appreciated that the beach resorts along the Indian Ocean coast were as vulnerable to attack as Bali had been seven weeks earlier. With the benefit of hindsight, some analysts believe that Israel has been surprisingly complacent.

The warning signals were there. The coast has many foreign visitors. British and German military aircraft use nearby air bases. American warships are often in port. There is a large Muslim community, part of which admires Bin Laden: a street in Mombasa was unofficially renamed in his honour. And the port is east Africa's gateway to the Middle East.

America has made the Horn of Africa a recent focus of its vast anti-terrorist operations. It alleges links between Al-Qaeda and the Somali group called Al-Itihaad al-Islamiya (Islamic Unity), which it suspects of having allowed Bin Laden's terrorists to train for the embassy bombings.

The recent killing of a top Al-Qaeda operative in Yemen with a missile fired at his vehicle from an American drone plane was a further sign that this region may be the next anti-terror battleground - with obvious implications for the safety of western and Israeli citizens passing through.

Israel calls up 'sleeper warriors' to hunt down Mombasa killers

However, the Israeli foreign ministry did not consider there to be a threat. No specific security advice had been issued. No cars were stopped as they approached the Paradise hotel and airport security was lax. But at the Safini mosque in the heart of Mombasa, Sheikh Abu Hamza, one of the imams, has publicly told Israelis to get out of Kenya. "Why should Kenya have relations with Jews?" he said, calling for the government to sever ties with Israel.

"This is our area, a Muslim area, so Kenya should have no relations with them. Those Kenyans who were killed in the bombing we feel sorry for. They are our people and we miss them. But we do not feel sorry for the Jews." He berated Israel over the deaths of Palestinians on the West Bank.

It may be that Bin Laden has decided to make propaganda gains from the anger felt by many of the world's 1.2 billion Muslims over Israel's repeated crackdowns on Palestinians. So far Israel has conspicuously stayed outside America's war on terror; and President George W Bush has struggled to distance the American campaign from any link to the Palestinian question.

Some analysts believe that Bin Laden wants to provoke an Israeli military response that would discourage Arab governments from signing up to an American-led war against Iraq.

With Mossad now joining the war on terror and the hunt for Bin Laden, it remains to be seen whether the Al-Qaeda leader has pulled off a strategic masterstroke, or whether he has fatally miscalculated and sown the seeds of his own destruction.

Editorial, page 16

Graphic

War on terror

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Problems stacking up in Iraq:
The U. S. and Britain are rulers of a country with no infrastructure.
They aren't committing the resources for nation-building.

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Body

Two weeks in and around Baghdad have left me stunned at the size of the project the Bush administration has undertaken in Iraq.

According to the U.N. Security Council, the United States and Britain are the official "occupying powers" with full responsibility for running and remaking the country, until the establishment of a representative government. No one knows how long that will take.

Americans have become rulers of a country whose institutions and infrastructure are shattered, to a depth the Bush team wasn't remotely prepared for. A White House once leery of "nation-building lite" is now embarked on nation-building massive - without committing a fraction of the staff and resources needed. It is not yet clear whether the White House will have the stamina to stick it out if the going gets nasty.

Below are a few snapshots of Iraqi life that hint at the extent of what the Bush administration has taken on.

*

Most Iraqis have no idea where their lives are headed or what the United States wants to do with their country. Such uncertainty breeds rumors and fear, and makes some Iraqis nostalgic for a dictator. It also creates a climate in which U.S. soldiers can become targets.

In the last two weeks, there has been steady progress in restoring electricity and reducing hours-long queues for gasoline and cooking gas. Security has also improved, with many more U.S. military patrols and Iraqi police on the streets. But Iraqis are still fearful of going out at night.

Merchants on Karada Street, which does a brisk trade in imported electronic appliances, say they still need armed guards to protect against night-time robberies. The Hoda Girls School near my hotel has shortened the school day because parents are nervous about the welfare of their daughters.

Problems stacking up in Iraq ; The U. S. and Britain are rulers of a country with no infrastructure. They aren't committing the resources for nation-building.

In some neighborhoods, these fears are fed by imams who spread rumors at Friday prayers that girls have been kidnapped. The U.S. military has tried to squelch another rumor that is ludicrous but widely believed in poor Shiite districts: U.S. soldiers use night-vision goggles to peer through women's clothing.

Most Iraqis are starved for information - though the rich are snapping up satellite dishes, banned under Saddam Hussein. It's hard to understand why coalition radio is so droningly boring, or why U.S. officials have yet to set up TV broadcasts that give serious news - especially now that the electricity is working.

If Iran and Lebanon's Hezbollah can beam steady newscasts into Baghdad that tell Iraqis to rise up against the occupiers, why can't U.S. officials provide accurate news that Iraqis need?

Jobs, jobs, jobs

Most Iraqis are still waiting to go back to work. Many are living off dwindling savings and the six months' advance food rations Hussein issued before the war. Rations distribution has just been resumed by the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), the 1,000-person U.S.-British bureaucracy that now runs Iraq.

Government ministries, which employed most Baghdadis, are barely functional, especially those that were looted and burned. In the cavernous concrete oil ministry, well-protected by U.S. soldiers, employees wander aimlessly through the halls. They at least collect their paychecks; other ministries are just beginning to pay back wages, and many teachers haven't been paid since March.

In an example of the reigning confusion, government workers are paid in 10,000-dinar notes, a bill most merchants won't accept. Rumors have started that these notes will soon be pulled from circulation because a huge lot of the notes was stolen from the central bank during postwar looting. Coalition radio has broadcast that the bills are valid, but the broadcasts have had very little effect. In today's Iraq, rumors are more powerful than facts.

To get ministries working again, the United States Agency for International Development has a quick-impact project, run by Philadelphian Jerry Bowers, to set up "ministries in a box." The idea is to get 100 core people from key ministries set up with desks and computers - somewhere - until their wrecked buildings can be replaced or restored. It's not clear where the other tens of thousands will set up shop.

The CPA's decision to abolish the army not only has boosted massive unemployment but also has created a large pool of bitter men.

Lt. Col. Mohammed Jawad Ahmad sat listlessly in a dark, airless, small house and told me how he and his colleagues at a military training college decided not to fight the Americans "because there was no justice inside Saddam's military." Officers like Ahmad, who weren't even Baath Party members and got paid only \$90 a month, are bitter over being axed without even getting their pensions. Ahmad can't imagine where he will find a job.

Iraq once had a flourishing private sector, but Hussein destroyed it. Coalition officials talk dreamily about free trade and foreign investment. But wealthy Iraqi businessmen tell me they won't invest in job-creating factories until they are sure who will be ruling Iraq and whether that rule will be stable. The same goes, no doubt, for foreign investors.

Abdul Muhsin Shanshal, a prominent retired banker and exporter whose family still owns textile factories, said he wouldn't invest in a factory now. The dignified, multilingual Shanshal, whose two daughters are doctors, exemplifies the talented elite who could rebuild Iraq. But he said that private business skills were eroded by the corruption of the Hussein era, and that no one would invest in manufacturing and private job creation until "the situation is clear."

In the short term, the CPA should come up with a massive public-works project, hiring ex-soldiers to rebuild infrastructure. And it should pay those army pensions. Otherwise, a lot of unhappy men, with guns and nothing to do, will be nursing a grievance against the United States.

The Shiite factor

Problems stacking up in Iraq ; The U. S. and Britain are rulers of a country with no infrastructure. They aren't committing the resources for nation-building.

A key factor in U.S. efforts to rebuild Iraq will be the reaction of the Shiite Muslim community to an extended U.S. stay. The Shiites, who make up 60 percent of the population, were repressed under Hussein. Now many are eager to flex their political muscles, especially key religious leaders and vocal young clerics in Baghdad's teeming slums.

Two million people live in Baghdad's Al Thawra district, now renamed Sadr City after a revered cleric named Mohammed Baqr al Sadr, who was murdered by Hussein's thugs in 1999. Sadr's portrait has been painted on a plaque at the entrance to the district that used to display Hussein's picture; Sadr's followers have taken over whole sections of the district. Those who claim to follow in Sadr's footsteps have many faces, some of them friendly to Americans, some not.

On Fridays, tens of thousands of men pray near the Al Muhssin Mosque, kneeling in tight formation on prayer rugs stretched along the boulevard. There I heard Shaikh Kadem Abbadi rail over a loudspeaker against the U.S. occupation.

"We should not stand silent on this U.S. decision that the government here will be from America," he told the silent and attentive assembly, hinting darkly that "the Zionists" were responsible.

"The U.S. has occupied, not liberated Iraq," he continued. "We ask the U.S. forces to leave." None of this fazed Capt. Corey Davis, a U.S. civil-military affairs officer who stood at the edge of the crowd, beside a tank, taking notes as Abbadi railed on against liquor and sex movies: "Is this freedom, is this democracy?"

Davis is optimistic about U.S.-Shiite relations in Sadr City. He is pursuing a doctorate on governmental restructuring in developing countries with no history of freedom, and said: "I'll have to redo my thesis." He meets regularly with the sheikhs and imams in Sadr City to talk about their problems.

Shaikh Kadem Fartussi, a gaunt Shiite cleric in gray cloak and turban who spent 11 years in Hussein's prisons, seems willing to work with the Americans. Head of the Al Wala'a General Relief Organization, Fartussi is a follower of Sadr but he says he has accepted funds from "American soldiers" for the poor and for a plan to collect garbage.

There are Iraqis who want U.S. troops to stay. I'm not talking of the grimy kids who swarm around U.S. tanks every night in the slums of Sadr City and make the thumbs-up sign. For them, the Americans are good entertainment.

I refer to educated Baghdadis who fear chaos if troops leave too soon; to Sunnis fearful of a Shiite takeover; to Kurds who fear Arab Iraq won't accept them; and to middle-class Iraqis who think only America can bring Iraq back into the modern world. Those Iraqis are like Nadar Fadel, a translator in the Ministry of Oil: "We need the Americans. We have oil under the ground, but we can't afford to find it and take it out. We need American help."

They are also like Shaikh Yusuf Khairallah, a major tribal leader in the southern Iraqi town of Rifai, resplendent in flowing black abaya over a long white dishdasha, who recently helped organize a mass meeting of sheikhs and religious leaders to discuss Iraq's future. He has formed a tribal alliance and is now living in a massive Baghdad mansion built by Hussein's former intelligence chief, Izzat Ibrahim al Douri.

Khairallah's grandfather joined in the revolt against British invaders in southern Iraq in 1914, but now he wants the Americans to stay: "We call on the United States to rebuild our country for two years. If America builds Iraq and we can touch freedom, there will be no uprising."

Tribal leaders in Iraq are known for changing sides - Khairallah served in Hussein's parliament - but they command many followers. Many of these leaders, including Khairallah, are Shiite and could balance out radical Shiite religious leaders. U.S. officials know this.

But Khairallah hints that the United States could have trouble if it fails to deliver what it has promised. The occupation must deliver jobs, information, infrastructure and aid to its new subjects. If U.S. officials are lucky, that will win them a window of several months to set up Iraqi elections - and leave the rest of the job to Iraqis themselves.

Problems stacking up in Iraq ; The U. S. and Britain are rulers of a country with no infrastructure. They aren't committing the resources for nation-building.

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

Notes

Worldview

Graphic

PHOTO;

Inquirer photographs by Peter Tobia

Members of the disbanded Iraqi army are pushed back by U.S. troops as they protest in front of the Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad. The CPA got rid of the army, creating a large pool of bitter men.

Kamil Hameed, 58, a Communist, reads the party's newspaper Tareek Al-Sha'ab in downtown Baghdad. Though Iraqis are starved for information, the United States has a hard time getting accurate and serious news to the people.

Shiites during Friday prayers at the al Rahmaan mosque in Baghdad's Mansoor section. Shiites, repressed under Saddam Hussein but in the majority, now are eager to flex their political muscle - with or without the United States' approval.

PETER TOBIA, Inquirer Staff Photographer

Women wait in line for cooking gas as U.S. soldiers of the First Armored Division maintain crowd control in Baghdad's Al Thawra district, now renamed Sadr City after a revered cleric. A tank of cooking gas in the district went for about 50 cents; distribution started at 8 a.m. and continued until the early afternoon. The U.S. flag on the soldier's sleeve is not backward; military protocol calls for the flag to be displayed with the field of stars worn closest to the heart.

Tribal leader Shaikh Yusuf Khairallah: The United States might have trouble if it fails to keep promises it has made to Iraq.

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MUSLIM WORLD FAR FROM BEING MONOLITHIC

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Body

Islam in the grinding poverty of Afghanistan is harsh, its justice unforgiving.

For a woman found guilty of adultery, the punishment is death -- which religious leaders carry out with stones. For ancient Buddhist statues deemed by the ruling Taliban to inspire idolatry, explosives did an equally thorough job.

In the holy lands of Saudi Arabia, Islam shows another face.

The Saudi constitution consists of the Quran, the Muslim holy book and its accompanying traditions, and all legislation must conform to the Shariah, or Islamic law.

Still, a royal family, not clerics, rules the land. There are limousines in the streets; families watch satellite TV in their homes. In the capital, Riyadh, young men in jeans or white robes and women swaddled in black cloaks flock to a glitzy shopping mall to hang out.

As the terrorist attacks on the United States and the response since have shown, the Muslim world is no monolith. Afghanistan's extremism and alleged ties to the terror have made it a pariah among the leaders of fellow Muslim nations. Even the government of Pakistan, previously one of the Taliban's only friends, has offered support for Washington.

"There is a contemporary perception of Islam in the West that is misinformed, because many people still believe that Muslims across the world are angry, primitive and fanatical," said Salahuddin Ayub, a Malaysian ustaz, or religious instructor for Muslims. "But they should understand that there should not be stereotypes, that there is great diversity among Muslim countries in different regions."

Islam was born in the Middle East. But it has grown beyond its origins, physically and spiritually.

In countries around the world, it has been adopted in strikingly different ways. From sub-Saharan Africa to the steppes of Central Asia and the Malay archipelago, the world's "other Muslims" have endowed it with a stunning diversity -- and a complexity born of conflict and compromise.

On Fridays in Cairo, worshippers spill out of storefront mosques onto sidewalks just down the street from the McDonald's. It is a commonplace scene; few give it much thought.

MUSLIM WORLD FAR FROM BEING MONOLITHIC

In Saudi Arabia, Christmas decorations, considered blasphemous, are appearing in stores other than U.S.-style supermarkets. They include cards designed in Saudi Arabia showing a reindeer and camel rubbing noses.

Even in countries where Islam is deeply established and Muslims are the majority, today's mixture of cultures and economies, and the looming ideals of Western democracy, present a difficult choice.

The question is asked throughout the Muslim world: How much secularism can Islam take?

Politicians in Egypt and Jordan have tried to assimilate secular freedoms while co-opting fundamentalists, recognizing their influence over a broad range of people feeling the strain of the demands of modern economies.

But to the fundamentalists, secular policies can rapidly become a threat to Islam, and the swings from one pole to the other continue to reflect that deep tension throughout much of the Middle East, and Muslims throughout the world.

Solutions do not come easily.

In Shiite and Persian Iran, Muslims are grappling with the legacy of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's 1979 revolution that toppled the shah and made Khomeini the first supreme leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Under reformist President Mohammad Khatami, himself a cleric, some of the more rigid restrictions on cultural and social activities have been relaxed or removed. Women dress more freely and are allowed to sing in public and act on stage. Music concerts have been revived.

The most daring Iranian reformists are questioning whether Khomeini's successor, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, should have the supreme political control he now holds, or whether he should be strictly a religious leader.

Hard-liners who want no retreat from their definition of an Islamic state have fought back from a powerful position -- they control the courts and have Khamenei's support.

Islam's future is Asia

Mecca and the Middle East will always be at the heart of Islam. But Asia may be where its future is shaped. Here, away from the Arab world, there are other difficulties, and other tensions.

More than half the world's Muslims live east of Karachi, Pakistan, and Asia is home to the four countries with the largest Islamic populations: Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India.

In the globe's most populous Muslim nation, Indonesia, muezzin call the faithful to evening prayers while throngs of the young head to discos for nights of drink and dance. This year, a woman was chosen president.

Here, too, the pressures on Muslims are intense.

Calls are strengthening in Asia for stricter observance of conservative Islamic ideals. Women in parts of Malaysia have been ordered to wear headscarves, and local Indonesian authorities closed nightspots last New Year's to avoid a backlash from Muslims in the holy month of Ramadan.

Muslim unrest from Chechnya eastward gnaws at the southern fringes of post-Soviet Russia. In China, which views all religion with suspicion, it is one more ingredient adding to the wrenching transition of a communist giant. For three decades, a Muslim minority in the Philippines has been fighting an insurgency against the largely Roman Catholic majority.

Since the attacks on New York and Washington, Islam in Asia has been reduced in the eyes of many Westerners to a terrorism emanating from the hills of Afghanistan.

MUSLIM WORLD FAR FROM BEING MONOLITHIC

But the story of Asia's Islam is above all one of a faith that swept a continent -- by conquest on the Indian subcontinent, by peaceful trade and mysticism across the Malay archipelago -- and adapted to the multitude of beliefs it encountered there.

At the demographic center of the Islamic world -- Islamabad, Pakistan -- female models stream down a runway, the outlines of their bodies clear under sheer blouses.

Working the fashion show audience, Muslim waiters steal glances at the women and compete for the task of carrying refreshments backstage.

In Islamabad lives the divided soul of Asian Islam, split between a religion that imposes ironclad restrictions on the faithful and a more flexible creed that embraces tolerance and diversity.

The backdrop is the enduring struggle of Muslims worldwide to maintain a religious identity and culture while confronting the economic, social and political forces of Westernization.

This is true both in places left behind, like Afghanistan, and in more industrialized Asian nations like Indonesia and Malaysia.

Predictions about which way the region is headed are precarious. But no one can deny the growing strength of orthodox Islam, despite Asia's long history of diversity and tolerance.

"Between the more accommodating and modern Islam and the more fundamentalist Islam, I would say the recent gains have tended to be made by the fundamentalists," said Ng Kam Weng, a religion expert at Kairof, a think tank in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

"What you want to ask is whether these gains are permanent. I think the jury is still out."

Exporting Taliban extremism

Afghanistan is just across the border from Pakistan. But it is a world away.

After years of struggle, first to repel Soviet troops and then a civil war, the Taliban religious militia emerged to impose an Islamic regime so severe that even other conservative Muslims call them extremists.

Guided not only by Islam, but also by Afghan tribal society and a history of poverty, the Taliban have banned videos, TV and music. Girls cannot go to school after age 8. Women may not work and must wear head-to-toe coverings called burquas. Men must have untrimmed beards. Violators have been whipped in the streets.

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MUSLIM WORLD FAR FROM BEING MONOLITHIC

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The threat goes further.

Islamic separatists fighting in Kashmir, western China and the former Soviet republics in Central Asia draw inspiration -- and, allegedly, training in weaponry and terrorism -- from Taliban teachers.

But the road of the Taliban remains a lonely one.

Indonesia is also poor. It has also struggled through political upheaval. Sectarian skirmishes and bloodshed continue. But it has chosen a much different course than that of the Taliban.

Call it the Muslim melting pot. Islam is the religion of 85 percent of the country's 210 million people, but its more than 13,000 islands also encompass large pockets of Christians, Hindus and ethnic Chinese practicing Buddhism.

Perhaps mixing is inevitable, and the Islam practiced there is hardly uniform. Strict Islamic mores rule in Aceh province on Sumatra, for example, while Muslims elsewhere practice a faith strongly tinged with remnants of Hindu and animist rituals that predate Islam.

Flash points are many, with ethnic bloodshed flaring recently on several islands. But the diversity also brings openness and flexibility. The country's major Muslim group, the Nahdlatul Ulama, once hired sorcerers to drive evil spirits from a meeting hall, something Muslims elsewhere might consider blasphemous.

That broad tolerance has helped put Indonesia in the vanguard of a growing movement in the Muslim world: democratic Islam.

Indonesia's first democratically elected president, Abdurrahman Wahid, a Muslim cleric, reached out to religious and ethnic minorities and refused to promote strict Islamic law.

It was a bumpy start. Wahid was accused of incompetence and corruption and ousted this year. But he has been succeeded by a leader seen as even more democratic and reformist -- Megawati Sukarnoputri, daughter of the founder of modern Indonesia.

That is a significant fact.

In Saudi Arabia, women are expected to cover themselves head to foot before going out in public. They cannot drive, and when traveling must be accompanied by a male chaperone.

East of Afghanistan, Islam imposes fewer restrictions on relations between the sexes.

"When it comes to issues of dress, of people meeting in public space, of work ... by and large, Asian Islam has been far more pluralistic in outlook," said Georgetown's Esposito.

Pakistan has had a female leader. So has Bangladesh, a predominantly Muslim nation of 126 million where women run small businesses and are the key workers in textiles, the top export industry. The government encourages girls to get educated.

Bangladesh is ruled by secular not Islamic law -- and it shows. Women don't have to wear veils. They are encouraged to work and are given loans to start businesses or go to school. Almost 1.3 million women work in garment factories that earn 70 percent of the country's export income.

Parliament in 1998 passed a law allowing women to run for village council. Tougher laws have been passed against rape and other attacks on women.

Graphic

PHOTO: John McConnico /Associated Press; Kamran Jebreili/Reuters: (For two photos) The Islamic world ranges from the strictly traditional to the thoroughly modern. Afghan women walking through a refugee-camp market in Peshawar, Pakistan, above, must be completely covered in public once they reach the age of 14. Saudi men, left, talk and browse the Internet at a hotel in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia.

Load-Date: October 9, 2001

End of Document

Worlds of Differences

Hamilton Spectator (Ontario, Canada)

October 5, 2001 Friday Final Edition

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Section: CANADA & WORLD; Pg. B04; Canada & World News

Length: 1998 words

Byline: Eric Talmadge

Body

There is no one face of Islam. Depending on where you are in the Muslim world, you could find yourself as free as if you were in North America or restricted by extreme views of morality.

Islam in the grinding poverty of Afghanistan is harsh, its justice unforgiving.

For a woman found guilty of adultery, the punishment is death -- which turbaned religious leaders carry out with stones. For ancient Buddhist statues deemed by the ruling Taliban to inspire idolatry, explosives did an equally thorough job.

The Associated Press

In the holy lands of Saudi Arabia, Islam shows another face.

The Saudi constitution consists of the Koran, the Muslim holy book, and its accompanying traditions, and all legislation must conform to the Shariah, or Islamic law.

Still, a royal family, not clerics, rules the land. There are limousines in the streets; families watch satellite TV in their homes. In the capital, Riyadh, young men in jeans or white robes and women swaddled in black cloaks flock to a glitzy shopping mall to hang out.

As the terrorist attacks on the United States and the response since have shown, the Muslim world is no monolith. Afghanistan's extremism and alleged ties to the terror have made it a pariah among the leaders of fellow Muslim nations. Even the government of Pakistan, previously one of the Taliban's only friends, has offered support for Washington.

"There is a contemporary perception of Islam in the West that is misinformed, because many people still believe that Muslims across the world are angry, primitive and fanatical," said Salahuddin Ayub, a Malaysian ustaz, or religious instructor for Muslims.

"But they should understand that there should not be stereotypes, that there is great diversity among Muslim countries in different regions."

Islam was born in the Middle East. But it has grown beyond its origins, physically and spiritually.

Worlds of Differences

In countries around the world, it has been adopted in strikingly different ways. From sub-Saharan Africa to the steppes of Central Asia and the Malay archipelago, the world's "other Muslims" have endowed it with a stunning diversity -- and a complexity born of conflict and compromise.

On Fridays in Cairo, worshippers spill out of storefront mosques onto sidewalks just down the street from the McDonald's. It is a commonplace scene; few give it much thought.

In Saudi Arabia, Christmas decorations, considered blasphemous, are appearing in stores other than U.S.-style supermarkets. They include cards designed in Saudi Arabia showing a reindeer and camel rubbing noses.

Even in countries where Islam is deeply established and Muslims are the majority, today's mixture of cultures and economies, and the looming ideals of western democracy, present a difficult choice.

The question is asked throughout the Muslim world: How much secularism can Islam take?

Politicians in Egypt and Jordan have tried to assimilate secular freedoms while co-opting fundamentalists, recognizing their influence over a broad range of people feeling the strain of the demands of modern economies.

But to the fundamentalists, secular policies can rapidly become a threat to Islam, and the swings from one pole to the other continue to reflect that deep tension throughout much of the Middle East, and Muslims throughout the world.

Solutions do not come easily.

In Shiite and Persian Iran, Muslims are grappling with the legacy of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's 1979 revolution that toppled the Shah and made Khomeini the first supreme leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Under reformist President Mohammad Khatami, himself a cleric, some of the more rigid restrictions on cultural and social activities in Iran have been relaxed or removed. Women dress more freely and are allowed to sing in public and act on stage. Music concerts have been revived.

The most daring Iranian reformists are questioning whether Khomeini's successor, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, should have the supreme political control he now holds, or whether he should be strictly a religious leader.

Hardliners who want no retreat from their definition of an Islamic state have fought back from a powerful position -- they control the courts and have Khamenei's support.

Mecca and the Middle East will always be at the heart of Islam. But Asia may be where its future is shaped. Here, away from the Arab world, there are other difficulties, and other tensions.

More than half the world's Muslims live east of Karachi, Pakistan, and Asia is home to the four countries with the largest Islamic populations: Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India.

In the globe's most populous Muslim nation, Indonesia, muezzin call the faithful to evening prayers while throngs of the young head to discos for nights of drink and dance. This year, a woman was chosen president.

Here, too, the pressures on Muslims are intense.

Calls are strengthening in Asia for stricter observance of conservative Islamic ideals. Women in parts of Malaysia have been ordered to wear headscarves, and local Indonesian authorities closed nightspots last New Year's to avoid a backlash from Muslims in the holy month of Ramadan.

Muslim unrest from Chechnya eastward gnaws at the southern fringes of post-Soviet Russia. In China, which views all religion with suspicion, it is one more ingredient adding to the wrenching transition of a communist giant. For three decades, a Muslim minority in the Philippines has been fighting an insurgency against the largely Roman Catholic majority.

Worlds of Differences

But the story of Asia's Islam is above all one of a faith that swept a continent -- by conquest on the Indian subcontinent, by peaceful trade and mysticism across the Malay archipelago -- and adapted to the multitude of beliefs it encountered there.

At the demographic centre of the Islamic world -- Islamabad, Pakistan -- female models stream down a runway, the outlines of their bodies clear under sheer blouses. Working the fashion show audience, Muslim waiters steal glances at the women and compete for the task of carrying refreshments backstage.

In Islamabad lives the divided soul of Asian Islam, split between a religion that imposes ironclad restrictions on the faithful and a more flexible creed that embraces tolerance and diversity.

The backdrop is the enduring struggle of Muslims worldwide to maintain a religious identity and culture while confronting the economic, social and political forces of westernization.

This is true both in places left behind, like Afghanistan, and in more industrialized Asian countries like Indonesia and Malaysia.

Predictions about which way the region is headed are precarious. But no one can deny the growing strength of orthodox Islam, despite Asia's long history of diversity and tolerance.

"Between the more accommodating and modern Islam and the more fundamentalist Islam, I would say the recent gains have tended to be made by the fundamentalists," said Ng Kam Weng, a religion expert at Kairos, a think-tank in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

"What you want to ask is whether these gains are permanent. I think the jury is still out."

Afghanistan is just across the border from Pakistan. But it is a world away.

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Worlds of Differences

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Graphic

Photo: Jerry Lampen, Reuters; Two Afghan children at their mud home in the Saranan refugee camp, 45 kilometres outside Quetta, Pakistan. They are among thousands that have fled ahead of anticipated retaliatory strikes by the U.S. against Afghanistan, whose rulers the Taliban are accused of harbouring Osama bin Laden.; Map : CIA; ESRI; The Muslim World

Worlds of Differences

Load-Date: November 5, 2001

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alice Howard was a highflying PR when she fell for an architect from Lebanon. It was only after she handed over a GBP 40,000 dowry that she realised she'd married a conman ...;
femail modern times

DAILY MAIL (London)

February 20, 2003

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Section: Pg. 54;55

Length: 1857 words

Byline: Helen Weathers;Charlotte Stacey

Body

DRAPED in a sumptuous white dress personally designed by Elie Saab - the man who created Hollywood star Halle Berry's famous Oscar gown - and adorned with thousands of pounds worth of twinkling diamond jewellery, Alice Howard's wedding last September was everything she had ever dreamed of.

At the reception at the five-star Park Hotel in Lebanon, their 280 guests showered her with fresh flowers while her new husband, architect Rabih Nasser, 35, told her how beautiful she was, how happy he was and, knowing how much she longed to be a mother, about all the children they'd have together back in Britain.

'Even though I had a wonderful and glamorous life as a single career girl in London, I had always set myself the target that I would be married with a child by the age of 35,' says Alice, a public relations executive.

'And when I met Rabih I couldn't believe my luck. He seemed to be everything I was looking for in a husband. On my wedding day I was the happiest woman alive - but now I can't believe how naive I was.' Indeed, just five months later, Alice, 32, was standing in a Lebanese courtroom seeking a divorce after discovering her dream husband was, in her words, little more than 'a conman' who was only interested in obtaining a British visa and tricking her into signing away her GBP 40,000 dowry.

After the wedding, the money with which he'd lavished gifts on her suddenly dried up, she became a virtual prisoner in her home and, worst of all, she found out her husband was infertile.

A virgin on her wedding night because she was determined to save herself for marriage, the sexual side of the relationship was a complete disaster and the marriage was unconsummated.

As for Rabih's architectural business, that, too, was floundering. Even the diamonds he'd bought her had been paid for by his family.

Then there was the previous marriage to an American woman which he had failed to tell Alice about and which ended as abruptly as theirs.

alice Howard was a highflying PR when she fell for an architect from Lebanon . It was only after she handed over a GBP 40,000 dowry that she realised she'd marr....

Today, Alice - the daughter of a British policeman and Lebanese mother - is back in London, wondering how an intelligent PR executive who counted celebrities Zoe Ball and Julia Carling among her clients, could have been quite so foolish.

EVEN though she and her family are now GBP 40,000 poorer, she considers it a small price to pay for her freedom. For she knows only too well it could all have been much worse. 'After our wedding, my husband kept demanding that I put his name on my British passport,' she says. 'Something made me hold back and I'm so glad I didn't, because if I had he could have stopped me leaving Lebanon.

'In Lebanon, women do not have the same rights and freedoms that British women take for granted. As his wife, I was his property and with his name on my passport I would have needed his permission to go anywhere.

'If I had just left him, he could have circulated my name at every port and even on TV until I was returned to him. It makes me shiver to think I could still be a prisoner over there.' So why did a smart career girl like Alice throw caution to the wind and marry a stranger in such haste?

It seems her judgment was impaired by the fear - shared by many single thirtysomething women - that time was running out.

When Alice met Rabih, she had recently ended a three-year relationship with her British boyfriend, who worked in marketing, because he was reluctant to commit to marriage and children and she was desperate to settle down.

'We were happy together, but I felt the relationship wasn't going anywhere,' says Alice. 'I had just turned 30 and I thought staying with him might prevent me from meeting someone who did want to settle down.' Shortly afterwards, in September last year, Alice was on holiday in Lebanon with her mother, visiting relatives, and it was then that she met Rabih, a distant cousin of her mother's.

'He was so charming and flirtatious, telling me how beautiful I was and speaking to me in English. He was extremely attentive and friendly.

'Rabih would notice all my favourite things and buy them for me - everything from magazines and perfumes to Marmite, which I love. He did everything he could to make me feel at home and not think about London.

'He drove a vintage Mercedes and wore designer suits by Cerutti. He took me to the best restaurants and the most upmarket resorts and casinos.

'After dating British men who seemed so reluctant to commit, I was completely bowled over by Rabih, who after just a few days was talking about how much he wanted to marry me and have children with me.

'Alarm bells should have been ringing, but they weren't. I fell completely in love and it simply never occurred to me that he would ever harm me, because, after all, he was family.' When the time came for Alice to return to London three weeks later, Rabih begged her to stay. 'As Rabih drove me to the airport the morning I was meant to fly home, he said: "You can't leave now. I want you to marry me. I love you."

'I knew it would mean giving up my life in London, my career and all my friends, but I was so wrapped up in the whole whirlwind romance of it and thought he genuinely loved me.

I thought this might be my last chance to get married.' SHE accepted his proposal and excitedly phoned her mother from the airport to tell her she wasn't returning to London - but planning her wedding instead. To Alice's surprise, her mother was far from happy.

'My mother kept saying to me: "You don't know what Lebanese men are like."

She knew that, having been born and brought up in Britain, I had not lived with the Lebanese customs and traditions,' says Alice, whose father died when she was 13.

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'But when I told her how much I loved Rabih, she came round. Like me, she thought there was no way a cousin would hurt me in any way.' Just five days after Rabih proposed - during which time he presented Alice with a GBP 5,500 diamond solitaire ring and a GBP 3,500 diamond necklace and earring set - they were married, on September 26.

'All I had to do was arrange my dress, book my hair and makeup and prepare my cousins, who were bridesmaids,' says Alice. 'Rabih did everything else.'

In Lebanon, tradition dictates that when a couple marry, the bride's family agree to pay a cash dowry to the groom. In Alice's case, the GBP 40,000 dowry had been agreed between Alice's mother and Rabih, stating that if he divorced Alice she would receive the dowry but if she divorced him he would keep the money.

The dowry paid, the family looked forward to the wedding. 'The reception was packed, relatives had flown in from Canada and America, and when I took my vows I didn't have any doubts this was the right thing to do,' says Alice.

The dreamlike wedding, however, turned into a nightmare as they retired to their five-star suite. Her handsome groom, Alice claims, fell asleep drunk after pushing her away from him when she tried to show any physical affection.

'We didn't consummate our marriage then or at any other time,' she says.

'Four days after the wedding I decided to talk to him about it because I was worried about our lack of sexual relationship. It became clear he could not have a full sexual relationship or father children (due to a congenital defect).

'Other problems began to emerge over the next few weeks.

'He'd tell me he was heading to the office and I'd find out he was somewhere else, or he'd say he was going on a business trip and then I'd hear he'd been seen driving around town.

'Before our wedding, he'd been so generous, but now he became quite nasty, telling me I couldn't buy a 50p cappuccino, or get my hair cut or my nails done. The money just seemed to dry up.

'I gradually realised his business was going badly and that all the money for the diamonds and gifts he'd bought me before the wedding had come from his mother. Now we were married, she resented my spending her money.' Then, last winter, Alice, who suffers from asthma, fell ill with an infection which required hospital treatment. 'He just left me in bed and never even offered to get me any medication. I felt like a prisoner in the house.

'He'd tell me not to go out on my own because of the Hezbollah gunmen, saying: "They'll see you're English and kill you." I know now that he was just trying to scare me.' WHEN her mother visited her at Christmas, Alice told her how desperately unhappy she was. Her mother insisted they go to the register office to get a copy of the wedding certificate so that her daughter could come home to Britain, and tell Rabih they would sort out his visa from there.

'But when my mother looked at the certificate, she started crying. She told me: 'This isn't the same one you signed on your wedding day.' I explained that a few weeks after the wedding, Rabih had told me he'd lost the certificate, so I signed a new agreement.

'I had no idea what I was signing because it was in Arabic, but at the time I thought I had no reason not to trust him. But Rabih had illegally changed the agreement. I had effectively signed everything away and wouldn't get a penny of our dowry even if he divorced me.' Devastated, Alice decided the marriage was over, but she and her mother had to act quickly.

'We knew we had to get out of the country fast,' says Alice, 'but I had to pretend everything was still fine so that Rabih and his family did not get suspicious. I told his mother and brother I was going to London for a holiday. If I'd

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told them I was leaving him, according to Lebanese law they could have legally made me a prisoner in my home because I was married to him.

'I realised I had no time. I was desperate to get a divorce before I left for Britain and so we had to do things secretly.

'Without him knowing, I went to court to apply for a divorce on the grounds that the marriage had never been consummated, and Rabih was issued with a summons. Rabih literally didn't know why he'd been summoned until he arrived in court.' At the hearing on January 24, the five-month marriage was dissolved in just 15 minutes. 'I was shaking as I stood in front of the sheik pleading my case for divorce. He was holding my life in his hands.

'The sheik laid the charges before Rabih that I wanted a divorce on the grounds that he was not a man (i.e. could not father a child), he betrayed my trust and he lied to me.

Rabih had the chance to defend himself but he didn't deny anything.

'As the sheik issued my divorce, he said to me: "I'm sorry to tell you this but he only wanted you for your visa." Something, of course, that by that stage I knew only too well.' Now back in Britain and living with her mother in North London, Alice is trying to pick up the pieces of her once-thriving career and has completely abandoned her dreams of marriage.

'I'm just trying to get my life back together,' she says. 'I left a job I loved, friends and colleagues - I gave it all up because I was so naive.

'I never thought I was the type of person who could be tricked so easily.

I saw myself as a confident, intelligent woman who was a good judge of character. Now I'm not sure I'll ever trust my judgment again.

'My only consolation is that I did escape, and the GBP 40,000 dowry money is a small price to pay for my freedom.'

Load-Date: February 21, 2003

LIFTING A VEIL ON PREJUDICE

The Scotsman

November 6, 2001, Tuesday

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Section: Pg. 2

Length: 2184 words

Byline: Robert Tait

Body

Fatima Hassan was not drawn to the United States by visions of untold riches or the American Dream. She had been born into considerable wealth in Iraq. But the sumptuous lifestyle her family once enjoyed in Baghdad had been no protection against the unspeakable depravities of Saddam Hussein's secret police. For her, the magnetism of America lay in its promise as a place of greater safety.

Hassan's family were local philanthropists, which made them a threat in the paranoiac imaginings of the Iraqi leader. Hassan's first husband was tortured to death, before her eyes, in a bath of acid that caused his skin to dissolve. Her brother was killed. She herself suffered extensive torture during two spells in jail, the second while she was pregnant. Both her shoulders were broken and her finger nails were removed. "I was supposed to be killed by Saddam but I escaped from prison," she says.

Years of living like a nomad followed that escape in 1982. First she went to Iran, then Dubai, then briefly - when it looked as if the Iraqi regime might collapse after the Gulf War - to southern Iraq, then to Saudi Arabia and on to Lebanon. At no time did she feel safe. So last year, Hassan, 47, who has a master's degree in English literature, arrived in America. A shabby basement in a rundown suburb south of Detroit became a perfect refuge, a paradise removed from a world of torment. "This is my country," she used to say. "Nobody asks or cares if you are Muslim."

All that changed on 11 September. Suddenly an America that had been indifferent to her black Muslim chador and covered head took notice. "They look at us as if we are Osama bin Laden," she says. "The beautiful life is gone. Psychologically, everything is changed."

Hassan's harrowing tale is not unusual among exiled Iraqi women. So much so that she has become a counsellor for other female refugees from the regime's malevolent clutches. All of them, she says, are traumatised by what happened in New York and Washington.

"They are scared to go out," she says. "People are saying that Arabs should be put in camps, others say we should leave the country. They should realise we too are victims of terrorism."

According to ACCESS, the Arab Community Centre for Economic and Social Services - for which Hassan works - the post-11 September sense of alienation and isolation among America's ethnic Arab citizens is leading to a "community mental health collapse." People in unprecedented numbers are seeking help for depression and other mental disorders.

LIFTING A VEIL ON PREJUDICE

The setting for this mass misery is Dearborn, a city of just under 100,000 on the periphery of Detroit. Here, and in a cluster of nearby towns, live the biggest concentration of Arabs in America. There are some 270,000 Arabs in this corner of south-eastern Michigan. About half are Muslim, the other half Christian.

Arabs have been coming to Dearborn since the 1890s. The motor car was the driving force behind the early migrations. For while Detroit may be the Motown of the public imagination, Dearborn is the original motor city.

The economic migrants who made up the early waves of Arab arrivals have been followed in the past generation by a very different breed. Their migration, like that of Fatima Hassan, has been a flight from oppression. The biggest group were those fleeing the civil war which ruptured Lebanon for 15 years before 1990. Close behind have been the Chaldean Iraqis, fleeing Saddam Hussein. Others have come from Egypt and Yemen. Freedom from fear was the guiding motive behind their odyssey to America.

Hassan Jaber, the deputy director of ACCESS, followed his father to Dearborn after a brief spell in the Lebanese army in the early stages of the civil war, which broke out in 1975.

"The United States was the last place I expected to end up," he says. Before the war, his middle-class family had lived the good life. His father owned a bakery in Beirut's tourist sector. He remembers a time of some bliss. "My father only worked from 7am until 12 noon and then came home and had a siesta. I remember the smell of his cologne when he went out in the evening and how contented he was. I don't think he ever wanted to come here. But the war horrified him. For the first two years of the war, he couldn't go to his bakery."

For Jaber's father, as for many other Arabs here, America was a replacement for a way of life torn asunder. Of the recent Arab arrivals into America, Jaber says: "Maybe this is the only place they feel they have control of their lives, where they can stay alive and provide for their families."

As with every ethnic group ever to set foot on American shores, they have brought with them the culture of their forebears.

Warren Avenue, the commercial heart of Dearborn's Arab neighbourhood, is like the Middle East, transplanted. Arabic lettering adorns the whole panoply of emporia - butchers selling halal meat, clothes shops specialising in Muslim fashions, Lebanese restaurants serving the cuisine of the Levant.

But unlike other ethnic groups to have arrived in America, many of the Arabs in Michigan are not well assimilated. Their arrival has been too recent for that. So when the horror of 11 September struck like a thunderbolt, these people were exposed. Already differentiated by culture, their distinctiveness made them a prime target for scapegoating.

In the early days after the attacks, stories of reprisals against Arabs, Muslims and others who might (to the uninitiated) look like them were legion. Mosques were attacked. One Sikh man was shot dead in Arizona. Airline pilots refused to fly with Arabic-looking passengers.

These excesses have passed Dearborn and its surrounds by. The community is too well entrenched for such victimisation, its leaders say. But there are tales of low-level but traumatising prejudice, and the sense of isolation is palpable.

Some local Arabs say they have been spat at. Children have been kept home from school after playground beatings. There has been discrimination in the workplace. One employer told an Arab Muslim man he had employed for 20 years that he never wanted to see his face again.

On the day of the World Trade Centre and Pentagon attacks, a flood of abusive phone calls and e-mails was directed at the Arab-American News, a Dearborn-based publication that circulates to Arabs across the US.

"The telephone calls that came here were extremely nasty," says Osama Siblani, the paper's editor and publisher. "Some of them were chilling. One of my female employees was in tears. She had to leave and go home, she

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couldn't take any more. So I had to sit here and take phone calls that were directed against me, my staff and our families."

As commentators have compared the events of 11 September with Pearl Harbor, Arabs are reminded of the historic parallel for their plight: the Community leaders don't hesitate to dredge up comparisons with the 100,000 ethnic Japanese who were carted off to internment camps during the Second World War.

Standards of racial fairness have changed dramatically since 1941. Today's Arabs and Muslims at least have the benefit of President George Bush's exhortations that they should not be singled out for discrimination. But the pressure on Arabs to show their loyalty is immense. Some of the biggest American flags in the US are flying in Dearborn right now and nowhere is their concentration bigger than in the Arabic east side of town. A poll conducted by the Detroit News showed a majority of Arabs said they believed the authorities were justified in singling them out for special scrutiny at airports.

"It's a defence mechanism on the part of the community that comes out of fear they will be considered unpatriotic or disloyal," says Jaber who names Kafka as his favourite author. Having read *The Trial*, he says he has found it easier to rationalise his community's plight.

"The loyalty issue we resent," said Arab-American News's Siblani. "People who were born here have no choice but to be Americans, but we have chosen to come here. We took an oath. That makes us better Americans ... You don't hear the loyalty of Jews questioned because they have the automatic right to become citizens of another country, Israel."

Yet, loyalty has its boundaries. Outrage at bin Laden may have appeared universal - and support for the military action in Afghanistan seemed to be holding - but such backing would dissolve if the list of targets were expanded to include, say, Iraq. A prominently placed television set in the reception area of the local ACCESS office beams the output of al-Jazeera, the Arab news channel with easy access to bin Laden, rather than CNN, with its diet of flag-waving patriotism. Some in the community, including Jaber's wife, who is Canadian, are asking if there is a future in the US for Arabs.

Ilmad Hamad, the Mid-West regional director of the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, occupies an office adorned by pictures of him meeting Bill Clinton. The feeling of vulnerability is not all in the mind, he says. The committee's phone rang off the hook with complaints of discrimination in the first week after 11 September.

But the real dangers, Hamad says, lie in the months and years ahead. The sense of national panic and the government's resort to authoritarian measures makes Arabs an easy target. Emergency laws allowing the authorities to detain immigrants on mere suspicion, together with expanded wire tapping authority, has induced a siege mentality in American Arabs. Around 700 people have been arrested and detained since 11 September. "Do you think they're all terrorists?" asks Hamad rhetorically. "There is no doubt that the target of these indefinite detentions at this time are Arab and Muslim Americans."

A solidarity with the Palestinian struggle on the streets of Ramallah and other parts of the West Bank lies at the heart of the fear. Many Arabs have gone to Michigan seeking refuge from the fight with Israel over a Palestinian state. Hamad himself came from a family of Palestinian refugees. Arabs in Dearborn have not hidden their unhappiness with America's unstinting support of Israel. Two years ago, when Israeli forces withdrew from Lebanon, more than 15,000 marched through the centre of town in support of Hezbollah.

Into the midst of the ethnic turmoil came the Dearborn mayor's race. The votes are cast today. Mayor Michael Guido is running for a fifth term as mayor against an Arab challenger, Abed Hammoud. In a run-off primary election - held, by coincidence, on 11 September - Guido came top of a field of four with 61 per cent of the vote. But he lost the election in the Arab part of town.

At a recent hustings meeting, Guido - a short, barrel-chested figure in a bottle green, double-breasted suit - strode up to the first person he saw, stuck out his hand and said: "I'm Mike Guido, your friendly mayor." On discovering that he had just shaken the hand of a Scottish reporter writing a piece about the Arab community, the mayor -

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without prompting - declared how proud he was that Dearborn had experienced none of the violent reprisals against Arabs seen elsewhere in America. After 11 September, he said, extra police were dispatched to Arab neighbourhoods to quell public safety fears.

But the mayor, it turns out, is deeply mistrusted by the Arabs of Dearborn. His city council has no Arab department heads and employs just 27 Arabs out of a workforce of 2,000; only three of the city's police officers speak Arabic .

Hammoud, 35, who arrived in America in 1990 from Lebanon before qualifying as a prosecutor, is not keen to talk about Arab issues. But he reacts scornfully when told what Guido has said. "He keeps bragging about the fact that we didn't have violence, as if it is all because of him," Hammoud responds.

Dearborn's Arabs remember that Guido won his first term 16 years ago promising to deal with the "Arab problem." In 2001, Arabs in Dearborn say it still has an Arab problem. Hammoud, a founder of an American Arab Political Action Committee - formed to put Arab issues on the political map - has been installed as a mayoral candidate to try and address it. He is keeping that agenda hidden in the hope he can pick up enough non-Arab support to win the election.

But his chances of success seem forlorn. The challenger doesn't mention this but it turns out that some voters engaged in racial profiling in the 11 September run-off election. Hammoud campaign workers canvassing for their candidate heard the words repeatedly from white voters: "After what happened today, no way."

So the freedom from fear Arabs in Michigan and elsewhere were seeking in the Land of the Free does not seem at hand . ACCESS director Hassan Jaber finds solace in memories of Lebanon's civil war. During a war, he says, "you become much closer to other human beings, even when you don't know them. I lost that sense after I left Lebanon, that extreme closeness to other people."

Maybe now, he suggests, Michigan's Arabs and their fellow Americans will be bound by a new shared sense of fear. His sentiments, though, seem to spring more from hope than expectation.

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End of Document

Region watches the first domino - THE FUTURE - WAR ON IRAQ: DAY TWO

The Weekend Australian

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Byline: Peter Wilson

Body

The Americans are on their way to Baghdad, but what will happen when they get there? Peter Wilson in Kuwait explores the options

WE know this war will have an unhappy end for one man, Saddam Hussein. What we do not know is the outcome for the 200 million other people who live in Iraq and the six countries it borders.

Just as the longer-term future of Iraq and its 22 million people is unclear, so the coming days or weeks of conflict, and the subsequent imposition of a new US-friendly regime in Baghdad will wreak enormous, often uncontrollable changes throughout Iraq's neighbourhood.

Trade flows will be disrupted then reshaped, ethnic and religious tensions are likely to be strained, the regional power balance will be thrown out of kilter by the arrival of a new US favourite, and the oil industry restructured by a new surge of Iraqi supplies.

And, in perhaps the most important change of all, the US is poised to finally withdraw its traditional tolerance or outright support for dictatorships in the region, sparking bold talk of a new democratic "domino theory" in the Middle East.

MATP

Political suppression and economic mismanagement have long characterised US allies such as Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Kuwait, as well as Washington's opponents in the region, such as Syria and Iran.

The political changes triggered by the fall of Hussein might improve the human rights and economic conditions of many ordinary people in the region but they will almost certainly be bad news for most of their current rulers.

The knock-on effects of the upheaval in Iraq will depend on how change comes to Baghdad, with four possible scenarios most likely:

A COUP: Early success in the US-led military campaign could prompt one or more generals in Iraq's Republican Guard to depose Hussein, perhaps when the invaders reach the edge of Baghdad. Such an internal revolt would avoid a long siege of the capital, a city of almost 5million, and the brutal street fighting threatened by Hussein.

US commanders might negotiate a settlement with the new rulers, allowing President George W. Bush to declare the fall of Hussein and the removal of his weapons of mass destruction without creating a power vacuum in Iraq.

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Some in the White House would prefer to take this "fastest and cheapest" route, which would impose the least possible change on Iraqi power structures by removing top Baath party officials but leaving much of the current administration in place.

This is also the preferred option of the governments of Turkey, Syria, Iran, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, with only Kuwait -- the smallest country bordering Iraq -- having any appetite for greater change in Baghdad because of the grudge it bears so passionately from the first Gulf War.

Foreign investment would flood into Iraq's struggling oil industry, and the end of the UN's trade sanctions would overhaul the oil and trade links that Iraq has formed with its neighbours under the decade-long sanctions. Syria's economy now relies heavily on smuggled Iraqi oil, while Jordan has been buying oil from Iraq at less than half the market rate, cosy arrangements that would die with the Hussein regime.

Turkey also has been making good money transporting Iraqi oil to the Mediterranean but, like Syria, it would hope to earn more in the longer-term future by acting as a conduit for expanded Iraqi trade and oil flows.

All the governments neighbouring Iraq would be happy to see the least-change option avert a flood of refugees to their borders, and only Turkey, the only real democracy on Iraq's borders, would like more than minimal democratic change in Iraq.

The smoothest possible regime change would also please the neighbours by reducing the chances of an increase in Kurdish autonomy in northern Iraq.

The two main Kurdish groups in Iraq already operate their own democracies and armies, and anything that remotely resembles the start of a new Kurdish state would be vigorously opposed by Turkey, Iran and to a lesser extent Syria.

A QUICK COALITION VICTORY FOLLOWED BY STABLE DEMOCRACY: The outcome sought by the US, Britain and Australia would cause immediate problems for all the neighbours, and serious long-term threats for the governments of Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iran and, to a slightly lesser degree, Jordan.

Iraq's largest neighbours have withheld the open support they offered Washington during the first Gulf War, largely because many of their citizens see the attack as an act of US imperialism to protect US oil supplies and Israel. US allies Saudi Arabia and Jordan are afraid that Washington will expect them to introduce their own democratic reforms, while Iran is being touted as the next target on Bush's "axis of evil" list and Syria is not far behind.

If the follow-up diplomacy is handled astutely, a triumph for Bush in Iraq is likely to accelerate the recent push within Iran for political reform.

The opening up of Iraq would offer a challenge to Shi'ite clerics in Iran by freeing religious thought and allowing the Iraqi centres of Shi'ite religious learning, Najaf and Karbala, to challenge Iranian clerics.

The conservative clerics who rule Tehran have a fragile power base, and the arrival of a sustainable democracy in their neighbour would hearten the Iranian reformers. Recent municipal elections showed that young, reform-minded voters are losing faith in reformist politicians, with very low turn-out allowing religious hardliners to do well.

Some analysts, such as Ali Ansari of London's Royal Institute of International Affairs, worry that heavy-handed US pressure for political change in Iran might strengthen the position of Iranian hardliners by allowing them to exploit a nationalist backlash.

The challenge, he says, is to encourage and support the democratic yearnings of many Iranians rather than uniting them behind the clerics.

Washington's most important Arab ally, Saudi Arabia, is even more worried about the prospect of an emboldened US trying to use the example of a post-Hussein Iraq to promote democratic reform in the region.

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Saudi social politics are already extremely tense, with the Government struggling to suppress agents of change such as the independent-minded Al-Jazeera television news network, and many citizens openly antagonistic towards both the US and the Al-Saud regime. Given that the most dangerous time for an oppressive regime is when it starts to reform, it faces even greater danger when there are external "shocks" such as the war in Iraq at such a time.

According to analyst Mai Yamani, regime change in Baghdad will increase the pressure on the three pillars of the Saudi royal family's regime - its relationship with the country's increasingly assertive clerics, its oil wealth, and the solid support it has enjoyed from Washington.

The rebirth of Iraq's oil industry will create a potent new competitor for the region's oil producers, undercutting Saudi Arabia's influence within OPEC and reducing the income that funds the elaborate network of patronage used to buy support for the royal family.

And, as Iraq becomes the new focus of foreign investment in the region, a marginalised Saudi Arabia will be much more vulnerable to US demands that it act against extremists such as the mostly Saudi citizens who launched the September 11 attacks.

Another monarchy uncomfortable when the conversation turns to democracy is Kuwait, which still does not allow women to vote, despite its emir promising that particular reform after its liberation in 1991. The emir can sack the country's weak parliament whenever he wants, and his family holds all sensitive government ministries.

Attempts at reform in Jordan after the first Gulf War were just as unsuccessful, and both monarchies will come under pressure to make changes.

Jordan is braced for a flood of refugees, trade disruption and the loss of cheap oil from Hussein's Iraq, but in the longer term it could benefit from new investment and development in Iraq's oil industry, perhaps acting as a conduit for its export, and would be pleased to see its many Iraqi exiles going home.

Like Jordan, Syria is likely to suffer a trade jolt but could gain in the long term from trading with a stable, developing Iraqi state. Syria, the country with the longest border with Iraq, has long competed with its neighbour, backing Iran in its 1980s war with Hussein, and supporting the US coalition in 1990-91.

Its relations with Hussein quietly improved in recent years and it will now find itself almost surrounded by US allies in Israel, Turkey and Jordan.

Still listed by Washington as a sponsor of state terrorism, Syria has tried hard to improve ties with the sole superpower, most successfully by providing useful intelligence in the war on terror.

But Damascus has continued to sponsor Israel's enemies, Hamas and Hezbollah, and its standing in the US will suffer for its role on the Security Council in recent weeks, where it was an early ally of France against the US and Britain.

Turkey has also lost points in Washington because of its behaviour in recent weeks. The refusal of its parliament to host US troops to allow a "northern front" against Iraq will cost Istanbul dearly in US economic support if the lack of such a front is deemed to cost American lives.

The stand-off with the US has put enormous pressure on Istanbul's precarious economy and still fragile democracy -- the Turkish military is perfectly capable of stepping in yet again to save the nation from its elected representatives if the generals deem it necessary.

A COALITION VICTORY FOLLOWED BY FAILED TRANSITION TO AN IRAQI REGIME: This remains a strong possibility, as there is no convincing strategy for eventually handing authority to a legitimate Iraqi government.

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Two Carnegie Foundation analysts, Minxin Pei and Sara Kaspar, note that the US had used military force to impose democratic rule in foreign lands 18 times last century, and yet democracy was sustained in only five of those cases -- Germany, Japan, Italy, Panama and Grenada.

Any outbreak of factional, religious or ethnic fighting while US administrators were still in control, or after they had handed power to a new regime, would be likely to lead to proxy battles involving Iraq's neighbours, and the rise of religious extremists.

No neighbour wants to see Iraq follow the path of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia by breaking up after the end of totalitarian rule.

They would prefer to see a weak, factionalised Iraq rather than the formal break-up of the nation, but a failed state is still a recipe for widespread destabilisation.

PROTRACTED WAR: This is the least likely outcome but still a possibility.

Apart from the danger of Hussein springing some surprise, such as a massive use of chemical weapons to halt the coalition advance, other possibilities include the US-led forces stopping on the edge of Baghdad because of a fear of massive casualties, or uprisings in the Kurdish north or Shi'ite south, with locals seizing power and refusing to cede to US authority.

The neighbours do not want to see such a messy and inconclusive extension of the war, preferring a swift conclusion to avoid large numbers of refugees.

The longer hostilities continue, the greater the chance that Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey or Syria could be drawn into proxy battles supporting different Iraqi groups.

Iran is an obvious protagonist but might take the opportunity to improve its relations with the US by using its influence with the Shi'ite minority in the south and Kurds in the north to become a stabilising force.

The collapse of central authority in Iraq is the worst-case option for Turkey and would cause trouble throughout the region.

A protracted conflict would damage Syria's economy and destabilise its Government, and see a rapid escalation of political tensions and anti-US feeling in Saudi Arabia.

Jordan could find itself trapped between two war zones, with Iraq burning to its east and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict raging to its west.

Israel is the random element for all of Iraq's neighbours. If Hussein were to fire chemical weapons at Israel, there is little doubt that this time, unlike in 1991, it would retaliate.

And that is when we would really find out what a troubled neighbourhood looked like.

WHERE THE ETHNIC GROUPS LIVE

Kurds

15-20 per cent

* Sunni Muslims

* Divided between Turkey, Iran, Syria, Azerbaijan and Iraq.

* Rebelled at end of 1991 Gulf War but were thwarted by Hussein's forces, which led to about 1.5 million refugees fleeing their homes.

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- * After establishment of northern no-fly zone, were able to establish an autonomous government.
- * Hostilities between Kurdistan Democratic Party and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan have led to a partition of the areas they control.

Shia Arabs

45-52 per cent

- * Dominant religious group amongst Iraqi Arabs.
- * Excluded from power by the Sunni of the Baath Party.
- * Rebelled after Gulf War but were quickly defeated.
- * Fearful of their ties to the Iranian Shia regime, Hussein has environmentally devastated the marshlands in the Tigris-Euphrates delta in which they predominantly live.

Sunni Arabs

24-30 per cent

- * Minority of Iraqi Arab population.
- * Wield political power through Hussein's Baath party, which has close ties to Syria and radical Muslim groups throughout Middle East.

Other groups About 5 per cent

- * Primarily Turks, Armenians and Assyrians.

Source: CIA World Factbook 2002

- * Within Iraq

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In a Lebanese Valley, A Star Chef's Tour

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Byline: By NEIL MacFARQUHAR

Dateline: HERMIL, Lebanon

Body

DRIVING northward through the Bekaa, a valley habitually mentioned in the same breath as Hezbollah, hashish and hostages, I felt a little peculiar discussing the abundant varieties of traditional Lebanese cooking.

But my guide for the day, Ramzi Shwayri, Lebanon's most famous chef and a television star throughout the region, radiates infectious enthusiasm for his country's food, especially dishes found only in remote hamlets where unsavory characters might seek refuge.

"The basic philosophy of Lebanon's cuisine is that you want a few little things to eat while enjoying the company of friends," the chef said, expanding on the subject of meze, Middle Eastern hors d'oeuvres traditionally served with arak, a liquor distilled from anise.

"The original idea of meze was to have a small glass of arak and chat for two or three hours, maybe enjoy the view," he said. "But now the meze has become something where you sit for three hours and just eat. It has lost some meaning."

Like many compatriots, Mr. Shwayri, 31, wants Lebanon to shake off its sinister reputation of the war years and return to its past glory as a destination for bon vivants. Beirut has developed a hectic restaurant scene in the past couple of years, but dinner conversation tends to swirl around the ample displays of surgically enhanced cleavage rather than the food. Although the French once controlled Lebanon, their recipes did not influence Lebanese cooking, other than to leave a flair for presentation and service.

"No restaurant is famous in Lebanon because of the chef," Mr. Shwayri said. "People say they want to eat Italian, or they want to try the restaurant at the new Movenpick Hotel. Before the war, people used to go to restaurants for the chef, but now cooking is not important to them. I would like us to start over again where cooking will prevail over any other art."

One starting point for a renaissance of Lebanese food, he believes, might be with the traditional meze. Meze means appetizer in Arabic, although several languages around the Mediterranean claim the word. The chef thinks the concept developed independently among different peoples, starting in the early 1920's at the small riverside restaurants near the Bekaa town of Zahle. Travelers rested by a brook before hauling over the soaring Lebanon range to Beirut and the coast.

In a Lebanese Valley, A Star Chef's Tour

Those prototype mezes consisted of five or six preparations served in small rectangular pottery plates -- raw okra, olives, fried strips of eggplant, boiled eggs, broad beans cooked in olive oil and garlic, and labne, a thick strained yogurt that is a Lebanese staple. (Hummus evolved later.)

Eventually, small establishments in Beirut started competing by adding original dishes and salads; today, it is not uncommon to find a table with 20 meze plates, among them oddities for the region like smoked salmon or spring rolls.

"Meze should be simple and stay small amounts; you should not worry about having enough variety to fill the whole table," Mr. Shwayri said. "I think it is something Lebanese chefs should think about, about quality. When the emphasis is on quantity, it means people have lost the idea. They just eat a lot. If it is a meal, it is too much."

He thinks the best mezes consist of a balance of cold and hot dishes, all with fresh ingredients. He recommends a few raw vegetables, tabbouleh salad, perhaps tomato slices sprinkled with thyme and olive oil, then some cooked vegetables, small portions of meat like kibbe croquettes and some kind of cheese.

It was the quest for simple, traditional dishes that started the chef on a three-year trek on back roads and that led to his putting together a compendium of recipes he found. It is a huge book, some 740 pages, published in Arabic and French; an English language version, he said, is under consideration.

Mr. Shwayri found farms concentrating on what he called handicraft food -- like butter made by rocking milk in old clay jars -- and often grandmothers who knew how to cook it. (He collected old cookbooks, too, although recipe directions like "capture a live chicken, kill and pluck it" were a little more traditional than any modern cook would want to handle.)

To parade a fraction of what he found, the chef drove me through the Bekaa and northern Lebanon. The eating began in the morning with a wrap: huge round sheets of thin bread cooked on a sort of inverted wok known as a saj and spread with labne from the dairy of the Couvent de Tanail, a Jesuit establishment in Taanayel whose stone barns date back to the 19th century.

Its labne, sprinkled with a little olive oil and salt, has a light, slightly nutty taste and exudes freshness. It is so good that no fewer than 11 dairies have managed to work the name Tanail into their products, but the Jesuits sell only from their own store.

I asked the Rev. Paul Brouwers, the Dutch director of Tanail, how the farm assures its freshness. "We've tried to help the people in the area learn to use what they have," he said, noting that the Jesuits helped drain the marshes that once impeded farming in the area. Recently? "No, in 1860," he said.

Our next stop was a manufacturer of halvah and Turkish delight. Literally translated, the local Arabic term for Turkish delight means "throat comfort." S. H. Yaman & Sons makes both products using only natural ingredients. Great gooey vats of sugar, starch, water and citric acid sat bubbling slowly in the Turkish delight section of the workshop. Eventually we tore ourselves away from the table where women rolled a fresh batch in powdered sugar.

We meandered north, reaching the northern Bekaa, whose arid climate and rocky soil make the cultivation of all but one infamous crop particularly difficult. "Somewhere around here last summer I saw hashish growing right next to the road," said Mr. Shwayri, ever the thorough guide.

When we reached Hermil, a small farming community astride the Orontes River, our destination was the home of a particularly accomplished cook who had given Mr. Shwayri a recipe. We were visiting during Ramadan, so our Muslim hosts were fasting. But when the chef drove up on the bright, warm afternoon to deliver the cookbooks, they insisted on preparing no less than half a dozen local delicacies. (Mr. Shwayri is Greek Orthodox.)

The roly-poly Mr. Shwayri, deferring to the guests-shall-not-say-no etiquette of Arab hospitality, accepted but remained somewhat ill at ease. Uncharacteristically, he took just one helping from each dish.

In a Lebanese Valley, A Star Chef's Tour

Mr. Shwayri clucked approvingly about the kibbe, some of which was hand-shaped to resemble little flying saucers, while the rest was cupped into a more common version, which resembles a golf ball wearing two pointed party hats.

Basic kibbe -- meat mixed with cracked wheat -- has a rich dark brown color. But the color can change when cooks tinker with the ingredients. Adding something like pumpkin or potatoes to the meat creates a more golden effect once they are cooked. Served raw, like steak tartare, kibbe is considered an aphrodisiac. "Half of Lebanon's cuisine is kibbe, so if you can master that, you can master Lebanese cooking," Mr. Shwayri said.

After lunch, we spent two hours winding through the mountains, the bushes high up on the slopes tinged with red and yellow. Near sunset we arrived in the village of Andait, which still has three open-pit tannour ovens, where all villagers used to bake bread. Just as we arrived, the owners stopped making bread and began to stoke the fire with branches from their olive orchard to start cooking manaquish, a Lebanese pizza spread with wild thyme, olive oil and sumac.

It is a dish available everywhere in Lebanon, but sometimes the heavy bread crust overwhelms the delicate flavor of the thyme. Those slapped up on the stone sides of the tannour were exceptional, with a hot, thin, crispy crust that enhanced the sizzling, slightly bitter zest of the thyme.

"Eat these and you will forget all about ever going back to America," the baker, Joseph Gbeily, said as he handed them over, refusing payment.

An aide whom Mr. Shwayri brought on the trip wandered off in search of bread from another tannour to take back to Beirut. The aide is a retired army officer, and the chef admitted that he brought him on all his trips because he was never quite sure what kind of reception he would meet, particularly in very remote villages.

With a foreigner along, it also seemed prudent to travel with the aide, since he carried a gun permit. But the day passed without incident, as have all of Mr. Shwayri's trips into Lebanon's interior. "Actually, I'm not even sure he remembers how to shoot the gun anymore," he said later, grinning.

Finding Pitza

IN New York restaurants, Middle Eastern borders carry little sanctity. Rarely will a place label itself Egyptian, Israeli, Syrian or Lebanese. Almost always they call themselves Middle Eastern. Now and then, a restaurant's soul reveals itself, in a specialty, an owner's pride, a flag.

The most prominent Lebanese restaurant in New York, and perhaps the only one in Manhattan, is Al Bustan. Its extensive menu may not be obviously Lebanese -- many of the dishes are familiar from neighboring countries -- but dishes with a clear Lebanese provenance include labne, a thick yogurt spread; fattoush, a salad made with deep-fried pieces of bread; and an exceptional range of kibbes. Al Bustan offers Lebanese wines, including the well-regarded Bordeaux-like Chateau Musar. Al Bustan is at 827 Third Avenue, near 51st Street, (212) 759-5933.

Several Middle Eastern restaurants serve excellent versions of manaquish, the Lebanese pizza. At Moustache, manaquish is called piza. Moustache is at 90 Bedford Street, near Grove Street, (212) 229-2220, and at 265 East 10th Street, (212) 228-2022. Zaytoons, in Cobble Hill, Brooklyn, also serves good manaquish. It is at 283 Smith Street, (718) 875-1880.

Two other Brooklyn restaurants serve Lebanese specialties. They are Tripoli, 156 Atlantic Avenue, at Clinton Street, (718) 596-5800, and Fountain Cafe, 183 Atlantic Avenue, near Clinton Street, (718) 624-6764. ERIC ASIMOV

LAMB OR GOAT TARTARE (KIBBE NAYE)

Adapted from Ramzi Shwayri

Time: 1 hour 10 minutes

3/4 cup bulgur wheat

In a Lebanese Valley, A Star Chef's Tour

1 pound lean boneless high-quality lamb or goat, ground twice (ask the butcher to do this)

Finely grated zest of 1 lime

Half an onion, finely grated

1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

1 1/2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper

2 tablespoons finely chopped basil leaves

Salt

Pine nuts, for garnish

Coarsely chopped fresh mint leaves, for garnish

Finely sliced onion, for garnish

Extra virgin olive oil, for garnish.

1. Bring a kettle of water to a boil. Place bulgur wheat in a medium bowl, cover with boiling water and allow to sit for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, fill a large bowl with water and ice, and set aside.

2. Place bulgur in a fine-meshed sieve, rinse with cold water, and allow to drain. Place meat in a deep bowl. Dip hands in ice water, then knead meat for about 2 minutes. Add bulgur to meat a handful at a time, first squeezing out excess water.

3. Add lime zest and grated onion to bowl. Chill hands again in ice water, and knead mixture until blended. Add cinnamon, pepper, basil and salt to taste. Chill hands and knead again. Cover mixture and refrigerate for 15 minutes.

4. Shape meat into an oval mound on a serving platter. Use tip of a knife to incise a decorative pattern into meat, and insert pine nuts as desired. Garnish platter with mint leaves and sliced onion, and drizzle edges of platter with olive oil. Serve cold. (The mixture may also be rolled into balls of any size and deep fried or grilled.)

Yield: 4 to 6 servings.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos: THE MEZE MAKER -- Ramzi Shwayri. (James Hill for The New York Times)(pg. F1); A GATHERING OF TRADITIONS -- Olive branches fuel the fire, above, in Andait, Lebanon. Bekaa dishes include chicken cooked with rice and nuts, left; a special bread baked during Ramadan, below; and wheat that is hand-pounded before cooking, bottom. (Photographs by James Hill for The New York Times)(pg. F6)

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Christianity HITS a crossroad: Once-thriving Christian churches are falling by the wayside in Turkey, but one new, less rigid evangelical church is defying the odds in that Muslim world

Ottawa Citizen

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Byline: Michael Petrou

Dateline: DIYARBAKIR, Eastern Turkey

Body

DIYARBAKIR, Eastern Turkey - Deep in the heart of Muslim Turkey stand two Christian churches, their front doors facing across a narrow, garbage-strewn street where gangs of children chase plastic soccer balls and play with scraps of paper.

On the north side of the Diyarbakir street is the Meryem Ana Kilisesi, the Church of the Virgin Mary, an ancient Syrian Orthodox church whose courtyard is surrounded by high and crumbling basalt walls.

Once home to hundreds of worshippers, the Church of the Virgin Mary is now an empty place. A few families still attend, but most of the Christians who lived here have left for Western Europe and North America.

Father Yusuf Akbulut is 35, but already his beard is flecked with grey and he carries with him a premature air of almost whimsical nostalgia. His flock is dwindling, and he is far too young to preside over a decline.

Citizen Special

Some of his parishioners left for economic reasons. Others were pushed out by subtle social pressure and, in the 1980s and 1990s, by murders and terrorist attacks by Hezbollah, the militant Islamic organization that targets both Christians and Muslims.

"We do feel lonely," he says. Decades ago, "we had 150 families and now we have 15."

Four families live within the walls of the church courtyard. In a small garden with olive and pine trees, a water fountain stands surrounded by climbing grapevines and empty olive oil cans that now serve as water jugs. Children, some of them belonging to Father Yusuf, play beneath the trees.

"They won't come back," Father Yusuf says of his missing parishioners.

"But they can live away for years and still be foreigners. I want to stay. We have history here. This is home."

Father Yusuf's voice is tinged with sadness. Diyarbakir, it seems, is not an obvious place for Christianity to grow.

And yet, across the street is a brand-new building, with strong straight walls, gleaming floors and plush chairs inside. Workers cart out debris and arrive with new building material.

Christianity HITS a crossroad: Once-thriving Christian churches are falling by the wayside in Turkey , but one new, less rigid evangelical church is defying the....

This new, as yet unnamed evangelical church was paid for with American money and is supervised by Jerry Mattiks, a 24-year-old from Washington state.

Jerry has a fuzzy moustache, a serious, if friendly, adult demeanour, and a wife. He arrived after graduating from bible college, where he read that Christian congregations in eastern Turkey needed help.

He's been here for 19 months and speaks fluent Turkish; his voice is highlighted with the tones of a true believer.

"I'm just serving the Lord Jesus Christ," he says.

At Jerry's church, all congregants are converts from Islam. The church has only been open for a couple of weeks and about 30 people, if not really members, at least stop by regularly. But there is room for 150 to 200 people. The congregation is expected to grow.

And although the two churches exist perhaps three metres from each other, the congregations do not pray together at all.

"They are based on race," Jerry says. "It is the Assyrian Orthodox Church. And sometimes they don't even open the gate when people bang on it. We're open to everyone."

Christianity's past in Turkey is encapsulated in the decaying walls of Father Yusuf's empty church. Jerry is convinced its future is in his building across the street.

Lands that are now Turkey were

once home to millions of Christians, mostly Armenians in the eastern part of the country and ethnic Greeks on the Black Sea coast.

The Pontic Greeks left in the early 1920s after a failed Greek invasion. Ethnic Turks in Greece, and ethnic Greeks in Turkey, were forced to leave their homes and move to respective nation-states.

The disappearance of the Armenians was more deadly.

In 1915, with the Russian army advancing on the crumbling Ottoman Empire, Armenians in the city of Van revolted, murdered many of the local Muslims, and held the town until the Russians arrived. It was the latest in a series of Armenian rebellions. The Ottomans responded with massacres and ethnic cleansing.

Hundreds of thousands of Armenians were killed, and many more were deported to Syria. Kurdish tribesmen savaged the long columns of starving survivors and carried off young women on horseback. When it ended, between 800,000 and 1.5 million Armenians were dead, and the Anatolian heartland was virtually empty of Christians.

It was the 20th century's first genocide, although it is rarely acknowledged.

"Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?" Adolf Hitler asked before his slaughter of the Jews.

Today, few do.

Turkey downplays the tragedy, claiming the numbers are exaggerated, and that the Armenians died in a civil war or from disease.

It remains a bitter dispute in Turkey and among Armenians worldwide, highlighted in Canada by fatal Armenian terrorist attacks on Turkish diplomats in the 1980s.

The subject is taboo in the Turkish press, but is hardly a secret among Turks on the street.

Christianity HITS a crossroad: Once-thriving Christian churches are falling by the wayside in Turkey , but one new, less rigid evangelical church is defying the....

"Do you know about 1915?" Israfil, a Turkish Kurd in Diyarbakir, asks. "Yes, many died. Maybe my grandfather killed someone, but not me. I didn't kill. And it was a different government then, the Ottomans."

Three years ago, Father Yusuf told a newspaper reporter that Syriac Christians were systematically killed in the Armenian genocide -- and he was promptly arrested.

Others, understandably, are more circumspect.

"We don't know," says Father Gabriel Akyuz, an Assyrian Orthodox minister in Mardin, one of eastern Turkey's last towns with a significant Christian population.

"We didn't see it with our own eyes," because it was so long ago, he says.

But evidence of the once-strong Armenian presence is scattered across Turkey, in empty churches and steeples that have been converted into mosque minarets.

In Diyarbakir, I visit the massive and haunting ruins of the Armenian Surpagab Kilisesi church. Most of the roof has caved in but soaring stone arches still cross the empty sky like tiny airborne bridges.

Ten-year-old Nazzam Shian lives in an adjacent building with her five brothers and sisters. Hers is the last Armenian family in Diyarbakir.

She leads me through the deserted courtyard, past stone pools carved into the wall that once held holy water and whose tiles are fading. We climb darkened staircases and through narrow passageways, onto the top of the church walls.

Nazzam scampers along the decaying stone, 20 metres above the grounds, where she looks down at the roofs below us.

A flock of swallows, disturbed by our presence, wheels around and around above the ruined courtyard, their high-pitched calls echoing eerily off the crumbling ruins.

At Jerry's evangelical church, Muhar-

rem, my Turkish translator, is quietly grumbling. "I hear about churches like this, usually in Istanbul. They offer money and jobs to people who convert," he says.

"I think that is why they had problems with their building permits."

Jerry says he has heard these accusations before, and that the city had frustrated attempts to build the church. Some in town believe the church spies for the Americans. Why else would you need such a large building where are no Christians?

"A lot of people don't like that we convert Muslims," says Jerry. "They think we're dangerous. But we try to do it in a manner of peace and love. That's what we're trying to do -- to bring peace to people here."

Jerry says that his church doesn't aggressively convert, but that locals arrive at the church after reading the New Testament or having a dream.

"Our approach is to put the Gospel out to people so they can make the choice," he says.

He also downplays connections to Christian organizations in the United States. "There's no network at all. The bind between us all is the Holy Spirit that guides us."

I am uncomfortable with evangelism, and am skeptical.

Christianity HITS a crossroad: Once-thriving Christian churches are falling by the wayside in Turkey , but one new, less rigid evangelical church is defying the....

But later, over glasses of tea with some members of the congregation, a few tell me they have been Christians for more than a decade and met in each other's houses before the church was built.

Ahmed Guvener, a leader of the Diyarbakir church, was an Alevi Muslim before converting to Christianity. He says arguments over religion with local Sunni Muslims caused his brother and him to question their faith. They turned first to atheism but felt "empty." After reading an ad in a newspaper offering free Bibles, they researched Christianity, converted and started the church here.

"A new family has grown up around us, and we haven't been rebuked by our own families," he says.

Other members of the Diyarbakir church are not so grounded in their new faith.

Farhad Imanligolu, a friendly man with a smooth, round face, says he had been a communist and a heavy drinker until Jesus, a "treasure," helped him move on from alcohol and Marx. But later, strolling together through the town, Farhad and I visit a mosque. I suggest we wait outside until the evening prayers are complete, but Farhad beckons me inside. "It's OK. I'm Muslim too," he says.

Muharrem, my translator, says Christianity is more lenient than Islam about alcohol and sex. And, he says, because it is something new here it may appeal to those who are poor and have little hope.

"I think Christian, Muslims and Jews should live together," he says

"But I think people should leave each other in peace. Father Yusuf and the families at his church should have peace. And the Muslims in Diyarbakir should have peace, too."

After several days I leave Diyarbakir. The Eastern Orthodox Easter is approaching, and I want to be somewhere I will not feel quite so lonely.

I travel 100 kilometres south to Mardin, a beautiful and ancient city of honey-coloured buildings. The town clings to a craggy mountain, overlooking green fields that extend south to Syria.

The Kirklar Kilisesi, or Forty Martyrs Church, is small, well-kept and more than 500 years old. It serves about 600 people, one of the largest Christian communities in Turkey. A volleyball net is strung across the courtyard, and children from the town kick a soccer ball beneath it.

Assyrian Christians settled here in the fifth century, and the pastor, Father Gabriel Akyuz, still conducts services in Aramaic, the language spoken by Jesus. Father Gabriel also preaches in Turkish and Arabic. This is a multi-ethnic town, and all Christians worship at the same place.

At 43, Father Gabriel has survived only the most recent troubles afflicting Christians, and indeed many Muslims, in eastern Turkey. But, like Father Yusuf in Diyarbakir, he says he will not leave the city.

"I feel I am a real Christian. And we are not afraid of anything, because the soul cannot die," he says.

"I love my language and my history and my motherland. And for that I don't want to leave. I hope I will die here."

Besides, Father Gabriel says, relations between Muslims and Christians in Mardin are excellent.

It seems that way.

Everyone in town, Christian and Muslim, refer to Father Gabriel as "Papa." And during Easter celebrations on Sunday, the church courtyard is packed with Christian worshippers and Muslim city officials.

Father Gabriel leads a service in three languages, his chants floating with incense smoke around the tiny chapel. **Women** ululate as religious icons are carried past the congregation.

Christianity HITS a crossroad: Once-thriving Christian churches are falling by the wayside in Turkey , but one new, less rigid evangelical church is defying the....

Afterward, we spill out of the chapel and into the dazzling sunlight of the church courtyard. We eat hard-boiled eggs, dyed a deep red, and sweet, milky rice pudding.

Father Gabriel is optimistic.

"The Church may grow," he says. "We hope. But we are not prophets."

Michael Petrou is a Canadian journalist living in England.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Evangelist Jerry Mattiks, is convinced the future of Christianity in Turkey lies in the new church across the street from the nearly (abandoned church), headed by Father Yusuf Akbulut, right.; Colour Photo: Michael Petrou; The haunting ruins of the Surpagab Kilisesi church in Diyarbakir, a sign of the once-strong Armenian presence in Turkey .; Colour Photo: Evangelist Jerry Mattiks, is convinced the future of Christianity in Turkey lies in the new church across the street from the nearly abandoned church, headed by (Father Yusuf Akbulut).; Colour Photo: Evangelist (Jerry Mattiks), is convinced the future of Christianity in Turkey lies in the new church across the street from the nearly abandoned church, headed by Father Yusuf Akbulut.

Load-Date: September 21, 2003

Riches and ruins; Lebanon

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Late Edition

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Byline: Debra Jopson

Body

Debra Jopson, returning to Beirut after 25 years, finds it still abounds with amazing contradictions.

As an Australian of non-Lebanese descent, I have discovered that there are two reactions when you announce plans to holiday in Beirut. The first is: "Don't you get enough strife back home? You need to go looking for it?" The second is: "Beirut? How wonderful! I've always wanted to go there."

On day one, after struggling with mad honking taxis at Beirut Airport, careening down the boulevards with their trailing power lines and stunted street palms, after making the mental somersaults necessary to assimilate gleaming, elegant apartment blocks standing shoulder to shoulder with bombed-out buildings, it seemed as if both those comments made sense.

Lebanon, my home as a teenager in the years leading up to its civil war, was a maddening, exhilarating country, riddled with stunning contradictions. It still is.

I returned after a 25-year absence with my husband and teenage daughter. We rented a furnished apartment in Beirut's Hamra district for two weeks and lived half like residents, half like tourists, setting out daily by bus and taxi to see Lebanon's major attractions - all of them within three hours' drive in this tiny country.

Here's one of the great contradictions: while many of the modern buildings remain shot up and vandalised, the ancient ruins have been renovated, even expanded, in the years I was away.

Of all the occupying forces that have made marks on the landscape of this embattled country, the Israelis, who quit only in 2000, left bomb craters. The Syrians, whose army remains here, brought guest workers who live in sack-bag tents in the rural areas. But the buildings of the older occupiers - the Phoenicians, Romans, Byzantines, Arab Muslims, Crusaders, Marmalukes and Ottomans - have become shrines to both a glorious past and Lebanon's desperate need for tourists to rescue a sick economy.

Apart from the fabulous food, our two joys were visiting Lebanon's ancient sites and mingling with a people with such a zest for daily drama that a walk down the street seems like an adventure.

There are regular scenes of road rage. Seeing the anger, the waving hands, raised voices and popping eyes, you wait tensely for the gun to appear. Then the antagonists are smiling and slapping each other affectionately. Eh, "Maleish?" ("Who cares?")

Riches and ruins Lebanon

You can stay in a comfortable apartment overlooking the Mediterranean, as we did, and still feel you're an adventure traveller.

Take just one of our days there, spent with a driver who offered us a full-day tour for a reasonable \$US60, or about \$100 ("I don't care for money," he told us. "Friendship is all.")

We climbed a mountain, away from the humid, polluted fog that shrouded Beirut, to the giant monument to peace sculpted from concrete, crushed tanks and artillery by the French artist Arman. Soldiers guard it from attack. Beneath it is a military museum in a concrete bunker; a little monument to weaponry, including daggers and machine-guns. Our driver smiled benignly, seeming to miss the irony.

By mid-morning, thanks to a surprise planned by this new friend, we were engaged in a wine-tasting and tour at the Caves de Ksara, where in 1857 the Jesuits first used the dark, deep catacombs to make wine. Our Muslim mate had a little tipple himself.

At Aanjar, 58 kilometres from Beirut in mountains near the Syrian border, we toured extensive ruins dating back to the early eighth century AD. This was a city of the Umayyads, the first hereditary Islamic dynasty, which ruled an empire stretching from Damascus to southern France. And we had it almost to ourselves.

The driver hailed from Baalbek, 85 kilometres east of the capital, and we lunched on meat pastries and tea at his modest home. We posed for photos with an Arab headdress and a gun, then hit the tourist rush-hour at Baalbek's huge, head-spinning complex of ancient temples.

These are among the wonders of the ancient world, on a site more than 4000 years old. Six 22-metre-high columns remain from the temple of Jupiter, constructed in the first century AD. Lebanon's Tourism Ministry claims that this was the Roman empire's largest temple.

Baalbek is big and dramatic and sits in stunning countryside. It requires far more than the 90 minutes we gave it, but I was lucky. I had been many times before. It was like an old friend found safe after a war.

The road home took us to a cheese factory, where we bought its fresh white produce laced with tasty black seeds, plus glowing white eggs and a box of dates. We passed youths who had strung up yellow flags and held up buckets for motorists to throw money in. They are the Hezbollah, who fight Israel from the south but in the Bekaa valley to the north have a more benign image, running welfare agencies to help the poor. The poster of their leader, wielding a gun, is everywhere.

Everywhere, too, are regular checkpoints manned by armed Lebanese and Syrian soldiers. Not every tourist would find that comforting, but we did. A quarter of a century ago, I was stopped at such checkpoints and had guns pointed at my head by militia about whose politics and intent I was uncertain.

Another driver took us to the south as far as Tyre, where the remnants of the old Roman empire have been resurrected while the lands around them wallow in political conflict.

Tyre, founded around 3000 BC, was home to the Phoenicians and to the dye merchants who sold purple to the Europeans. It was considered a symbol of royalty and people paid a fortune for it. Tyre is an archaeological site in which it is a joy to become lost, the sun and sea lending a soporific air to the place.

Nearby Sidon has less extensive archaeological excavations, but clambering over its 13th-century Crusader castle, on a small island connected to the seafront by a causeway, is always pleasurable. One day we really will stop at the splendid-looking seaside restaurant here. But this day we're fed an enormous morning tea at our driver's home. He lives in Sidon; his brother lives in Lakemba.

Views from the car window provide some insight into modern Lebanon.

Riches and ruins Lebanon

The modern Marriott Hotel gives way to a refugee camp, then stores specialising in caged birds and tethered turkeys. Next, barrows are piled artistically with fruit. There is a butchery market with dead sheep hanging upside down, then rows of mattresses on sale.

On the foundations of an unfinished building, deckchairs have been arranged to face the beach. The country is littered with unfinished, empty buildings. There are greenhouses selling red roses and banana fields crowding between the highway and the sea.

The Lebanese coast is lined with cafes advertising ice-cream, coffee and narghila: the hubbly-bubbly pipe. How the Lebanese love to smoke. It's as if, having beaten the bombs and bullets, they feel they can't be touched by lung cancer.

Once it was enough for a tourist just to settle for Beirut, the casino, Baalbek, and to spend time sitting on Hamra Street, drinking coffee while watching the passing parade. Not so now.

The middle class seems to have disappeared and with it much affordable entertainment for the passing traveller. Hamra is still interesting, but the buzz is not back. We spotted only a couple of sheiks.

I took glam gear for the casino, remembering the breathtaking shows of yore - harem-clad dancers in jars of water who somersaulted to the puffs of a stage sultan's hubbly-bubbly, a steam train in full burst winding through the audience, a dozen white

horses tapping their hooves on rolling drums - but now the casino show is depleted. A Tom Jones impersonator seemed to be the drawcard during our visit.

Beirut is being rebuilt. But the Solidere project in the old Bourj - creating handsome ochre buildings and paved streets around newly discovered ancient ruins (perhaps the equivalent of 50 Queen Victoria Building restorations) - is largely for Lebanon's rich five per cent. We had coffee one day by these ruins and absorbed the vibes of the fabulously well-heeled at neighbouring tables.

The famous St Georges Hotel is gutted and covered in web cloth, but the glittering marina replete with super-yachts is still in operation.

The heart of Beirut, housing 6000 years of heritage, still yields treasures. The National Museum, which took a mighty battering during the war, is now a remarkable monument to the will and the craft of those who restored it. Ancient statues and mosaics too heavy to remove from the building during wartime were successfully covered and protected by cement blocks. The marble sarcophagi rich in friezes are the standout survivors.

Another rewarding Beirut pursuit is to spend a Sunday wandering along the Corniche, the seaside promenade that citizens treat like a park. People bring fold-up tables and chairs, narghilas, tape players for belting out loud Arabic dance music, dogs, children, scooters, roller blades and even, in one case, a stove and accoutrements for making Lebanese coffee.

Older Muslim women in white headscarves wear Sunday best (including bright red velvet kaftans woven with gold), but the Westernised rich jog or power-walk in designer tracksuits with mandatory gleaming white shoes.

Many of the wealthy now live at Jounieh, where Christians fled during the war. Some tourists now prefer it but Beirut, with its mangled pavements and dignified if shabby French buildings, seems more real.

There are many other places to visit, including Tripoli, with its high mountain cedars that inspired the creation of the Lebanese flag, and the riverside restaurants of Zahle.

My favourite, after Baalbek and Byblos, is the palace of Beiteddine. Considered the best example of local 19th-century architecture, it houses an ornate harem room, a labyrinth of Roman-style baths and now, in the stables which once held 600 horses and their riders, a huge collection of Byzantine mosaics.

Riches and ruins Lebanon

Nearby, at the village of Deir el-Qamar (Monastery of the Moon), we became instant friends with two strangers, as often happens in Lebanon. In a small sandwich shop where I had a deliciously garlicky soujouk roll, the proprietor brought us pictures of local scenery and insisted we have them as a token of friendship.

Then we found Georges Boustani, (French-speaking) guide extraordinaire, who showed us around the caravanseraï and a little church, including a painting of the Virgin Mary which once wept tears. But not lately. "She doesn't like war."

Georges took us into the vast, empty bedrooms of the palace from which emirs once ruled Lebanon. There, on a small stove he had stowed away, Georges made us Arabic coffee and gave us roses and little white, sweet-smelling flowers he kept in water in a plastic container. That moment was worth every hour spent sitting in a mad Beirut traffic jam.

DESTINATION LEBANON

GETTING THERE

Malaysia Airlines (stopover in Kuala Lumpur of two hours and Dubai of 50 minutes) and Emirates (stopover in Singapore of one hour and Dubai of 10 hours) both fly to Lebanon. Low-season fares cost about \$1800 (until end of March), rising to about \$2000 in the high season, May 15-September 15.

The specialist travel agent for Lebanon is Orient Travel, 120 Haldon Street, Lakemba (Phone 9759 8855) or 25 Auburn Road, Auburn (9646 4400).

Australian citizens can obtain six-month tourist visas when they arrive in Beirut, at a cost of \$110.

STAYING THERE

The author stayed at the Mayfair Residence in Hamra, phone (9611) 340 050/5. The bookings were made and the rate negotiated via email (mayfair@destination

.com.lb). Rates, which range from \$US30 (about \$50) for a single room to \$US100 for a VIP suite, are available at www.mayfairresidence.com. Cheaper rates are negotiable for longer stays.

Rates for other hotels are published at www.hotels-lebanon.com

BEING THERE

Given heightened tensions in the Middle East, the Department of Foreign Affairs advises Australians in Lebanon to "exercise extreme caution and a high degree of personal security awareness, particularly in commercial and public areas known to be frequented by foreigners". More details at www.dfat.gov.au

Graphic

TWO ILLUS: Cafe society ... far left, locals and tourists enjoy a night out in Beirut; left, temple ruins at Baalbek.
Main photo: AP/Hussein Malla MAP: LEBANON

Load-Date: July 17, 2007

Hijack victim recalls ordeal

Times Colonist (Victoria, British Columbia)

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Body

It was 1 p.m. on Day 11 of the second longest airline hijack in history. In his second-row seat on the fetid and bloodied Boeing 707, now grounded on a runway in Damascus, Jeffrey Balkind listened as a Pakistani hijacker, known as Alamgir, announced to the hostages that execution of foreigners would start in exactly six hours.

He watched a pilot cry, and a senior Pakistani official die, and kept himself sane by reading the only book he'd brought with him, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, remembering love-making with the seven women he'd known, and by singing to himself Paul McCartney's haunting song, *Yesterday*.

Balkind's story took place 21 years ago. He is now telling it anew in the perspective of the Sept. 11 attacks on the U.S. He spoke with the *Citizen* last week from his office in Washington, D.C. This week he appears on CTV's Vicki Gabereau and on CBC radio and television from Victoria.
Southam Newspapers

There, he will also finish a Canadian university lecture on the hijacking -- a lecture he began eight years ago, but overcome by emotion, never finished.

It should have been just another short flight for the economist working in the United Nations system in Pakistan. The Boeing 707 would take off from Karachi on the morning of March 2, 1981, and touch down three hours later in Peshawar on domestic Pakistan International Airlines, PK Flight 326.

"I boarded the plane, sat down, read magazines, reports and dozed," he recalls. But, 20 minutes later, when the plane hit its 10,000-metre altitude, three young men on board leapt from their seats, waving pistols. "They suddenly charged down the aisle," says Balkind, "shouting in Urdu and English: 'Move to the back of the aircraft!'"

"A fist fight broke out between one of the stewards and the hijackers. The steward got clubbed in the face with a pistol. A second hijacker swung his fist into the face of another steward.

"The lead hijacker, Salamullah Khan Tippu -- known as 'Alamgir' -- fired a shot at one of the suitcases in the overhead baggage to send a signal that this was serious.

"Luckily, he did not puncture the fuselage," says Balkind. "Or, maybe, his first bullet was a blank. In five minutes, they had pushed everyone cowering to the back of the plane," he says, "and shouted commands to the pilot and co-pilot to obey their instructions."

Hijack victim recalls ordeal

That is how the 13-day ordeal began. Only the hijacking of TWA 847 in June 1985, lasted longer -- 15 days. It was hijacked, from Athens to Beirut and Algiers, by Hezbollah Islamic fundamentalists. As with PK 326, one hostage would be cruelly killed, the U.S. navy diver, Robert Stetham.

From his seat in 2A, Balkind watched the life-and-death theatre that is terrorist hijacking, played to a captive seated audience.

The person sitting next to him as he was forced to the back of the plane was Lt.-Maj. Tariq Rahim, a former aide to Pakistan's deposed prime minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Bhutto had been overthrown in a coup by Gen. Mohammed Zia ul-Haq who had tried and hanged Bhutto in 1979 for ordering the killing of four political opponents, and who had imprisoned Bhutto supporters.

Alamgir had collected everyone's passports on the first evening, including Balkind's UN passport. He had hidden his other passport in his briefcase. The hijackers did not know that he was Jewish and a citizen of the apartheid pariah nation of South Africa.

The hijackers ordered the pilots to land in Kabul, the Afghanistan capital, then under Russian control. By all accounts, the Russians remained indifferent to the drama.

For 24 hours, the hijackers patrolled their hostages and announced their demands.

Meanwhile, the passengers, though allowed to return to their assigned seats, had nothing to eat for a day.

Fortunately, a regular supply of water arrived on the plane within the first half hour after a plea to the Kabul airport control tower. Temperatures inside the plane quickly shot to sweltering levels as air conditioning and generators faltered on the baking tarmac.

And the stench in the plane became unbearable. "Not everyone made it to the bathroom on time," he says. "We had to be accompanied by a hijacker and the bathrooms backed up a lot of the time."

In the classic egotism of nouveau newsmakers, the hijackers occasionally broadcast the nightly news on the loudspeaker. The passengers, therefore, could follow the course of negotiations as the governments and media sorted out identities of hostages, the crew members and the hijackers themselves.

The hijackers were all Pakistanis. Alamgir, a former college student, was already accused of murder and other serious crimes. Nasir Jamal Khan, 22, was a former science student involved in the killing of another student. Arshad Hussain was a college student with no police record.

They wanted one thing: release of 93 Pakistani political prisoners thrown in jail by President Mohammed Zia ul-Haq. Zia refused.

On Day 3, a young boy walked up to Alamgir and pulling on his shirt, blurted "You said we'd be leaving soon."

Unaware it was a child, Alamgir whirled around, ready to shoot. He didn't.

"Within an hour," says Mr. Balkind, "all the women and children were taken off the plane." The release of 30 women and children and one stewardess left 105 Pakistanis and five foreigners from the original 148 passengers, plus a crew of six pilots and flight attendants.

Early on, the hijackers had identified Lt.-Maj. Rahim. "They told him not to talk with anybody, to sit silent," says Balkind. "He knew he would be killed."

Lt.-Maj. Rahim had written a letter pleading for his life, and had it smuggled out to Murtaza Bhutto, son of the executed prime minister. Murtaza operated terrorist training camps of his own in Kabul and had masterminded this hijacking to avenge the death of his father.

Hijack victim recalls ordeal

On Day 5, the hijackers announced from the cockpit: "The Pakistani government will not agree to release all the prisoners, and we have a government conspirator here responsible for the death of our beloved leader (Bhutto)." The hijackers apparently believed that Lt.-Maj. Rahim had testified against Bhutto at his trial.

"Rahim went white like a sheet," says Balkind. "The hijackers slapped and beat him as he was forced to stand at the front of the plane."

Bleeding and terrified, Lt.-Maj. Rahim begged for his life. As the beating continued, he slumped into unconsciousness. Blood spurted onto the seat beside Balkind.

"I thought they'd killed him," he says. "It was brutal, like being in an abattoir."

The hijackers thought they had killed Lt.-Maj. Rahim. They tossed him out the back door of the plane. He landed on his head and died on the tarmac with brain injuries.

On Day 6, the hijackers turned their attention to Balkind.

"Alamgir hauled me into the cockpit to do a radio broadcast," he says.

It was a message from Kabul to Delhi with the hijackers' demands for the release of political prisoners in Kabul. They made Balkind sit in the co-pilot's chair, ordered him to scribble a message and then to broadcast it over the plane's radio to Delhi.

"As soon as I was inside the cockpit," says Balkind, "they put a grenade to my head and kept pointing a pistol at me -- a Colt or a Beretta. My hand was shaking. I told them 'I can't write unless you put that down.'"

The hijackers laid down the weapons and dictated the message. In the cockpit, Balkind also had his first and only conversation with Alamgir. The hijacker told him of the lack of social justice in Pakistan.

"In my own work, I was also trying to right social injustices," says Balkind. "But there is a line in the sand that you just don't cross: Murder on board an aircraft."

On Day 7, the frustrated Afghan authorities ordered the plane out of the country. Syria said it would help and the Boeing 707 landed in Damascus.

There, talks continued with receding deadlines and repeated threats to blow up the plane.

Finally, the hijackers said they would settle for the release of 54 prisoners in exchange for the hostages.

On Day 11 at 1 p.m., the hijackers issued their deadline: At 7 p.m., they announced, they would begin to kill the five foreigners. One hostage per hour.

"They pulled down the shades of the plane," says Balkind, "and told us to say our last prayers."

"I kept trying to figure out which of the five of us would be the first to go," says Balkind. "One was a Canadian who had broken out of Dorchester Penitentiary in New Brunswick. Another was an American drug smuggler. A third was a Swedish drug smuggler. The fourth was a young Iowa lawyer named Fred Hubbell. And myself."

"Those last few hours seemed like an eternity."

He prayed. "I thought of my wife and my parents in South Africa, and my brother in New York, grieving. I didn't fear so much about my own life. You worry about your beloved."

Then, 20 minutes before the fateful 7 p.m. deadline, Zia agreed to the release the 54 prisoners from Pakistan's jails.

Euphoria swept the plane. Hostages and hijackers hugged each other. Alamgir relaxed. Security lapsed.

Hijack victim recalls ordeal

"That's when I took photos. If I had been noticed, they would have killed me. It was so stupid and risky," says Balkind, "but my hobby is photography and I didn't feel like hugging the hijackers. I think in retrospect, I was just trying to seize control of my life again by taking photos. I took a risk, a measured risk, a stupid risk."

On Day 13, Pakistan's 54 prisoners were released to Syria. Among them, according to Time magazine's sources in Islamabad, were murderers, arms smugglers, Soviet spies and saboteurs.

The hijackers "surrendered" to Syrian authorities, who freed them. After a brief stay in Syria, they returned to Afghanistan.

The hostages and crew were taken to a military hospital in Damascus where they, for the first time, could talk to one another and to the Pakistan ambassador to Syria. Balkind's wife met him there.

So ended "one of the most successful hijacking in history."

Balkind went right back to work as though nothing had happened. He developed his photos and never looked at them for 10 years.

Occasionally, Balkind, now 55, has plane-crash dreams. He remembers a nightmare in which his plane flies into a brick wall at 34,000 feet -- almost a premonition of Sept. 11.

In 1996, he remarried and now has a three-year-old daughter. His 18-year-old son, Marshall, child of his first marriage, collaborated with him for this interview.

Every hijacking still touches him. On Sept. 11, the nephew of his daughter's nanny died in the plane that hit the Pentagon. His neighbour, a US Air pilot, lost his wife who was a flight attendant on the same American Airlines plane.

His research led him to a Canadian hijack expert, Peter St. John who wrote the book Air Piracy, Airport Security, and International Terrorism. They became close friends. In 1994, Balkind travelled to the University of Manitoba to speak to St. John's class.

Of that visit, recalls St. John: "I could see Jeffrey was very disturbed. He was overcome by emotions several times through the lecture and never completed it."

This week, at the University of Victoria, he says that Jeffrey will "finish that lecture he started eight years ago." The course -- Intelligence, Espionage and Terrorism -- will be given to 70 students and invited guests.

HOW TO BEAT HIJACKERS:

Jeffrey Balkind survived the hijacking and now opposes negotiating with airplane hijackers. His seven-point plan:

- Take airport security out of the hands of 'poorly-trained people' and turn it over to the military.
- Speed up integration of computer data bases among immigration, airport security and police.
- Detain suspicious refugee claimants with no identity papers, or with possible bogus identities, pending an investigation.
- Carry out in-depth security checks on airline passengers, airport personnel and crew: "I have supported the Israeli system for years, which runs security checks and subjects each passenger to detailed interviewing and psychological assessment."
- Racial profiling: "Although I am personally uncomfortable with it, I support its use."
- Plain-clothed armed air marshals should sit among passengers on all flights.

Hijack victim recalls ordeal

- All cockpit doors should be bullet-proof and steel-reinforced. Pilots should be armed with sten guns -- handguns which fire non-metallic, non-piercing bullets.

Graphic

Photo: Captain of hijacked jet is comforted by two hostages. There was tremendous stress over the 13 days and nights, flying between three countries (Pakistan, Afghanistan and Syria) and the crew had to land the jet at gunpoint in each case.

Load-Date: March 25, 2002

End of Document

LIFE-AND-DEATH STAKES IN THE WAR ON TERROR; ATTACK ON TERRORISM; All eyes are on Afghanistan as the country of 27 million is caught in the line of fire of yesterday's U.S.-led air attacks as well as in the iron grip of hardline Taliban rulers and a famine-and-war-ravaged past. Here's what major western, Middle Eastern and South Asian countries have to win and lose in the gathering military, political and humanitarian storm settling over the region.

Hamilton Spectator (Ontario, Canada)

October 8, 2001 Monday Final Edition

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Body

Looking at the Middle East and Central Asia -- whether in spy satellite photos or graphics on newspaper and magazines pages -- the area might appear to be nothing more than a war gamer's board or computer screen simulation prepared for play.

Before yesterday's U.S.-led attacks on Afghanistan, war ships were in position in the Persian Gulf and Arabian Ocean. Fighter planes and bombers were at the ready on bases in Saudi Arabia, Oman and Diego Garcia Island in the Indian Ocean.

In history books, the previous duelling between Great Britain, Russia and other powers in the regions during the 18th and 19th century was known as "the Great Game."

Even with yesterday's attacks, expect to see more gamesmanship both on the military and diplomatic fields, as the United States continues to forge and call upon a coalition of nations to attack terrorists responsible for the death of nearly 7,000 people on Sept. 11.

The Hamilton Spectator

Historian and Middle East expert James Reilly at the University of Toronto says seeing those key players and nations engage in alliance-making, back-and-forth diplomacy, threats of further attacks and promises of more aid may give the appearance of a war game.

But, he adds, "it's not a game and the people on the ground are scared to death of what's about to happen."

Reilly has lived in the Mideast and travelled through the regions.

And the cities and peoples that he has visited are what's on his mind.

LIFE-AND-DEATH STAKES IN THE WAR ON TERROR; ATTACK ON TERRORISM; All eyes are on Afghanistan as the country of 27 million is caught in the line of fire of yeste....

At the borders of Pakistan, Iran and Tajikistan, more than a million refugees were trying to flee Afghanistan, its repressive Taliban regime, and the U.S.-led attacks. Reilly says the ordinary people of the regions are the ones who will pay if the war on terrorists goes awry, gives rise to blood-lust tensions, destabilized governments, new hatreds, new extremist regimes, broken truces, and more years of strife and deprivation.

"The outcome may be a great tragedy," he says.

UNITED STATES

The United States, the post-Cold War superpower that now dominates the globe, has amassed its military forces of carriers, battleships, fighter planes and troops into the area. And it is set to send more for what is seen by senior U.S. officials as a long, protracted war on terrorist sites and supporters.

More than 28,000 troops, airmen and sailors, 300 warplanes and dozens of ships were stretched from the Persian Gulf to the Indian Ocean. U.S. strikes were made possible yesterday with the support in the Mideast and South Asia of past, and sometimes reluctant, allies that were brought onside with threats, promises of aid, and the easing of sanctions and restrictions.

When the initial shock and fury over the Sept. 11 attacks on U.S. soil abated, the Americans slowly developed a retaliation plan that would not create new foes and upset relationships with nations still uneasy over massive U.S. presence in the region during the 1991 Gulf War.

That war, waged by the current U.S. president's father, left no doubt about the manpower, high-tech firepower and resolve that Americans are able and willing to bring down on foes.

U.S. President George W. Bush, Secretary of State Colin Powell, British Prime Minister Tony Blair and varied diplomats have met with heads of state and worked to convince countries to provide intelligence on terrorists and their operating bases, and to provide support or forces to go after the terrorists. The U.S. went as far as paying its arrears to the UN to curry favour.

Yesterday, the diplomacy and military plans converged as volleys of U.S. and British missiles swooped down through the cloudless nighttime skies of Kabul, Afghanistan in the first response to the attacks of Sept. 11.

AFGHANISTAN

All eyes are on Afghanistan. Even before yesterday's U.S.-led attacks, the nation was already war-ravaged after 22 years of battling Soviet occupiers and civil strife in which its infrastructure was virtually destroyed. Almost 27 million Afghans, many of them facing famine, are those most likely to pay the heaviest burden. They risk not only the estimated 10 million landmines planted in their soil but also now the U.S.-led attacks in their region, although the U.S. was also planning to drop food and medical supplies for them inside Afghanistan.

The extremist Taliban rulers are credited with bringing law and order to Afghanistan after the civil chaos that followed the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and the collapse of the Afghan communist regime. But the Taliban has come under widespread criticism for its repressive iron rule -- especially directed at women -- and for harbouring and refusing to turn over terrorist suspect Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda network of terrorists.

The estimated 40,000 Taliban fighters with their limited weapons are seen as no match for the U.S. forces and equipment. But Taliban soldiers are aided by the treacherous mountain bases where they can hide and ambush ground troops. The Afghans' terrain and their history of defeating past invaders make them dangerous opponents.

It is estimated, however, the Taliban have no more than 650 tanks, troop carriers and fighting vehicles. Their bombers and fighter planes can be counted on two hands.

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A mere 5 to 10 per cent of Afghanistan is under the control of the Northern Alliance rebel forces of 10,000 to 15,000 men still fighting the Taliban. They are key, however, to providing intelligence and support for the western commando forces sent into Afghanistan.

PAKISTAN

Pakistan is a nuclear power whose citizens show strong support for the Taliban. It has been both a key to the U.S. retaliation plan and a nation that teeters on the edge of disaster

The only country to still recognize the Taliban regime, Pakistan is torn by a 97 per cent Muslim population with strong, vocal pockets of religious extremists.

Pakistan's ruler, General Pervez Mushharraf, and his government see no choice but to co-operate and are already being rewarded by the U.S. with financial aid and the lifting of economic restrictions.

Pakistan is struggling with the affects of caring for two million Afghan refugees already inside its border and thousands more are being held at the frontiers with its neighbour.

IRAQ

Like the Taliban, Iraq's Saddam Hussein holds a repressive grip on a country in which 23 million people are still suffering the effects of post-war sanctions and destruction after the U.S.-lead Gulf War of 1991.

Like Osama bin Laden, Hussein was at one time supported by the United States -- in his case to check the growing power of Islamic extremists, rather than fight the Soviets. And some intelligence sources also blame him for the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon.

Despite Hussein's gloating over the Sept. 11 attacks, cooler heads in Washington are urging U.S. President George W. Bush to hold back from finishing the job his father started against Iraq in the Gulf War.

ISRAEL and PALESTINE

A truce in the Middle East flashpoint of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is essential if the uneasy U.S. coalition in the Arab world is to hold.

The Bush administration believes quelling violence in Israel and the West Bank and Gaza Strip is paramount to a united offensive.

Some Arab leaders want the war against terrorism linked to a peaceful settlement in the longstanding Israeli-Palestinian dispute.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres will be pushed to the fore and hawkish Prime Minister Ariel Sharon will likely have to take a back seat as diplomatic efforts involving Palestinian President Yasser Arafat take place.

Arab states worry that a wide-scale war on terrorism going well beyond Osama bin Laden and including attacks on Hezbollah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad and other extremist groups will ignite tensions with Lebanon, Jordan and other lands in the region. Any overt participation by Israel in U.S.-led actions in the Middle East is sure to provoke a hostile reaction in the Arab world.

RUSSIA

Russia, haunted by the debacle of its losses and retreat from Afghanistan, is co-operating with the United States.

Financially-ruined and trying to counter growing Islamic militancy in the former republics on its borders, the country stands to benefit with increased aid and muted criticism of its brutal war in Chechnya, which Russian President Vladimir Putin has described as his own war on terrorism.

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There's even talk of the need for NATO doors to be opened for Russian membership in the future as Putin cosies up to U.S. But some observers wonder whether Russia is ready to risk the U.S. becoming a power of influence in its own back yard.

FORMER SOVIET STATES

Three former Russian republics -- Uzbekistan Tajikistan and Turkmenistan -- border on Afghanistan. Their airfields play a pivotal role as jumping-off points for assaults on terrorist bases.

The border states are influenced by Russia and have given, or are likely to give, reluctant or tacit approval for use of bases and air space.

There are reports that more than 1,000 U.S. special airborne troops have been deployed in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in preparation for a ground operation after yesterday's air strike. Commando units are already reportedly active in Afghanistan

The three countries -- seemingly strange bedfellows with the U.S. -- have majority Muslim populations and active radical Islamic opposition groups, which threaten their own shaky governments.

CHINA

Even China is battling Islamic separatists in its frontier Xinjiang province and has formed a co-operative pact with neighbour states in the area to counter breakaway groups. Although pledging to help the U.S. in the fight against terrorism, it has not outlined specific details.

SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi Arabia is home to Islam's two holiest sites as well as strategic oil resources, making it a key Arab player in the events.

Saudi Arabia's autocratic ruling family is allied with the U.S., and the country was the staging ground for troops in the Gulf War.

Osama bin Laden's war chest of millions was inherited from his Saudi family and he has continued to draw financial support and followers among extremists who are opposed to the wealthy rulers in the region.

EGYPT

Although reluctant to be involved, Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak will likely be drawn into supporting the U.S. Egypt has had subdued terrorist groups active in the country in past years, but worries the U.S.-led attack will reignite internal protests.

IRAN

Iran has closed its borders to refugees from neighbouring Afghanistan.

Despite previous denunciations of U.S. actions against the Islamic world, Iran's initial response to the terrorist attacks was one of sympathy and condolences without reservation.

It's hoped the current crisis might lead to a rapprochement between Iran and the U.S., but more recent and hostile reactions in past days have dampened that view.

Iran, with a population of 66 million Muslims, is at odds with the Taliban and is in an intriguing position as its moderate government and Muslim leaders -- defending their own Islamic revolution -- resolve how to respond to the Sept. 11 attacks and the U.S.-led attack on Afghanistan.

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SYRIA

Syria, along with Iran, has been named by the United States as a sponsor of terrorism. But like other Muslim countries threatened by radical Islamic militants, it may have to soften its anti-U.S. stance and co-operate as it did in the Gulf War.

CANADA

Canada boasts of its peacekeeping reputation and a former Nobel-Peace-prize-winning prime minister who helped resolve the Suez Crisis. But with its bottom-of-the-barrel military strength, Canada role has been marginal.

The ever-cautious Prime Minister Jean Chretien was chastised by many Canadians for foot-dragging over the terrorist attacks in the U.S., but yesterday pledged military support. He said other action is being taken on the humanitarian, diplomatic, financial, legislative and domestic security fronts

GREAT BRITAIN

Great Britain and Prime Minister Tony Blair have been described by George W. Bush as the Americans' "staunch friend" and ally in the U.S. retaliatory action against terrorists yesterday.

Britain's elite special forces have already reportedly been in a fire fight with Taliban fighters in Afghanistan in recent days.

History books record Britain's disastrous campaigns -- like that of Soviet occupiers -- to control the Afghans during the U.K.'s colonial powerhouse days in Central Asia.

With its past record of intelligence-gathering and a strong military ally in the Gulf War, Britain is once standing shoulder to shoulder with the U.S.

Like Britain, Germany and France have suffered at the hands of terrorists and their leaders have pledged support.

Compiled by Peter Van Harten and Spectator library staff from wire services and various reference sources.

Graphic

Photo:

Load-Date: November 5, 2001

After September 11: Nile blues: Britain and the US claim the support of most Middle Eastern governments in the war against terrorism, but what do ordinary Arabs think? Do they see it as the west versus Islam? And what do they make of Tony Blair? Egyptian novelist Ahdaf Soueif visited Cairo to find out

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Byline: Ahdaf Soueif

Body

Right there, at my feet, the Nile spreads out in a shimmering, flowing mass. The water reflects the lights of small boats, of floating restaurants, of the bridges flung across the river. From the centre rises Gezira island, on it the lit-up dome of the Opera House and the tall, slim lotus of the Cairo Tower. The scene is spectacularly beautiful, and over it all hangs the thick pall that Cairenes call "the black cloud". No one seems certain where it comes from. They say it's the farmers burning husks of rice in Sharqiyya province. They say it's Cairo rubbish burning in several places - two of the fires out of control. They say it's a component in the new unleaded petrol. It hangs over everything, but Cairenes live with it, because - so far - they can still breathe.

"I don't know who I feel more alienated from, the Americans or the Taliban," says Nadra. She hitches her heel to the seat of her chair, hugs her knee to her chest. "The Americans' language is so sleazily self-laudatory." Nadra and her American husband are photographers. He has been in San Diego for three months. She was supposed to join him on September 15 and they had planned to come back together in January. But now she can't bring herself to go. "Do you watch CNN?" she asks. "Should journalists collude with government? Or do the media have an agenda of their own? They're trying to frighten us all so we each stay in our little hole and don't talk to each other." She tells me that on September 12 she received international calls from seven agencies, all working for clients in the American media. "Go out," they said, "and photograph the people rejoicing in the streets." "But nobody's rejoicing in the streets," she said. "In the coffee shops then. Photograph the people laughing and celebrating in the coffee shops." "People are glued to their TVs," she told them. "Everybody's in shock." Still they pressed her. Eventually, she said if they wanted her photographs they could send her to Jenin (on the West Bank) and she'd photograph Israeli tanks entering the city.

That was my first night in Cairo. The city is, as usual, humming with energy. The Cairo film festival awards its special jury prize to the Iranian director Tahmina, who is in trouble in Iran for including a shot of two chador-clad **women** handing out communist leaflets in her film *The Hidden Half*. The Hanagar theatre workshop is showing an Egyptian Phaedre. The feast of Lady Zainab, granddaughter of the Prophet and one of the most popular members of his household, is reaching its climax, with thousands of people from all over the country converging on al-Sayyida, the district which contains her mosque and bears her name. The walls of downtown Cairo are chaotic with posters for the trade union elections due to take place in a few days. The demonstrations that have so far been

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contained within the campuses of Cairo's five universities ebb and flow with news of Afghan civilian casualties and new Israeli incursions into Palestinian towns.

Over the next two weeks I sense a mood that is not explosive but tense, expectant. There is also puzzlement, a deep exhaustion and a cold, amused cynicism. Nobody even bothers to discuss the "clash of civilisations" theory except to marvel that the west wastes any time on it at all. Can't they see, people ask, how much of their culture we've adopted? Practically every major work of western literature or thought is translated into Arabic. The Cairo Opera House is home to the Cairo Symphony Orchestra and the Egyptian Ballet as well as the Arab Music Ensemble. English is taught in every school and the British Council in Cairo is the largest of their operations worldwide because of its English language courses. Yes, there are aspects of western society that we don't like, they say, but they are the aspects that the west itself regards as problematic: widespread drug abuse, violent crime, the disintegration of the family, teenage pregnancies, lack of sense of community, rampant consumerism. What's wrong with not wanting those for ourselves?

The "Islam versus the west" theory is dismissed by both Muslim and Christian clerics. In an interview with al-Jazeera, Sheikh Qaradawi echoes what Nadra has been saying: "It is unfair to lump people together in one basket," he says, "The American people are the prisoners of their media. They're ordinary people, concerned with their daily lives, with earning a living. We must try to reach them through debate, not through hostility." Sayed Hasan Nasrallah, the secretary general of Hizbullah warns: "We should not deal with this war (in Afghanistan) as if it is a Christian war against Islam."

A columnist in al-Ahram, the major national newspaper of Egypt, reminds readers that in 1977, when Anwar Sadat made his peace visit to Israel, the Coptic Pope, Shenuda III, insisted that no Arab Christian would visit Jerusalem until they could visit alongside the Muslims.

We are 14 people sitting down to dinner at the Arabesque: Egyptian, Palestinian, American and Iraqi. On the table is a choice of wine, water and guava juice:

"It's sheer ignorance, this equation of the east with Islam."

"Where did Christianity come from in the first place?"

"Bethlehem, Beit Sahour, Beit Jala, all essentially Christian Palestinian towns, bombarded by the Israelis every day."

"And where do they think we are, the 12m Egyptian Christians, in all this?"

"And the Jews would have still been here if it hadn't been for the creation of Israel."

One of the gravest fears in Egypt is of the threat that Islamic extremism poses to the 14 centuries of national unity between Egyptian Copts and Egyptian Muslims. The "clash of civilisations" rhetoric coming out of the west, the transformation of Osama bin Laden from a fringe figure into a hero, the shoe-horning of what people see as a political and economic conflict into a religious mould, are all appallingly dangerous for the very fabric of Egyptian society, where the two communities are so intertwined that they share all the rituals of both joy and sorrow; where Christian women visit the mosque of Sayyida Zainab to ask for help and Muslims visit the Church of Santa Teresa, the Rose of Lisieux, to plead for her aid.

Bush and Blair's repeated affirmations of the essential goodness of Islam are seen as so much hot air designed to appease the uneducated masses, who, naturally, will never believe them. People smile as they remind you of the German propaganda asserting that "Hajji Muhammad Hitler" was a true friend of Islam, or the rumour put about by the French 150 years earlier that Bonaparte had converted to the "true faith". Religion, people believe, is being used both as a smoke-screen and a mobilisation device. When, people ask, has Bin Laden ever spoken of Iraq or Palestine? Only after the bombings started. His mission, essentially, was to get the Americans out of Saudi Arabia;

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now he is playing the west at its own game, and the millions of aggrieved, desperate young Muslims across the world are likely to listen to him.

"And what does your chap think he's up to? What's his name?" I'm asked.

"Blair?" I venture.

"Yes. Is he outbidding the Americans? He comes over here with a list of names he wants handed over and six of them are in the Sudanese cabinet."

There is general incredulity at Tony Blair's gung-ho stance and Britain's seeming eagerness to be part of the conflict. Someone asks me what public opinion in the UK is really like. We talk about the anti-war demonstrations, reminiscent of the Suez crisis.

Returning from the Middle East after his first whirlwind visit last month, the prime minister seemed to think that his problem was one of communication. He has suggested that Britain needs to do more PR in the Arab world. His personal efforts seem to have been a resounding failure. Why, people ask, is he rushing around with such zeal? Why does he look so pleased with himself? A cartoon in a newspaper has a flunky saying to a government minister: "But of course there's nothing wrong with your excellency taking a second job to augment your income. Look at the British prime minister - he's got an extra job as PR manager for America's campaign in Afghanistan." Blair might save the Downing Street spin doctors' efforts for internal affairs. Spin will get nowhere with people who have for a long time not trusted their governments - far less the governments of the west.

Nobody condones what is happening in Afghanistan. The anger is given more edge, yes, by the fact that it is a Muslim country, but more by the perception that the Afghan people have been used and abused for more than 20 years. Everyone is aware of the responsibility of the US in creating the circumstances for the appearance of the Taliban, who are then pointed at as proof of the backwardness of Islam in general. Yet Afghanistan, before the Russian invasion, was finding its own way towards modernity; otherwise, how come there are so many Afghan women professionals in the opposition camped up north?

Nobody believes that America went into action in Afghanistan because of the events of September 11. That, they say, was the pretext to put into action an already formulated plan to intervene in central Asia. General Salah al-Din Salem, a respected military strategist, in an article in al-Ahram al-Arabi, cites "proof" that this plan was finalised last July. The US, through its Iraqi operation in 1991, has established a strong military presence in the Middle East and the Gulf. The vacuum created since then by the disintegration of the USSR and the emerging strength of China, whose oil needs are expected to outstrip those of the US within the coming 10 years, make it desirable for America to have control of the oil-rich area around the Caspian sea. A US military presence there would also impede the possibility of other alliances, potentially unfriendly or at least indifferent to US interests, to be formed in the region and would be a permanent threat to Iran.

An article in the Egyptian press maps the relationship between oil, arms and key members of the American administration. Not a conspiracy theory, rather a practical acknowledgment that "oil, defence and politics . . . are not mutually exclusive interests".

Nobody is surprised by any of this. After all, a democracy where you need millions of dollars to get into the White House is hardly likely to be free of corporate influence. But a journalist asks why America needs a pretext at all. Why paint itself into a corner with all the "Bin Laden, dead or alive" rhetoric? Maybe we understand why it needs Russia and Europe on board, but why the pressure on the Arab countries? Is it necessary? Several letters in al-Ahram Weekly suggest that not everyone thinks so. In the past five weeks the paper has received hundreds of hostile letters from westerners - many of them taking that classical orientalist image of a penetrative relationship between west and east to contemporary levels of openness and violence.

Why does America assume conflict and confrontation with the Arab world? My aunt reminds me of the crowds that welcomed Richard Nixon, then the US president, to Egypt in 1974: "Remember all the talk of USAID and the

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democratising process and how the coops were full of American chickens? America was synonymous then with plenty, with progress and liberalisation. But none of it came through." My aunt is a doctor, but right now she's lying in bed with a drip attached to her arm. Her left hand is swollen with a bad infection and a powerful antibiotic is blasting its way through her veins. Her son has had to scour Cairo and pay over the odds because the public-sector lab that produces the drug has just burned down. Next the lab will be sold at a rock-bottom price to a well-connected private investor, many of its workforce will be laid off, and the medicine, when production is resumed, will be more expensive than before. This is part of the privatisation process, the economic "reforms" the country is being pushed into. "None of it came through." In fact, I remember wondering, when I first came in touch with USAID in 1980, why - if it was such a benevolent operation - did its officials seem so jittery? Why did they drive around in black-windowed limos? And why had their embassy been turned into a marine-guarded fortress?

Over turkish coffee in the Cafe Riche, Ahmad Hamad, who works for Legal Aid (a non-governmental organisation funded by a sister NGO in Holland) reminds me of the US-encouraged domestic policies of President Anwar Sadat. People were ready to give them a try. America was democratic and free and more fun than the dour, totalitarian Russians. But what "democratisation" amounted to was a clampdown on all leftwing, Nasserist and pan-Arab views and organisations, and eventually on all opposition. "They nurtured the Islamists as a way of hitting the left. They created and funded Islamist organisations. They manipulated elections so that Islamists took control of the student unions and the professional syndicates. What they didn't understand was that the Islamists took themselves seriously and eventually, of course, they assassinated Sadat himself." It is the same game that the US played in Afghanistan: to fund and aid an "Islamist" opposition to the Russians and fail to recognise the consequences.

Since the three attacks by armed Islamist extremists on tourists in Egypt in the mid-90s, the tourist industry has become extremely sensitive. Last week some 50% of its employed workers were forced to take indefinite unpaid leave. For the self-employed there is hardly any work. Entire resorts in Sinai are closed down. Around 2m Egyptians rely directly on tourism for their livelihoods, and the worry in the country is palpable.

Practically every American or American-influenced intervention in Egypt has been bad for every one of the 65m Egyptians - except the few thousand who have become fabulously wealthy in the new economy. Debt-ridden farmers, disfranchised workers, the decimated middle class, the silenced intellectuals and students - all of them will tell you that they have America's influence to thank for their problems. Yes, Egyptians have internal problems with their government and inter-Arab problems with their neighbours, but these problems are made ever more intractable by American intervention. And then there's the question of Palestine.

Egyptian official media, on the whole, play down what is happening in the Palestinian territories. Egyptian television, for example, does not show the images of brutality, destruction and grief coming out of the West Bank and Gaza. Yet half of Cairo is tuned in to the al-Jazeera satellite channel. On top of every building you can see the dishes facing up towards ArabSat. And every taxi driver you talk to says: "Isn't that terrorism what they're doing to the Palestinians?"

The Egyptian Committee for Solidarity with the Palestinian Intifada (ECSPI) formed itself in October 2000 to provide humanitarian aid to the people of the West Bank and Gaza. It now has volunteers in every city across Egypt. When I meet four of its members in a coffee shop they are shadowed by a chap from the State Security Service, who sits down at the next table. Their phones are bugged and their every move is monitored. The people I meet are two men and two women. One of the women, May, is Christian, the other, Nadia, is a Muslim in a complete veil. She tells me she used to be my student, and it turns into a joke since there's no way that I can recognise her. The ECSPI volunteers go into the towns and villages to collect donations for the Palestinians. "There isn't a house that doesn't give us something," May tells me, "and people have so little. We collected three tons of sugar, half-kilo by half-kilo."

On September 10 a long-planned petition on behalf of the Palestinian people was due to be handed in to the American embassy in Cairo. As the delegation met in Tahrir Square it grew to some 300 people. The police surrounded it and refused to let it proceed. A group of 10 were chosen and headed for the embassy, where the ambassador refused to meet them and the embassy refused to take delivery of the petition.

After September 11: Nile blues: Britain and the US claim the support of most Middle Eastern governments in the war against terrorism, but what do ordinary Arabs....

America's support for Israel is a dominant issue in Egyptian-American relations. I have not had a conversation in Cairo where it has not come up. When American officials talk about the lives lost in New York and Washington, about New Yorkers' inalienable right to freedom of movement, about US citizens' right to safety, a voice inside the head of every Arab will echo: "True. And what about the Palestinians?" President Bush has spoken for the first time about a "Palestinian state", but he has not used the word "viable". People remember that when the west was drumming up the coalition against Iraq it made noises about Palestine and set up the Madrid conference, resulting in the Oslo agreements, which have been disastrous for peace. They suspect a similar agenda now. Yet the hope is that if one good thing can come out of the current horrors it would be that America recognises that a truly workable formula for a reasonably just peace has to be imposed on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

A few days after the failed attempt to deliver the petition, Farid Zahran, the vice-chair of the organisation, was abducted by State Security and vanished for three weeks. He was released only after 250 members of ECSPI and Legal Aid insisted on turning themselves in to the public attorney, signing an affidavit against themselves that they were complicit with Zahran in whatever he was accused of. "It was a warning," Nadia says. "We'll let you carry on collecting medicines and stuff, but any attempt to mobilise the street and we'll come down on you hard." This is made possible by the emergency laws operating since the assassination of Sadat in 1981 and further strengthened by anti-terrorism laws formulated in the mid-90s - essentially the same type of laws that are under discussion now both in the US and here in the UK.

People I speak to are alarmed at the prospect of Americans giving up their civil liberties. "It's one of the organising principles of their society," someone says. "How will their society hold without it?"

An article in the Egyptian press reports that Americans, apparently, are "cocooning". They're staying at home, hiring videos, talking to each other, visiting family and friends nearby, and buying only what they need. It seems, to the Egyptian reader, like a good way to live. But the report is alarmed: two-thirds of the American economy is consumer spending; if people don't get out there to the malls, the economy will collapse. People feel sorry for them. The poor Americans, they say, they're whipped out to work more and earn more, then they're whipped out to spend it; is that the freedom they're so proud of?

I walk down Sheikh Riham with a young American graduate student who tells me that he had been approached to be interviewed on NBC. They called him for a pre-interview, he says. He kept his answers neutral, but truthful. In the end they said they'd call him back - they never did.

There is general agreement among people who have access to western media that Americans are being kept ignorant. "They're under media siege," was how one journalist put it.

"Our only hope," Nadra says, "is to talk to them. Sensible people everywhere should make themselves heard so that we don't personally witness the end of the world."

A young, slim, professional woman in casual trousers and a loose shirt, the canvas bag slung over her shoulder bulging with lenses, tapes, papers and somewhere, I suppose, a comb and some lip salve. I watch her walk away from me down the avenue of flame-trees. Is the road tightening round her? Narrowing down? Or is it just my perspective?

This piece will be included in the collection Voices for Peace, published on November 19.

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LETTERS

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Body

War on terror: Responses to Jim Wooten's column "Evil benign in Kerry's eyes," @issue, Oct. 24

Exhaust other options before considering war

Jim Wooten claims the Democrats don't have the stomach for a protracted war and that John Kerry would "abandon the war on terrorism at the first face-saving exit." World War II was protracted, and FDR was a Democrat. And Vietnam? Kennedy and Johnson were Democrats. In fact, a Republican president cut and ran from Vietnam at the first "face-saving exit." Another Democrat, President Clinton, sent troops to Bosnia.

For the Journal-Constitution

Wooten further chides Kerry for saying we need to make terrorism no more than a pain in the neck. President Bush said there is no winning the war on terror, and he is right: We will not eliminate acts of terrorism throughout the world. Kerry, too, is right: Terrorism should be no more than a nuisance. We must keep such acts to a minimum and ferret out terrorists whenever possible.

I'm a Republican who hopes that any president would go to war only after exhausting all other avenues. This nation does not need a trigger-happy president.

HARRY BARTLETT, Tiger

Hard to confront evil without becoming evil

Jim Wooten tarred and feathered John Kerry, but he didn't answer the practical question about evil: What do you do about it? Bomb it? Sacrifice your son or daughter to it? Start a nuclear war over it? How many innocent lives do you snuff out, how many limbs do you blow off, how many orphans do you make?

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It takes great courage and wisdom to confront evil without becoming evil yourself.

In Jesus' time, people were being murdered, too, and without killing a single person he has saved billions. To this day, many Americans, including President Bush, claim to be his disciples.

LAURIE CRAW, Cave Spring

Kerry has no plan to leave terrorists alone

Jim Wooten's column is a work of spin, concluding that John Kerry "looks into the face of evil and sees a nuisance."

Obviously, Kerry has not claimed that terrorism is simply a nuisance. His point is that we can win the war against terrorism, and he was defining what that victory might look like. To say that he will "lose the war on terrorism . . . because he'll abandon it" is absurd.

Kerry, a leader on national security issues for 19 years as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has made it clear that he will pursue the war on terrorism more effectively than President Bush has.

ED OUTLAW, Peachtree City

Kerry acknowledges threat is still serious

Jim Wooten says John Kerry "tempts us to believe that terrorism is a relatively benign malady." And what does Wooten base this on? He quotes Kerry: "We have to get back to . . . where terrorists were not the focus of our lives, but they are a nuisance." Only a dense or dishonest person can come to the conclusion that Wooten does, based on that quote.

Expressing a hope of a certain future (that terrorism should not be a constant threat that consumes us) is itself an acknowledgment that we are not there. Kerry couldn't have been clearer that he understands that terrorism is a serious threat --- so much so that, sadly, it is the focus of our lives.

In Wooten's world, if Kerry said he wishes to see a day when the federal budget is balanced, it would be interpreted as "Kerry sees our huge deficit as a benign malady."

PARTHIV PAREKH, Duluth

Bush knows the enemy can't be brushed aside

Jim Wooten nailed the difference between President Bush and John Kerry on the war on terrorism.

Bush believes we are facing real enemies intent on subverting freedom in the world and imposing their distorted religious beliefs on everyone. Kerry believes the war is just an annoyance that can be contained by United Nations action, and he would allow funds spent on fighting terrorists to be redirected to social programs.

Like many who grew up in the anti-war, anti-Vietnam era, Kerry readily sees evil in our own country's government and institutions but can't see the same or worse in others. This self-defeating attitude is just as bad as Neville Chamberlain's "peace in our time." Without a willingness to deal with enemies of freedom forcefully and promptly, we will have neither safety nor prosperity.

JOHN MORTISON, Roswell

Don't give terrorists dignity of recognition as a state

Jim Wooten doesn't know the difference between wars and metaphors. Neville Chamberlain was trying to avoid war with a sovereign state. States have recognizable leaders to negotiate with or fight. When negotiation failed, war was fought until the enemy state surrendered.

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Terrorism is not a state, but a ghastly technique used by people with grievances. Calling their actions warfare gives them an undeserved dignity. Calling our response "war" is a lazy metaphor designed to make us feel righteous, avoid asking why terrorists do what they do and justify overkill responses that kill bystanders and radicalize survivors.

And Wooten's claim that the Iraq war had nothing to do with oil is shredded by images of Marines guarding the Oil Ministry and the construction of 14 military bases designed for permanence.

BRIAN A. WREN, Decatur

Homophobia: Responses to Cynthia Tucker's column "Homophobia a cruel choice," @issue, Oct. 24

'Bigot' label fitting for Tucker, too

The ease with which Cynthia Tucker is ready to label some people as bigots exposes the bigotry inherent in her own thinking.

She would have us believe that homosexuality is "determined by a complex interplay of factors . . . and is determined so early in a child's formation that it cannot be considered a choice."

Let's assume that this is correct. Why, then, should any heterosexual's complex feelings, reactions and responses to homosexuality be judged by a different standard?

Why is the behavior on the one hand a choice and on the other hand bigotry? I would argue that the only reason is Tucker's blind devotion to her own beliefs --- and isn't that the very definition of bigotry?

ROBERT CURRY, Stone Mountain

Too much tolerance weakens society

By birth or choice, homosexuality remains a perversion either way. What fate awaits a society that bases its acceptance or rejection of a behavior on whether the behavior is acquired at birth?

Should we accept, promote and incorporate mental illness into mainstream society, simply because those who are mentally ill were born that way? And are we saying that incest is by choice --- and that is the reason society is allowed to disapprove of it?

We are a society --- and when we get to the point where everything must be accepted based on the nonsensical notion of tolerance, we become instead a mass of humanity coexisting in the same geographical location at the same time, with no sense of direction, values or morals.

TERRY M. ADAMS, Cumming

Opposition flows from lifestyle

While it is ludicrous to believe homosexuals choose their sexual orientation, it is equally ludicrous to say they don't choose a lifestyle.

Having anonymous sex in parks and bathhouses, multiple sex partners and unprotected sex where AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases are rampant is a lifestyle choice --- and a primary factor in the opposition to gays' acceptance in greater society. Unbridled hedonism is the message they are sending.

On the other hand, the reactionary forces opposing gay marriage send their own message: "Continue offending us with your amoral values and dangerous lifestyle --- do not attempt to develop committed monogamous relationships, as we will not recognize them."

These two groups deserve each other.

LETTERS

MICHAEL HONOHAN, Marietta

Orientation no excuse for sin

Cynthia Tucker concludes illogically that because homosexuals don't choose their orientation, they aren't committing sin when they act on their impulses.

Homosexuals are bound by the same rules that apply to heterosexuals: Sex outside of marriage, wanton sexual behavior and lustful pursuit of illicit sexual pleasure are all sinful, no matter what orientation the sinner may have.

Society may have relaxed the rules, but the author of the rules never has.

JOE WALLACE, Braselton

Louis Nava's legacy touches many lives

Thank you for Mark Bixler's thoughtful, well-written article ("The legacy of Louis Nava," Page One, Oct. 24).

Louis touched those of us who knew him in his 16 short years. It is good to know that due to the efforts of people such as Reggie Perry, he continues to touch the lives of others who never had that privilege.

PAMELA D. BARNETTE, Atlanta

Malingering soldiers behind 'mutiny'

My unit traveled the same route (several times) that the 343rd Quartermaster Company refused to travel ("History often on the side of mutineers," @issue, Oct. 24).

What we didn't have for armor, we made --- sandbags and aluminum plates for some of the vehicles and Kevlar seat covers for others. Everyone had flak vests. Our vehicles were National Guard equipment maintained by our mechanics. We knew what would make it and what wouldn't.

I think what you have with the 343rd is a few malingering soldiers. We had a few of those also.

JOEL EDGE, Soperton

Factual Iraq article tainted by opinion

As an undecided voter, I am trying to read and learn as much as possible about the issues affecting our lives and world, so I was excited to see Sandra Mackey's piece --- a truthful, fact-filled, current article on Iraq, written by a Middle East expert ("Iraq's quiet war," @issue, Oct. 24).

I enjoyed the article, and learned much from it until I got to the paragraph near the end in which Mackey wrote, "But an ill-conceived war, an absence of any realistic postwar planning . . ." --- are these facts or opinion? Now the rest of the article is suspect.

AMY GRANELLI, Atlanta

Georgians have firm grasp of what matters

I am appalled by the recent letter saying Georgia is leaning toward Republicans because we cannot think for ourselves ("When brain is half-empty, it can't tell that glass is too," Oct. 24).

Most Georgians know the issues that most affect them and what the candidates stand for. To say that our brains are half-empty is disrespectful.

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Gov. Sonny Perdue was elected mostly because of the terrible way his predecessor managed the state like a dictatorship, squeezing the life out of our education system and the outrageous spending that he was proposing. Don't worry about Georgia --- our state is doing well and we know how to pick the leaders to keep it that way.

GARY COOPER, Cumming

Can't rest easy with 'security president'

President Bush has repeatedly stated that he is the security president. He says that under his watch, the world is safer, and that only he can protect us from terrorists.

Yet under his watch, almost 400 tons of explosives were taken from Iraq. They were either taken before troops arrived, while the United States was watching for weapons of mass destruction movement after the United Nations was forced out, or after the troops arrived.

Either way, Bush allowed these dangerous weapons to fall into the hands of terrorists. Does this appear to be the work of the security president?

DAVID DOMINICK, Atlanta

Friedman can't force his views on Israel

Thomas Friedman hews to his view of the Middle East conflict being Israel's to resolve. He then goes beyond the pale, to brand as the equivalent of terrorists a segment of Israel's population that strongly objects to its government's policies ("We help feed the bigotry we fight," @issue, Oct. 24).

On the first point, if the government and people of Israel, reviewing their experiences and history, have come to the conclusion that the Palestinians are not prepared to peacefully coexist on any terms that would include a viable Jewish state, then who are Friedman, the United States or the rest of the world, to force them to think or act to their detriment?

On the second point, although what the leadership of the settler movement is promoting may be illegitimate, criminal, even treasonous, no left-wing children have been slaughtered; no buses have been bombed; no missiles have rained down on socialist kibbutzim, or the Knesset. To equate them with the terrorist Hezbollah is outrageous and opens the door to suggestions that they are fair game for physical elimination by any means possible.

WILLIAM BILEK, Woodstock

Electoral College story inaccurate

There were two serious mistakes in an article on the Electoral College ("Even an A student's outcome unsure in Electoral College," @issue, Oct. 24).

First, the scenarios that would produce a 269-269 tie are not correct because they do not take into account the changes to the Electoral College following the 2000 census. A Bush loss in any of the three states mentioned would still give President Bush a second term.

Second, the discussion about the potentially "faithless" elector in West Virginia incorrectly explains how a particular state is "won" in the Electoral College. To win a state, and therefore all of its electors, a candidate must win the most popular votes (a plurality), not more than half of the popular votes (a majority). This plurality or "most votes" rule applies to all states except Maine and Nebraska.

ADAM P. STONE

Stone, of Marietta, is an associate professor of political science at Georgia Perimeter College's Lawrenceville campus.

LETTERS

Electronic voting a huge improvement

In the 2000 presidential election, the four types of voting equipment used in Georgia caused an estimated 94,000 ballots never to be counted --- more than in Florida and more than twice the national average.

Looking ahead to this week's national election, Georgia's voters can feel confident that every ballot cast in Georgia will be counted. A new Cal Tech-MIT study indicates that implementing a statewide electronic voting system caused 40,000 more votes to be counted in 2002 than if Georgia had not made this switch. The report also highlights that there are no "concrete allegations" of vote tampering in Georgia's elections using touch-screen voting equipment.

While opponents of electronic voting continue to sideline election reform across the country, Georgians should feel proud that voters here are unequivocally better off today than ever before.

MEG SMOTHERS

Smothers is executive director of the League of Women Voters of Georgia.

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IS IT TIME FOR A

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Body

Osama bin Laden has reportedly offered Europe a truce if it 'stops attacking Muslims' but the Home Secretary has branded the idea as 'ludicrous.' Defence expert Paul Moorcraft, who has had direct experience of working alongside Islamic fighters in several war zones, today asks whether the West is fighting an unwinnable war against al-Qaeda. President Bush has summoned the world to fight a global war on terrorism, but can it be won? Or should we opt for some kind of negotiated settlement with al-Qaeda and its allies?

WHAT KIND OF WAR?

Is the global war on terrorism (GWT) merely a convenient substitute for hawks who lusted after a replacement for the Cold War? Will it end up as 'another Hundred Years War,' a phrase used by Jean-Louis Bruguiere, the French judge and counter-terrorism expert?

And George Bush clumsily talked of a 'crusade.' Are we indeed facing 'the clash of civilisations,' prophesied by Professor Samuel Huntington - a continuation of centuries of Muslim v Judaeo-Christian conflict? There are equally numerous examples of co-operation and amity between these so-called civilisations. More dangerously, though, the GWT could make Huntington's forecasts self-fulfilling .

Terrorism is a political method; how do you fight something that is universal and timeless? Read the Old Testament for a variety of discussions on terrorism and guerrilla warfare. Above all, Islam is a belief system - how do you fight an idea? Hawks will say, however, that communism was an ideology that was fought and beaten.

Take a narrow military definition of the war on al-Qaeda: a small and loose coalition of dedicated Islamic extremists is fighting an asymmetric economic and armed conflict against a hyper-power. The war is vastly different from other terror campaigns. It is global, and - apparently - no chance of political compromise is offered. Operationally, the terror planners aim for simultaneous spectaculars, without warnings, and ideally with weapons of mass destruction (WMD), with volunteers who embrace death.

WHO IS WINNING THIS WAR?

If a traditional definition of terrorism is assumed, who is winning? As Secretary of State for Defence Donald Rumsfeld confessed, 'We lack the metrics to know if we are winning or losing.'

But some assessment must be made.

WINNING?

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Since 9/11, mainly because of the war in Afghanistan, roughly one third of the senior al-Qaeda leaders, as well as roughly 2,000 rank and file, have been killed or jailed. That leaves, from those who went through the Afghan training camps, about 18,000 trained al-Qaeda personnel at large, but mostly they are concentrating on survival (or, depending on your perspective, taking back territory in Afghanistan). Over US\$ 125m of suspected terrorist assets have been seized or frozen. And Muslim countries such as Pakistan have supported the US, thus proving that it is not a war on Islam.

LOSING?

The military attacks on the Taleban and Iraq have intensified radical Islamic resentment. Iraq - often seen as a detour in the terror war - has sucked in al-Qaeda supporters where few existed under the profoundly secular Saddam Hussein. The madrassas (religious schools) are daily churning out far more jihadists than the West could ever catch or kill. Al-Qaeda operates as a virtual entity in loose alliance with supporters in 90 countries. Its cells function within a flat informal trans-national infrastructure, whereas counter-terrorism is nationally based and hierarchical. And intelligence agencies are hampered by frequent turf wars. Much of the terror money circulates through the informal Islamic hawala system - modern banking systems are largely irrelevant, except as avenues for fraud. Thanks to modern technology and the multinational allure of the jihad, it is very difficult to deter such a hydra-headed monster. Since 9/11, constant worldwide attacks - including Western Europe but not the US - have demonstrated the resilience of al-Qaeda. It is only a matter of time before spectaculars are repeated in London or the US.

A DRAW?

The Americans have led a global effort to kill and arrest terrorists, while fostering an internal homeland security model. They have improved multinational law enforcement along more horizontal lines. And they have led efforts to curb the proliferation of WMD in rogue states and their seepage to the likes of al-Qaeda. But Osama bin Laden (or his body) has not been found and the threat, on the evidence of actual attacks such as Madrid, and not intelligence assessments, is clearly growing.

A fair-minded conclusion could be that - so far - the war is a draw, but it is not a stalemate. Catching bin Laden would be a short-term tactical success, but his martyrdom could well boost his adulation for generations to come.

A NEW EMPIRE

9/11 displayed an awkward juxtaposition of the invincibility of the US hyper-power and yet also its absolute vulnerability. The old rules of deterrence are gone, because al-Qaeda apparently cannot be deterred. US dominance and coalitions of the willing have replaced the creaking alliance structure. Nato serves as a useful tool-box, not the West's lead defence team.

The impossibility of deterrence has encouraged the logical use of a pre-emptive strategy. But successful pre-emption - morality aside - relies totally on intelligence. The failure to find WMD in Iraq has dumped a huge question mark over not only fighting other rogue states, but the whole basis of the war on terror.

The US has not relied solely on hard military power. European diplomacy in Iran and careful multilateralism over North Korea have brought some rewards. The demonstration effect of Iraq - plus some subtle backstairs haggling by the UK Foreign Office - has removed Libya from the list of rogue states. True, Kashmir and Chechnya still fester. The US has, however, helped to curb Indo-Pakistan nuclear sabre-rattling, while al-Qaeda support for the stubborn Chechen rebellion has corralled the Russians into the US anti-terror camp. Likewise, Chinese concern at Uighur Muslim separatists in Xinjiang province has also muted Chinese criticism. But, in Central Asia, US backing for neo-dictatorships such as in Uzbekistan could fire up enduring resentment among the jihadists.

'LONDONISTAN'

Determined and much more joined-up UK counter-terrorism has thwarted a number of attacks in Britain, most publicly the danger of a surface-to-air missile launch near Heathrow airport. The vast majority of the British Muslim

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community views al-Qaeda with some distaste; indeed, Muslim moderates have helped law enforcement agencies tremendously. The two UK suicide bombers in Tel Aviv and Richard Reid, the shoe bomber, are very much in the tiny minority, but there could still be sleepers.

As Eliza Manningham-Buller, the head of MI5, succinctly put it, 'We do not see the Muslim community as a threat; in the same way that we did not see the Irish community as a threat. Our focus is terrorists.'

The French intelligence agencies, though, used to refer to extremists in the UK capital as 'Londonistan.' The Paris spooks alleged that there was an unofficial concordat - jihadists are allowed to operate at the political and fund-raising levels, provided there were no attacks on British soil. There was allegedly a similar understanding that the IRA would not hit targets in Wales and Scotland, fellow Celtic countries.

Yet 9/11 was the single largest loss of British lives in a terrorist attack. And the MI5 chief said that 'we are faced with a realistic possibility' of some form of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) attack in the UK.

It may be, however, that a CBRN attack is more likely from a non-Muslim maverick within the existing Western scientific establishment. Take the anthrax attacks in the US. Or consider domestic right-wing violence: the Oklahoma bomber in the US, or the neo-Nazi fanatic who killed three people in the Admiral Duncan pub in Soho in 1999.

DOING A DEAL?

North Korea is arguably the greatest threat to world peace. The regime is said to be led by dangerous fanatics, but a brokered compromise is on the cards. Could a similar deal be cut with al-Qaeda? What does Osama want? Washington should know: he was once CIA pin-up boy in the war against the Russians in Afghanistan.

Jihadism is fuelled by a large number of causes: including low levels of economic development in Arab states and a sense of political impotence - especially among the young educated elite - at the undemocratic regimes, and Western support for them. Terrorism is inspired and led not by denizens of absolute poverty, but by the wealthy middle class. Osama, remember, is (or was) a Saudi multi-millionaire. Look at the educated background of the 16 Saudis involved in the 9/11 bombings.

The mass-casualty aggression is aimed at the 'far enemies' - the US and the UK in particular. There is also anger at the 'near enemies,' especially Egypt for making peace with Israel, and at Saudi Arabia for allowing US soldiers near the two most holy sites in Islam. Despite the belief in the superiority of Islam, many Muslims feel a sense of cultural humiliation imposed by decadent Western imperialists.

TACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

Obviously durable solutions must mean massive social engineering. The West can proffer immediate remedies. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the crazy and/or corrupt Cold War dictators in Africa, Asia and Latin America were largely dumped, but not in the Middle East. Why should the Anglo-Americans bomb Iraq into democracy but support the fundamentalist dictatorships in Saudi Arabia? Secular Iraq, for example, was light years ahead in its treatment of women compared with the Saudis. America is beginning to disengage from Saudi Arabia. This exit could eventually generate regime collapse or possibly partition of the country.

A serious attempt to enforce a settlement between Israel and the Palestinians would be a massive step forward. Only Washington can force the Israelis to withdraw their settlements from the occupied territories, while guaranteeing the security of the Jewish state. Apartheid walls will not work. America could dictate a two-state solution.

In other words, even though al-Qaeda methods are abhorrent, some of its demands may be reasonable. Osama will never get his pan-Islamic caliphate, but that is an issue for Muslims themselves.

America can set the stage, especially in Saudi Arabia and Palestine, by pulling the rug from under the extremists centred on Osama's fanatical Wahhabi brand of Islam.

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The pan-Islamic threat is largely a myth - far too many divisions fester even within the extremists, ranging from Shia backing for Hezbollah in Lebanon to various Islamic groups with local, often nationalistic, agendas in Asia. In this popeless religion there is no one authority to resolve centuries-old disputes, intensified by current chasms between the modernisers and democrats versus autocrat and traditionalists.

Despite the stereotypes, many Islamic leaders are not medieval throwbacks; the Taleban are the exception rather than the rule. Muslim fundamentalism is only one part of Islamic attempts to modernise their societies by removing the nepotistic, unstable status quo. Many Islamic religious leaders want to co-operate with the West, but without being swallowed or humiliated by it. They are important because the mosque is one of the few relatively uncontrolled institutions in the more repressive Arab states. So political fundamentalism has tended to be weaker where some toleration and opposition have been allowed - Morocco and Turkey are examples.

Withdrawal of support for anti-democratic systems throughout the Middle East will do a great deal to lessen the tension. The Arab perception of Western support for the nominal Muslims in Kosovo (against bloodthirsty Christian Serbs) was a start. Pulling out from Saudi Arabia is a necessary step. Nudging Egypt towards democracy is another.

Democracy in Iraq - if it is conjured up - will be another major step forwards. Why should we assume that, unlike Christians or Israelis, the Arabs are unfit for democracy? The West can provide some of the economic and democratic incentives, but individual Islamic countries - given the hope of democracy - should decide for themselves. They might initially opt for the Iran model and then claw back from the clerics more elements of Western democracy. But the Iranian revolution was primarily seen as an eccentric Shi'ite variation, not applicable to the vast majority of Sunni Muslims.

Instead of demonising fundamentalist movements in many Arab states why not encourage them? (Relatively) democratic states such as Turkey could still prove to be awkward partners - note Ankara's truculence bordering on blackmail over the war against Iraq. But that's the point of freedom - the ability to disagree.

Backing off from oil-rich dictators in the Middle East might be dangerous for the West. But Nato didn't argue that communism should be propped up because orthodox autocracy or virulent nationalism might flourish in Russia and its former satellites if the Wall came down. Democracy may provoke unintended and unpleasant consequences, but not as many as support for the current bunch of nasty despots. The status quo is crumbling.

As journalist Robert Fisk wrote of the region, 'We like dictatorships. We know how to do business with the kings and generals - how to sell them our tanks and fighter-bombers and missiles.'

That is, unless they renege on the Western embrace - as Osama and Saddam did. Washington has been battling democracy across the region in the name of stabilising savage autocracies such as Saudi Arabia.

ISLAMIC RESURGENCE

Professor Huntington was right in at least one sense: Islamic resurgence is mainstream, not extremist, pervasive, not isolated. The West must accommodate the Muslim 20% of the world population, but bolstering the dismal band of Arabs dictatorships will guarantee more floods of refugees and more terrorism from the region. The tactics of jihadism must be fought by Western counter-terrorism, by hard military power and tough diplomacy. Strategically it is not, however, a war that can be won solely in military terms.

The war on terror is as much about Western values as military might. Fighting a purely military campaign will mean the destruction of those values by the slow erosion of domestic civil liberties; it will also complement al-Qaeda's war aims - to create an Islamic-Western divide. Getting Islamic countries to understand and work with Western values is the only sustainable solution.

Democratic systems are the best guarantor of international peace - that was the lesson of the victory in the Cold War. Communism was a faith in terminal decline, Islam is resurgent. It might be better to work with it, not fight it. Al-

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Qaeda is a virus that can never be totally eradicated; but it can be effectively quarantined by political accommodation with its hosts.

Dr Paul Moorcraft, who has worked extensively for the Ministry of Defence, is editor of a group of security and defence magazines.

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The great Divide: Driven from their homes by war, Kurdish Turks struggle on for freedom -- and a state of their own

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Body

CIZRE, Turkey - One of the most memorable stories to emerge from the fall of Saddam Hussein is that of Kurdish villagers reclaiming -- often violently -- homes they had been driven from years before.

I am sitting in a car beside a Kurdish man named Mahir Gunet as we drive along a dusty mountain road toward the home he abandoned more than a decade ago.

As we approach the settlement of perhaps 50 houses, it is clear that most of them are empty shells. Wind blows dust through glassless windows, and even from the car it is possible to see debris and garbage covering their floors.

"I used to live there," Gunet says, nodding in the direction of a jumble of homes. I am not sure which house, but we do not get out of the car to take a closer look.

The Ottawa Citizen

A military watchtower on a hilltop one kilometre away overlooks the village and surrounding valley. Gunet points with a subtle bent finger and a nod. He is nervous and annoyed that our car is stopped.

"Let's go," he says.

Like thousands of Turkish Kurds, Gunet is the victim of a civil war that raged across southeastern Turkey for much of the 1980s and 90s, between Turkish security forces and the militant separatist group, the Kurdish Workers Party, or PKK.

In 1990, he says, two girls from his village went to the mountains to join the rebellion. Then every few nights PKK guerrillas came to the village for food and supplies. When help wasn't forthcoming, they sprayed the homes with gunfire, killing no one but terrorizing the village.

One night later, two women in the village, thought to be PKK supporters, were murdered. Gunet blames local members of Hezbollah, the Islamic militant organization that has been accused of working as an anti-PKK terror squad on behalf of the Turkish government. The alleged killers were tracked down and murdered. Within days, Turkish soldiers descended on the village and ordered everyone to leave. Most of the homes were destroyed. The Turks gave the few left standing to Village Guards, Kurds paid by the government to provide security and combat the PKK.

The great Divide: Driven from their homes by war, Kurdish Turks struggle on for freedom -- and a state of their own

Gunet moved with his family to Cizre, a nearby city built beside the headwaters of the Tigris River. He spends most afternoons drinking tea in local cafes and waiting.

Twice Gunet has given all his money to people-smugglers who promised to take him to Western Europe, but he was caught and deported home to Turkey.

Officially, he says, he is allowed to return to his village but in reality the Village Guards won't allow him.

"I hate feeling fear," he says. "I hate not being able to speak. It's not just me. It's all the people."

Cities in the Kurdish regions of Turkey are full of men like Gunet, refugees from surrounding villages who have fled a war that is supposed to be over.

I meet them in Diyarbakir, Cizre and Mardin. Their stories are the same. Soldiers destroyed their homes. They came to the city and are afraid to go back.

"Some of us had to give support to the PKK or we would be killed," says Rifat, a Kurd from a village near Bingol.

"The government asks why we didn't stop the PKK from walking around our village, but there is pressure from both sides."

Rifat's village was razed. He now lives in Diyarbakir, where he peddles cheap electronic equipment. He is allowed to go back to his village but says there is nothing there. His animals are dead and his house is destroyed.

"Look at this," he says, pointing at a box of electric plugs and raising his palms in a gesture of helplessness. "It's nothing. I may sell them all for \$2."

The Kurds, as their politicians are quick to tell you, are the largest ethnic group in the world without a state of their own.

At the end of First World War, when the Ottoman Empire was dismembered and shared by the victors, European bureaucrats promised them a state. But between the 1920 Treaty of Sevres, which gave the Kurds a country, and the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, which ratified the new borders of Turkey, this promise was broken.

The borders of five nations were drawn through Kurdish lands. The Turks saw Kurds as a threat to Turkey's new nationalism. Kurds were denied the right to speak their own language, sing and dance to Kurdish songs, and to educate their children in Kurdish schools. Until the 1980s, they were denied even their identity, dubbed "mountain Turks" by governments in Ankara.

Kurdish rebellions sputtered on and off for most of the 20th century. The most recent and terrible began in 1974, when a Turkish Kurd named Abdullah Ocalan formed the Kurdish Workers Party, or PKK, and launched a guerrilla war against Turkish security forces.

The PKK rebellion reached its deadly zenith in the 1990s, when PKK terrorist attacks and suicide operations in Turkish cities were matched by brutal counter-terrorism measures by the Turkish army and allied militias.

Hundreds of Kurdish villages were destroyed and thousands of Kurds were killed or simply disappeared, often turning up dead and mutilated days or weeks later. Up to 40,000 Kurds and Turks died in the conflict.

Many Kurds were caught in the middle, between the anvil of the PKK and the hammer of the Turkish army.

Both sides punished suspected "collaborators."

A PKK supporter in a town near Cizre admits the militants murdered fellow Kurds who complained about them to the government, but he insists the PKK never harmed anyone without reason.

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"The PKK leadership has a good philosophy about this," he says. "If you're not my friend, fine. But don't be my enemy."

However, if cities in Southeastern Turkey are full of Kurdish villagers who have been driven from their homes by the army, Istanbul is home to many Kurds who have fled the PKK.

"Look at me. Look at my face. Look at my chin. Look at my hand," says Sedat, a young Kurd who now lives and owns a shop in Istanbul. He is tracing thin lines of scar tissue across his chin and arms.

"It was a bomb, when they put a bomb in a car. There was glass and metal everywhere. My uncle and cousin are dead. That was 12 years ago."

Sedat says his entire village was targeted by the PKK because of suspected collaboration with the Turks. He returned home a few years later and was hit by a stray bullet in another PKK attack.

"They PKK terrorists, they say, 'Why aren't you giving money to the PKK? Why aren't you giving food to the PKK?'" Sedat says.

"You know, when I came to Istanbul I thought I would go home all the time. I thought I would always be back and forth. I've been back twice. The last time was to find a wife. Lots of people would like to go back. They have homes with gardens. Things are better now. But the PKK are never really gone."

Life is getting better for Kurds in Turkey for two reasons. In 1999, Abdullah Ocalan was captured in Kenya and, facing execution, decided war wasn't the best way to help his people after all.

He declared a ceasefire, and his followers in the PKK retreated to their mountain enclave in northern Iraq. Last year they changed their name to the Kurdish Freedom and Democracy Congress (Kadek).

The second factor helping Turkish Kurds is Turkey's desire to join the European Union, something that won't happen unless Turkey better respects the human rights of its minorities, namely the Kurds.

Now it is possible to hear Kurdish music blaring from every shop window along Diyarbakir's main drag and, if you look hard enough, to find the odd newspaper published in the Kurdish language.

A new Kurdish cultural centre has opened in Diyarbakir, where Kurdish history, culture and music are taught and researched.

The centre gives music lessons on Kurdish instruments and has even has re-created a "traditional" Kurdish home. To a cynic, it looks like Kurdish theme park you might find at a multicultural festival somewhere in Canada.

And yet in Diyarbakir's late-night teahouses I meet half a dozen young men, mostly students, who insist this is all superficial nonsense. The Kurds in Turkey are still oppressed, and the PKK offers the only "solution."

I press one of the students, Haluk, a brooding young man with long, shaggy hair and a goatee, on this point. What is the solution? What exactly does the PKK propose for Turkey's Kurds?

Haluk can't tell me, exactly. He is frustrated and suggests I speak with officials at DEHAP, the latest legal political party to promote Kurdish rights in Turkey. It was founded several months ago when its predecessor, HADEP, was shut down the authorities.

"They are the Sin Fein of the IRA," Haluk says. "Are you clear?"

And so the next morning I climb a dirty, darkened staircase to reach the offices of DEHAP, where I sit down with its regional minister, Mustafa Karahan.

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Karahan chain-smokes as he examines my passport before we begin the interview. On a shelf behind his desk is a small television broadcasting a Kurdish-language show that is beamed in from Belgium.

Karahan says Turkish Kurds have accomplished much in the past decade, but he says there is still a lot of work to do.

"We don't want freedom of language where we can listen to Kurdish music and speak it on the street. We want it to be the language of education, too," he says.

Last year the Turkish government passed a law allowing private education in Kurdish. But this is not enough, he says. Kurds are poor and cannot afford to open their own schools. Government schools must teach classes in Kurdish, too.

I ask if he thinks Kurds in Turkey should have their own state, and he says this is impossible.

"We have lived with the Turks for thousands of years. We are married," he says. "If we separate from each other, what can we do for the children?"

Karahan denies any connection with the PKK, but says DEHAP and the PKK share similar goals.

"Kadek (the PKK) made the situation possible for DEHAP to be a political actor," he says. "They prepared an opening for us."

It strikes me that Karahan speaks of the PKK almost in the past tense, as if their job is finished.

And yet across the border in Iraq, the PKK has a standing army of about 10,000 fighters who show no sign of putting down their weapons.

In recent weeks several journalists, lingering in the region after the big show in Iraq ended with the fall of Baghdad, have visited PKK camps high in the Iraqi mountains.

The militants spout enough revolutionary platitudes about Marx and Lenin to make any Cold Warrior nostalgic. But it also emerges that many are teenagers. Almost half are women. They haven't done much fighting since Ocalan declared a ceasefire, and seem to spend a lot of time playing soccer and volleyball.

The militants in the mountains now echo their political allies in dingy Turkish office buildings. They say they have renounced violence except in self-defence, and are now committed to promoting cultural and political rights for Kurds.

But none of this changes the fact that, to the United States and Britain, the PKK is a banned terrorist organization. What has changed is that the land it occupies is now directly controlled by the United States, a superpower committed to waging a war against terrorism.

The PKK may have several months, even a year or two, to disband or to reform themselves into something remotely palatable to London and Washington.

If not, it is only a matter of time before U.S. Special Forces, backed by air strikes and local Kurdish allies, penetrate the PKK's mountain stronghold and wipe them out.

Back in the hills beyond Cizre, Gunet and I are pulled over by Turkish soldiers manning a checkpoint guarded by a large armoured personnel carrier. They stand and sit around a ramshackle table that supports a plastic cup of water holding two fresh roses. There is a fountain of springwater nearby, and the hills are covered with poppies.

The soldiers are Turks from the West of the country. A couple of them look like teenagers. They joke and laugh easily with Gunet and my translator, but will not let us pass and send us back to the city. As we pull away, the youngest one reaches his hand through the open window of our car and hands me a poppy.

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Unable to push any deeper into the surrounding countryside, we finish the day where we started, drinking tea beside the Tigris River.

Gunet is melancholy again. He says the fall of Saddam may be good for Kurds in Turkey as well, but he's not sure how. So far it has meant only more poverty for Kurds here, as cross-border trade grinds to a halt. Fields near the Iraqi border are littered with trucks that have been sold for scrap metal.

Perhaps, he says, if there is an independent Kurdish homeland in Iraq, one day there will be one in Turkey, too.

"I don't think we should separate, but we must be able to feel free," he says. "We need to feel free."

Gunet was born across the border in Iraq and still has relatives there. If Kurds in Iraq get their own state, he says he may move back to his original home.

Gunet then takes a page from my notebook and draws a rough map of the Middle East, tracing lines around Kurdish areas in Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Syria and Armenia.

When he is finished he has drawn a country that doesn't exist. Gunet looks at it for a few moments, and then crunches the paper into a tiny ball and throws it into the muddy waters beside us.

The map of an imagined Kurdistan floats briefly as the swirling river carries it south toward Iraq, and then disappears beneath the water.

Michael Petrou is a Canadian journalist living in England.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Reuters; Kurds around the world, including a flag-waving Layla Abdulaziz in Ottawa, and Kurdish students returning to school in Kirkuk, Iraq, celebrated the defeat of Saddam Hussein. But even now, many still can't go home.; Colour Photo: Reuters; An elderly man naps at a refugee camp near the Iran-Iraq border where thousands of Kurds sought sanctuary after abandoning their frontline homes.; Photo: Reuters; A Kurdish family flees a northern town as war clouds gather over Iraq last spring.; Photo: Reuters; Kurdish PKK rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan: His rebellion prompted destruction of hundreds of Kurdish villages.

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With Europe's Passive Acquiescence, Arab Judeophobes Have Ascended

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Byline: Harold Evans Mr. Evans is most recently the author of "The American Century." This article is adapted from the Index Lecture delivered at the Hay-on-Wye Literary Festival.

Body

Just before he was given the boot by President Bush, Yasser Arafat made an extraordinary offer - extraordinary because it was not one of the specific demands Mr. Bush was about to make, and extraordinary because Mr. Arafat acknowledged a hidden horror: The indoctrination of the delusional young people who carry out suicide bombings. In a six-page private memorandum he sent to Mr. Bush and Arab leaders outlining his 100-day plan for reform, Mr. Arafat said he would "renounce fanaticism in the educational curricula and spread the spirit of democracy and enlightenment and openness."

The fanaticism Mr. Arafat offers to renounce - as a bargaining chip, not a moral principle - is the fanaticism stimulated by his Palestinian Authority which, among other enlightenments, makes educational films of little girls singing their dedication to martyrdom. The degree of infection was manifest at Al-Najah University in the city of Nablus where the students put on a show entitled "The Sbarro Cafe Exhibition," after the pizza parlor where a Palestinian Arab suicide bomber murdered 15 people taking a meal. The exhibition, according to the Associated Press and Israeli press, consisted of pizza slices and body parts strewn across the room. The walls were painted red to represent scattered blood.

There is a lot under the stone Mr. Arafat has lifted. Fanaticism has been bred into the suicide murderers and millions of young people throughout the Arab nations - with scant attention by the media, governments, academia, and churches of the civilized world. The Palestinian Arab schools, financed by Europe, are open sewers in terms of the hatred they seed not just of Israel, but of all Jews and all their friends. Ahmad Abu Halabiya, the former acting rector of the Islamic University in Gaza, speaks the message: "Wherever you are kill the Jews, the Americans who are like them, and those who stand by them." Arab leaders come to Washington and London and Geneva with formulas for peace while at home they feed their populations with similar incitements. It means that even if by some miracle there is agreement on the shape of a Palestinian state there will be no peace in the Middle East for a generation. The Israelis may find it in their heart to forget or forgive the suicide assassins; the Palestinians may find it possible to put behind them the humiliations of occupation. But the political conflict over Palestine is only one aspect of the fanaticism that has been fomented. It adds up to the dehumanization of all Jews and it has been manufactured and propagated throughout the Middle East and south Asia on a scale and intensity that is utterly unprecedented. This is something relatively new in the Islamic world. There was more tolerance for Jews in the Islamic empire than ever there was in Christian Europe.

What we are up against is best illustrated by what the Jews did to the World Trade Center. Everyone in the Muslim world knows that September 11 was a Jewish plot to pave the way for a joint Israeli-American military operation

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against not just Osama bin Laden and the Taliban but also Islamic militants in Palestine. On Sept. 11, 4,000 Jews were absent from the World Trade Center; they had been tipped off not to go to work. I thought this canard had long ago vanished up its own orifice but it was being retailed with all sincerity by a Pakistani taxi driver last week in New York of all places - which proves nothing except that he happens to be an accurate representation of a now-unshakable Muslim conviction. Millions and millions believe this rubbish, as a Gallup Poll has found after questioning people in nine predominantly Islamic countries - Pakistan, Iran, Indonesia, Turkey, Lebanon, Morocco, Kuwait, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia - that represent about half the world's Muslim population.

Some 67% found the attacks morally unjustified, which is something (why not 100%?) but they were also asked whether they believed reports that groups of Arabs carried out the bombings. Only in West-aligned Turkey was the answer Yes, but it was close - 46 to 43%. In all eight of the other Islamic countries, the majority of the populations rejected the idea that Arabs or Al Qaeda were responsible. This poll was taken just a couple of months ago, after millions of words from reporters and exultant videos from the Osama bin Laden show. The majorities are overwhelming in Pakistan, Kuwait, Iran, and Indonesia - in Pakistan only 4% accept that the killers were Arabs.

Who could be crazy, malign, or misguided enough to disseminate such teeming fabrications? The effluent is from official sources - newspapers and television - in Arab states, from schools and government-funded mosques, from Arab columnists and editorial writers, cartoonists, clerics, and intellectuals, from Web sites that trail into an infinity of iniquity. The appearance of modernity in the Arab media is illusory. More important than the presence of the hardware is the absence of the software, the notion of a ruggedly independent self-critical free press. CNN will film American bomb damage in Afghanistan. Al-Jazeera and the Middle East stations would never dream of talking to the orphans and widows whose loved ones were blown apart by a suicide bomber. An Arab critic of America and the coalition is always given the last word.

The smear that defiles the Jews who died in the World Trade Center, the smear that millions perceive as reality, owes its original currency in September 2001 to one Web site. It is called InformationTimes.com, "an independent news and information service," whose address was given as the National Press Building in Washington D.C. I thought it was worth asking the editor-in-chief, Syed Adeeb, for the evidence. He told me his source was the television station Al Manar in Lebanon. When I asked if he had any qualms about relying on Al Manar, which serves as a mouthpiece for the terrorist group Hezbollah, Mr. Adeeb's reply was, "Well, it is a very popular station." Mr. Adeeb clearly believed his story; when I mentioned that there were names of Jews who died in the towers, he conceded that one or two might have died, but he found it sinister that nobody could tell him just how many Jews did die there. He volunteered that he was an American citizen, and that some of his best friends were Jews. Mr. Adeeb's approach to the world speaks for itself in his headlines, such as "Israeli mafia controls US Congress," "FBI and CIA should investigate the Israeli lobby," and "Barbarous Israeli soldiers rape and torture 86 women in Nablus, Palestine."

At the end of such incendiary headlines and the careless propagation of e-mail there is Danny Pearl, who was tortured and butchered because he was a Jew and a reporter.

Unfortunately, reporting and comment in the West all too often, and for the best of motives, ingenuously reinforces the anti-Semitic mindset. Israel is supported, in Lenin's phrase, like a rope supports a hanging man. As we saw in the argument over Jenin, equal weight is given to information from corrupt police states and proven liars as to information from a vigorous and self-critical democracy. The pious but fatuous posture is that this is somehow fair, as if truth existed in a moral vacuum, something to be measured by the yard like calico. Five million Jews in Israel are a vulnerable minority surrounded by 300 million Muslims, who for the most part are governed by authoritarian regimes, quasi-police states, that in more than 50 years have never ceased trying to wipe Israel out by war and terrorism. They muzzle dissent and critical reporting, they run vengeful penal systems and toxic schools, they have failed in almost every measure of social and political justice, they deflect the frustrations of their streets to the scapegoat of Zionism, and they breed and finance international terrorism. Yet it is Israel that is regarded with skepticism and sometimes hostility.

It is now fashionable to suggest that protesting anti-Semitism is a cunning way of silencing all criticism of Israel. Let me reject that sophistry. It is not anti-Semitic to report and protest ill treatment of Palestinian Arabs. It is not anti-

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Semitic to consider whether Prime Minister Sharon's past belies his promises for the future. It is not anti-Semitic to deplore the long occupation, though originally brought by Arab leaders in instigating and losing three wars.

It is anti-Semitic to vilify the state of Israel as a diabolical abstraction, reserving tolerance for the individual Jew but not the collective Jew; it is anti-Semitic to invent malignant outrages; it is anti-Semitic to consistently condemn in Israel what you ignore or condone elsewhere; it is above all, anti-Semitic to de-humanize Judaism and the Jewish people such as to incite and justify their extermination. That is what we have, thousands of times over, on a preposterous scale.

It is hard looking for sanity to put in the picture. Here is Dr. Adel Sadeq of the Department of Psychiatry at Ein Shams University in Cairo, who is also chairman of the Arab Psychiatrists' Association. This is what he had to say on suicide bombings:

"As a professional psychiatrist, I say that the height of bliss comes with the end of the countdown: ten, nine, eight, seven six, five, four three, two, one. When the martyr reaches "one" and he explodes he has a sense of himself flying, because he knows for certain that he is not dead. It is a transition to another, more beautiful world. None in the Western world sacrifices his life for his homeland. If his homeland is drowning, he is the first to jump ship. In our culture it is different...This is the only Arab weapon there is and anyone who says otherwise is a conspirator."

Next patient, please!

The Muslim world's relentless caricatures of the Jew is ever on the same one note - Jews are dirty, hook-nosed, money-grubbing, vindictive, and scheming parasites. They are barbarians who deliberately spread vice, drugs, prostitution, and poison water. They are also masterminds; incredibly, the Arab and Muslim media - and behind them their states - have resurrected the Bolshevik forgery, "The Protocols of the Elders of the Zion," which reads like something discarded as too ridiculous for the script of Mel Brooks' *The Producers*. Among the fabrications: Al Ahram in Cairo tells us that Jews use the blood of gentiles to make matzos for Passover. This past April, state-funded San Francisco students put out a poster of a baby "slaughtered according to Jewish rites under American license."

Apart from the volume and intensity of the multi-media global campaign, there has been an ominous change in political direction. Arab frustration with the recognition of the state of Israel after World War II has for decades been expressed as "why should the Arabs have to compensate the Jews for the Holocaust perpetrated by Europeans?"

Today the theme is that the Holocaust is a Zionist invention. It is expressed with a vehemence as astounding as the contempt for scholar ship.

A typical column in Al Ahram, the Egyptian government daily: "The entire matter [the Holocaust], as many French and British scientists have proven, is nothing more than a huge Israeli plot aimed at extorting the German government in particular and the European countries. I personally and in the light of this imaginary tale complain to Hitler, even saying to him, 'If only you had done it, brother, if only it had really happened, so that the world could sigh in relief [without] their evil and sin.'"

Hiri Manzour in the official Palestinian Arab newspaper: "the figure of six million Jews cremated in the Nazi Auschwitz camps is a lie," a hoax promoted by Jews as part of their international "marketing operation."

Seif al-Al Jarawn in the Palestinian Arab newspaper Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda: "They concocted horrible stories of gas chambers which Hitler, they claimed, used to burn them alive. The press overflowed with pictures of Jews being gunned down... or being pushed into gas chambers. The truth is that such malicious persecution was a malicious fabrication by the Jews."

Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, the former president of Iran, had this to say on Tehran Radio: "One atomic bomb would wipe out Israel without trace while the Islamic world would only be damaged rather than destroyed by Israeli nuclear retaliation."

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The Palestinian claim to a state is unanswerable and with wiser leadership would have been flourishing for years. It is tragic that the cause is now being so ruthlessly exploited with Jew as a code word for extremist incitement of hatred of America and the West. This is Jihad. It is aimed at us all, at Europeans who "look like" Americans because they believe in liberal democracy and are infected by American culture. But its first victims are the Palestinians and the frustrated masses of the Muslim world.

Their leaders have led them into ignominy in three wars. They have failed to reform their corrupt and incompetent societies. It is convenient to deflect the despair and anger of the so-called street to Israel and the Jews who supposedly control the West, but terror and hate have a way of poisoning every society that encourages or tolerates them.

Habits of mind tending to approve terror are becoming ingrained in the Muslim world, sanctioned by the lethargy and prejudice in Europe: Those Palestinian Arabs who danced for joy on September 11 and those students who staged the grisly exhibition of pizza parlor murders were not Al Qaeda, but their acceptance of terror as a substitute for politics does not auger well for the future of their country or the possibilities of peaceful political dialogue in any of the Arab states.

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A TALENT FOR TERROR

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Body

The dispensers of Infinite Justice will have trouble finding Osama bin Laden. He has learnt his lessons well, writes Paul McGeough

AUGUST nights are the hottest. There is some relief in a cooling evening wind that whips through the ragged folds of Afghanistan's eastern mountains, but as Osama bin Laden put down the phone, he knew that he had to get away. Fast.

As darkness took hold, his men had gathered for prayer in the Kili al-Badr training camp for terrorists.

Now, food was being prepared and they broke into small groups, drinking green tea; talking about their wars; and tuning in to news bulletins from around the globe on crackling short-wave radios.

But others were listening, too. Bin Laden knew that, even before he lifted the handset of the satellite phone. And when Washington did pick up the signal, it was relayed to Bill Clinton's holiday retreat at Martha's Vineyard.

It was 3am on August 20, 1998. The president uttered just one word: "Go".

Soon and sudden, dozens of titanium-covered warheads thundered in from the Arabian Sea, hammering into the treeless Afghan mountains. Furquan Bhatti was on guard duty at bin Laden's camp: "There was light and explosions all over. There was chaos and fire everywhere."

The telephone intercept allowed the United States to pinpoint bin Laden's precise whereabouts to within 10 metres. But it seems the superpower didn't bank on the terrorist moving in the hours between his phone call and the Tomahawk missile attack.

The next time the satellite phone dialled out from the mountains, the voice was deliberately different. The caller was Dr Haq, one of bin Laden's cadres, and he tapped in a number for the editor of Al-Qods, an Arabic newspaper in London.

He had a message for its readers that he knew would get to the White House: "Bin Laden wants the Muslim world to know that he is alive and safe. The battle has not yet begun. We plan to answer with actions, not words."

If what investigative authorities say is right, there was a point not long before that US strike on bin Laden, in 1998, when the macabre threads of this man's mind must have been coming together in a tapestry of apocalyptic proportions.

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Bin Laden was purposefully putting men and money in place for an overlapping campaign of death and destruction that would unfold over three years.

In the coming August, his attacks on the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam would cause 257 deaths and injure thousands. And his attacks on September 11 in New York and Washington would account for more than 6000 deaths; they would destroy one of the most potent symbols of US power, the World Trade Centre; and they would badly disfigure another, the Pentagon.

Between the execution of those two plans, two others that were equally grotesque were foiled.

Bin Laden had decided to mark the millennium celebrations at the start of last year by wreathing the world in death and destruction. Los Angeles airport, one of the busiest in the world, was to be bombed; the Radisson hotel in Amman, Jordan, would be bombed when it was booked out with Christian pilgrims; border crossings between Jordan and Israel and Christian holy sites packed with pilgrims also would be bombed.

That is why the Pentagon has branded bin Laden as the most dangerous man in the world. It's why the US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, has dubbed him "the CEO of Terrorism Inc" and it is why, when George W. Bush said last week he wanted bin Laden "dead or alive", it was not a rhetorical flourish by the President.

Bin Laden's phone call on the night of the US missile attack in 1998 was intentionally provocative.

He knew the Americans were desperate to catch him over his choreography of the huge car and truck bomb attacks on the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam two weeks earlier -- eight years to the day after the arrival of US troops into Saudi Arabia in the wake of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

More specifically, he would have known that a powerful attack on himself and his camps was imminent. He has cronies at all levels of the Pakistani secret service and they would have informed him that three days before the US assault on his mountain hideout, all US citizens had been told to leave Pakistan.

Once again, the US is after bin Laden and this time usually squeamish Americans are telling the President through opinion polls that they are ready for the loss of soldiers' lives and that they don't care about the possible loss of civilian lives in Afghanistan.

But the damp-squib outcome of the 1998 missile attack on bin Laden's camps, and his accomplishments since then, confirm that putting bin Laden out of business is no easy task.

If the US troops and jets go in, they'll find little more than a dusty post-box operation, a virtual bunker from which the wraith-like Saudi multimillionaire has globalised and privatised a practice that used to be local and state-sponsored.

Bin Laden has created terrorists without borders. His followers are strewn in a crescent across the globe, from the Philippines to the Maghreb, prompting this assessment by Bruce Hoffman, of the Rand Corporation think tank: "This is the first truly 'terrorist internationale'. Others have had pretensions, but (bin Laden) is the first to be able to do it. It's money, charisma, being in the right place at the right time -- they all play a role. But, fundamentally, it's vision."

The bin Laden training camps are clearing houses that hone the skills of militiamen for terror groups around the world. Bin Laden has worked persistently to bring dozens of cells, involving as many as 5000 militants in 50 to 60 countries, under his messianic pan-Islamic umbrella.

His battlefield is wherever the US or the perceived enemies of Islam are. In the words of Michael Sheehan, a former co-ordinator of the State Department's counter-terrorism office: "The role of Afghanistan is now absolutely clear -- every Islamic militant we've looked at goes scurrying back there for sanctuary."

SOME of the 12 training camps bin Laden operates near the Pakistani border are sophisticated structures, built with the assistance of the CIA in the '80s when Washington poured billions into the Afghan war in an attempt to block Soviet expansionism.

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But most of the camps are simple mud-brick structures that can be replaced in days or weeks. They are sure to be empty now.

The turn-off on the road for those going to the camps was a guesthouse bin Laden operated in the Pakistani border town of Peshawar. US investigators believe that it was from there that one of bin Laden's key lieutenants directed the millennium plots in Jordan and on the US west coast.

That man is Abu Zubaydah, a Palestinian from the Gaza Strip.

He also was the "post box" through which terrorist cells around the world communicated with bin Laden and the man who screened all candidates for training before they went to the camps and to fight for the extremist Taliban. Successful applicants are expected to swear an oath of allegiance.

Raed Hijazi, a 32-year-old Palestinian who abandoned his job as a Boston taxi driver to undergo advanced training in explosives in one of the Afghan camps, said he was made to read from a slip of paper: "In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate, I promise to ally myself to Osama bin Laden for the sake of God."

Those who come are called the Afghan Arabs but there's hardly an Afghan among them. Instead, they are Sudanese and Saudi, Pakistani and Palestinian, Chechin and Chinese. There are Algerians, Lebanese, Egyptians, Syrians, Yemenis, Iraqis and they all believe in the bin Laden crusade. They know what their leader requires of them, so when they return to their home bases in the US, in Europe and in the Middle East they gather in tight-knit cells.

They disappear into local Arab communities, often laying the groundwork for a "sleeper" who is unknown to them and whose task has not been revealed.

Strict security ensures that only those at the top -- bin Laden and his key lieutenants -- are aware of all the elements of any plot.

Al-Qaeda (The Base) is an international terrorist resource centre. When assistance, guidance or funds are needed, the would-be terrorists are drawn back to Afghanistan, back to the mountains and to bin Laden.

And this is the critical point at which the grand master gets to pick and choose which of the cell activities he will become directly involved in: if the time is right and if the plot is sufficiently grotesque or opportune, he and his lieutenants insist on having the power to direct or finesse an undertaking in return for their make-or-break contribution to it.

Bin Laden is not in a hurry.

At times he lives with his family in a cave with few creature comforts. More often he is constantly on the move.

When he needs to send a secure message to operatives abroad, he is more likely to send it down endless mountain passes by a man on a donkey than to send it encrypted, through the ether.

BUT, despite the surroundings, the camps are the most advanced educational institutions in the country. One US investigator described them as "universities for jihad". Another said bin Laden was the Ford Foundation of terrorists.

Classes are up to date, students learn about cell phone and satellite communication, their notes on how to make bombs with everyday materials are circulated on CD-ROMs and they learn how to encrypt mail.

There is inordinate attention to detail. Before the 1998 embassy bombings, a wooden, scale model of the Nairobi building was constructed in one of the camps.

A captured terrorist told a US court how the 50 to 100 people he trained with were exhorted to kill Americans and were lectured on targeting enemy installations big companies, power stations, airports and railways.

A TALENT FOR TERROR

Also, he had been instructed on poisoning people by putting toxins on doorknobs and had taken part in experiments in which dogs had been injected with cyanide.

Outside experts, including at least one former US serviceman, were brought in to lecture on the finer points of weapons, urban fighting, counter-intelligence and cell dynamics. And experts from Hezbollah, the Iranian-backed Lebanese militia, lectured on the art of making car bombs.

Mohammed Khaled Mihraban, a camp graduate tracked down by The New York Times while fighting in the Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan, said: "We learnt how to plant mines, how to make bombs using dynamite and how to kill someone quietly." If asked, would he go to London, Paris or New York to blow up women and children for Islam? "Yes, I would do it," he said.

US authorities claim the participants in nearly every terrorist act against the US in the past decade honed their skills in the camps and trenches of Afghanistan.

The CIA reckons up to 70,000 activists from more than 50 countries have fought in Afghanistan in recent years. And that more than 5000 of them went through the bin Laden camps before spreading out across the globe with increased confidence, experience and ability. They learnt from their mistakes.

When a local group in Yemen tried to attack the USS Sullivans in January last year, they overloaded their attack boat with explosives and it sank long before it got near the target.

So, in October last year, a consultant from al-Qaeda, whom the CIA has identified as Mohammed Omar al-Harazi, went in to help on a second attempt, successfully ramming an explosives-laden skiff into the USS Cole, which was refuelling in Aden, killing 17 US seamen and blowing a 15m diameter hole in the side of the ship.

The FBI says bin Laden helped fund and had a guiding hand in the first attempt to blow up the World Trade Centre in 1993. Six died, 1000 were injured and the damage cost hundreds of millions of dollars to repair. But the conspirators complained that they had run out of money and that their plan to have one of the WTC towers topple into its twin had failed because those charged with placing the bomb had put it next to the wrong support structure in the WTC basement.

The man on the ground in charge of the project was the British-educated extremist Ramzi Yousef. Later, he botched an incredible plan to explode 12 airliners over the Pacific when he caused a house fire while practising with home-made bombs in a Manila apartment. He fled but was arrested.

Yousef is now in jail. But on September 11 his two crazed schemes became one in the attack that shook America and the world.

US and other intelligence services have had great difficulty infiltrating the bin Laden organisation. They do know that his core group includes Ayman al-Zawahiri, head of the Egyptian fundamentalist group Islamic Jihad, which was responsible for the 1981 assassination of Egyptian president Anwar Sadat.

Others include Mohammed Atef, head of bin Laden's military operations, whom US authorities accuse of a direct involvement in this month's attacks, the attack on the Cole and the embassy attacks in Africa.

A 238-page indictment of bin Laden for the 1998 embassy bombings named Atef as a member of the al-Qaeda committee that approved all terrorist actions and as a vital player in a 1993 attack on US soldiers serving with the United Nations in Somalia.

Eighteen soldiers died and there were appalling TV images of the body of one being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu, the Somali capital. Incredibly, it took the US five years to identify bin Laden as the instigator of the violence.

A third core group member is Rifai Taha, another Egyptian accused of trying to assassinate the current Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak, and the slaughter of 58 foreign tourists at Luxor in 1997.

A TALENT FOR TERROR

The thousands of US investigators working on the bin Laden case in the wake of this month's attacks are confident he is the right and only suspect.

They claim to have gathered detailed evidence from intercepts on telephone lines and sufficient detail on the background of the 19 terrorists who died in the attacks and their associates to lock in the al-Qaeda organisation and its bearded leader as the guilty parties.

The White House has dropped virtually its entire agenda to focus on the war which, Bush says, will be fought on four fronts -- military, diplomatic, intelligence and finance.

The difficulty, of course, is that there is no formal enemy and no territory to be fought over in the usual sense of a war.

Load-Date: November 12, 2001

End of Document

Thirteen days of terror: In 1985, Jeffrey Balkind was a passenger on a plane hijacked by Islamic fundamentalists. He now is recounting his experiences in light of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Ottawa Citizen

March 25, 2002 Monday Final Edition

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Body

It was 1 p.m. on Day 11 of the second longest airline hijack ing in history. In his second-row seat on the fetid and bloodied Boeing 707, now grounded on a runway in Damascus, Jeffrey Balkind listened as a Pakistani hijacker, known as Alamgir, announced to the hostages that execution of foreigners would start in exactly six hours.

He watched a pilot cry, a senior Pakistani official die, and kept himself sane by reading the only book he'd brought with him, The French Lieutenant's Woman, remembering love-making with the seven women he'd known, and by singing to himself Paul McCartney's haunting song, Yesterday.

Mr. Balkind's story took place 21 years ago. He is now telling it anew in the perspective of the Sept. 11 attacks on the U.S. He spoke with the Citizen last week from his office in Washington, D.C. This week he appears on CTV's Vicki Gabereau and on CBC radio and television from Victoria, B.C.

There, he will finish a Canadian university lecture on the hijacking -- a lecture he began eight years ago, but overcome by emotion, never finished.

Citizen Special

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It should have been just another short flight for the economist working in the United Nations system in Pakistan. The Boeing 707, domestic Pakistan International Airlines PK Flight 326, would take off from Karachi on the morning of March 2, 1981, and touch down three hours later in Peshawar.

"I boarded the plane, sat down, read magazines, reports and dozed," he recalls. But, 20 minutes later, when the plane hit its 10,000-metre altitude, three young men on board leapt from their seats, waving pistols. "They suddenly charged down the aisle," says Mr. Balkind, "shouting in Urdu and English: 'Move to the back of the aircraft!'"

"A fistfight broke out between one of the stewards and the hijackers. The steward got clubbed in the face with a pistol. A second hijacker swung his fist into the face of another steward.

"The lead hijacker, Salamullah Khan Tippu -- known as 'Alamgir' -- fired a shot at one of the suitcases in the overhead baggage to send a signal that this was serious.

"Luckily, he did not puncture the fuselage," says Mr. Balkind. "Or, maybe, his first bullet was a blank.

Thirteen days of terror: In 1985, Jeffrey Balkind was a passenger on a plane hijacked by Islamic fundamentalists. He now is recounting his experiences in light

"In five minutes, they had pushed everyone cowering to the back of the plane," he says, "and shouted commands to the pilot and co-pilot to obey their instructions."

That is how the 13-day ordeal began. Only the hijacking of TWA 847 in June 1985 lasted longer -- 15 days. It was hijacked from Athens to Beirut and Algiers by Hezbollah Islamic fundamentalists. As with PK 326, one hostage would be cruelly killed -- the U.S. navy diver, Robert Stetham.

Captive Audience

From his seat in 2A, Mr. Balkind watched the life-and-death theatre that is terrorist hijacking, played to a captive, seated audience.

The person sitting next to him as he was forced to the back of the plane was Lt.-Maj. Tariq Rahim, a former aide to Pakistan's deposed prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Mr. Bhutto had been overthrown in a coup by Gen. Mohammed Zia ul-Haq, who had tried and hanged Mr. Bhutto in 1979 for ordering the killing of four political opponents, and who had imprisoned Bhutto supporters.

Alamgir had collected everyone's passports on the first evening, including Mr. Balkind's UN passport. He had hidden his other passport in his briefcase. The hijackers did not know that he was Jewish and a citizen of the apartheid pariah nation of South Africa.

The hijackers ordered the pilots to land in Kabul, the Afghanistan capital, then under Russian control. By all accounts, the Russians remained indifferent to the drama.

For 24 hours, the hijackers patrolled among their hostages and announced their demands.

Meanwhile, the passengers, though allowed to return to their assigned seats, had nothing to eat for a day.

Fortunately, a regular supply of water arrived on the plane within the first half hour after a plea to the Kabul airport control tower. Temperatures inside the plane quickly shot to sweltering levels as air conditioning and generators faltered on the baking tarmac.

"It was very cold at night and very hot in the daytime," says Mr. Balkind. "We shivered out of fright and just plain cold."

And the stench in the plane became unbearable.

"Not everyone made it to the bathroom on time," he says. "We had to be accompanied by a hijacker and the bathrooms backed up a lot of the time."

Women and Children Freed

In the classic egotism of nouveau newsmakers, the hijackers occasionally broadcast the nightly news on the loudspeaker. The passengers, therefore, could follow the course of negotiations as the governments and media sorted out identities of hostages, the crew members and the hijackers themselves.

The hijackers were all Pakistanis. Alamgir, a former college student, was already accused of murder and other serious crimes. Nasir Jamal Khan, 22, was a former science student involved in the killing of another student. Arshad Hussain was a college student with no police record.

They wanted one thing: release of 93 Pakistani political prisoners thrown in jail by President Mohammed Zia ul-Haq. Mr. Zia refused.

On Day 3, a young boy walked up to Alamgir and, pulling on his shirt, blurted "You said we'd be leaving soon."

Unaware it was a child, Alamgir whirled around, ready to shoot. He didn't.

Thirteen days of terror: In 1985, Jeffrey Balkind was a passenger on a plane hijacked by Islamic fundamentalists. He now is recounting his experiences in light

"Within an hour," says Mr. Balkind, "all the women and children were taken off the plane." The release of 30 women and children and one stewardess left 105 Pakistanis and five foreigners from the original 148 passengers, plus a crew of six pilots and flight attendants.

Early on, the hijackers had identified Lt.-Maj. Rahim. "They told him not to talk with anybody, to sit silent," says Mr. Balkind. "He knew he would be killed."

Lt.-Maj. Rahim had written a letter pleading for his life, and had it smuggled out to Murtaza Bhutto, son of the executed prime minister. Mr. Murtaza operated terrorist training camps of his own in Kabul and had masterminded this hijacking to avenge the death of his father.

Apparently, Mr. Murtaza replied to this entreaty: "Go ahead and kill him when there is a stalemate."

On Day 5, the hijackers announced from the cockpit: "The Pakistani government will not agree to release all the prisoners, and we have a government conspirator here responsible for the death of our beloved leader (Bhutto)." The hijackers apparently believed that Lt.-Maj. Rahim had testified against Mr. Bhutto at his trial.

"Rahim went white like a sheet," says Mr. Balkind. "The hijackers slapped and beat him as he was forced to stand at the front of the plane."

Bleeding and terrified, Lt.-Maj. Rahim begged for his life. As the beating continued, he slumped into unconsciousness. Blood spurted onto the seat beside Mr. Balkind.

"I thought they'd killed him," he says. "It was brutal, like being in an abattoir."

"Aside from the horror, I felt sick to my stomach watching this," he says, "I was angry, very angry after the slaughter." He couldn't eat for a day.

The hijackers thought they had killed Lt.-Maj. Rahim. They tossed him out the back door of the plane. He landed on his head and died on the tarmac of brain injuries.

Hidden Message

On Day 6, the hijackers turned their attention to Mr. Balkind.

"Alamgir hauled me into the cockpit to do a radio broadcast," he says.

It was a message from Kabul to New Delhi with the hijackers' demands for the release of political prisoners in Kabul. They made Mr. Balkind sit in the co-pilot's chair, ordered him to scribble a message and then to broadcast it over the plane's radio to New Delhi.

"As soon as I was inside the cockpit," says Mr. Balkind, "they put a grenade to my head and kept pointing a pistol at me -- a Colt or a Beretta. My hand was shaking. I told them 'I can't write unless you put that down'."

The hijackers laid down the weapons and dictated the message. In the cockpit, Mr. Balkind also had his first and only conversation with Alamgir. The hijacker told him of the lack of social justice in Pakistan.

"In my own work, I was also trying to right social injustices," says Mr. Balkind. "But there is a line in the sand that you just don't cross: Murder on board an aircraft."

On Day 7, the frustrated Afghan authorities ordered the plane out of the country. Syria said it would help and the Boeing 707 landed in Damascus.

There, talks continued with receding deadlines and repeated threats to blow up the plane.

Finally, the hijackers said they would settle for release of 54 prisoners in exchange for the hostages.

Thirteen days of terror: In 1985, Jeffrey Balkind was a passenger on a plane hijacked by Islamic fundamentalists. He now is recounting his experiences in light

Final Deadline

On Day 11 at 1 p.m., the hijackers issued their deadline: At 7 p.m., they announced, they would begin to kill the five foreigners. One hostage per hour.

"They pulled down the shades of the plane," says Mr. Balkind, "and told us to say our last prayers." Speaking from the cockpit, a mullah on board spoke last prayers at sundown and sang to the doomed hostages.

"I kept trying to figure out which of the five of us would be the first to go," says Mr. Balkind. "One was a Canadian who had broken out of Dorchester Penitentiary in New Brunswick. Another was an American drug smuggler. A third was a Swedish drug smuggler. The fourth was a young Iowa lawyer named Fred Hubbell. And myself.

"Those last few hours seemed like an eternity."

He prayed. "I thought of my wife and my parents in South Africa, and my brother in New York, grieving. I didn't fear so much about my own life. You worry about your beloved.

"To keep peace in my mind, I actually remembered the girls I'd made love to in my life before I got married, and my wife. Why sex? Well, it's pretty nice. You try to think of something pleasant."

Then, 20 minutes before the fateful 7 p.m. deadline, Mr. Zia agreed to release the 54 prisoners from Pakistan's jails.

'A stupid risk'

Euphoria swept the plane. Hostages and hijackers hugged each other. Alamgir relaxed. Security lapsed.

"That's when I took photos. If I had been noticed, they would have killed me. It was so stupid and risky," says Mr. Balkind, "but my hobby is photography and I didn't feel like hugging the hijackers. I think in retrospect, I was just trying to seize control of my life again by taking photos. I took a risk, a measured risk, a stupid risk."

On Day 13, Pakistan's 54 prisoners were released to Syria. Among them, according to Time magazine's sources in Islamabad, were murderers, arms smugglers, Soviet spies and saboteurs.

The hijackers "surrendered" to Syrian authorities, who freed them. After a brief stay in Syria, they returned to Afghanistan.

The hostages and crew were taken to a military hospital in Damascus where they, for the first time, could talk to one another and to the Pakistan ambassador to Syria. Mr. Balkind's wife met him there.

So ended "one of the most successful hijackings in history."

Epilogue

Mr. Balkind went right back to work as though nothing had happened. He developed his photos and never looked at them for 10 years.

Occasionally, Mr. Balkind, now 55, has plane-crash dreams. He remembers a nightmare in which his plane flies into a brick wall at 34,000 feet -- almost a premonition of Sept. 11.

In 1996, he remarried and has a three-year-old daughter. His 18-year-old son, Marshall, child of his first marriage, collaborated with him for this interview.

Every hijacking still touches him. On Sept. 11, the nephew of his daughter's nanny died in the plane that hit the Pentagon. His neighbour, a US Air pilot, lost his wife, who was a flight attendant on the same American Airlines plane.

Thirteen days of terror: In 1985, Jeffrey Balkind was a passenger on a plane hijacked by Islamic fundamentalists. He now is recounting his experiences in light

His research led him to a Canadian hijack expert, Peter St. John who wrote the book Air Piracy, Airport Security, and International Terrorism. They became close friends. In 1994, Mr. Balkind travelled to the University of Manitoba to speak to Mr. St. John's class.

Of that visit, recalls Mr. St. John: "I could see Jeffrey was very disturbed. He was overcome by emotions several times through the lecture and never completed it."

Tomorrow evening, at the University of Victoria, he says Jeffrey will "finish that lecture he started eight years ago." The course -- Intelligence, Espionage and Terrorism -- will be given to 70 students and invited guests.

Donna Jacobs is a freelance writer living in Vancouver.

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Graphic

Photo: Copyright Jeffrey Balkind; Jeffrey Balkind, left, was a passenger in an almost front-row seat for the second longest hijacking in history in 1981. Mr. Balkind sits in the cockpit with co-pilot and first officer Junaid Yunus. Mr. Balkind spent an hour at gunpoint in the cockpit when he was forced to broadcast a message to the control tower containing conditions for release of all hostages.; Photo: Copyright Jeffrey Balkind; First Officer Junaid Yunus, centre, flanked by a crew member on the left and a hostage. Mr. Yunus contacted Mr. Balkind several years after the hijacking and they corroborated on the story.; Photo: Copyright Jeffrey Balkind; The captain, centre, is shown being comforted by two hostages. There was tremendous stress over the 13 days and nights, flying between three countries (Pakistan, Afghanistan and Syria) and the crew had to land the Boeing 707 at gunpoint in each case.

Load-Date: March 25, 2002

BACKGROUND: IRAN: Struggle pits theocracy vs. democracy

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Body

Symbols of change abound in Afghanistan today: unveiled faces of women, music from radios --- and in the western town of Herat, the Iranian flag.

The red, green and white tricolor of Afghanistan's neighbor is flying again at its consulate in Herat. Given the enmity between Iran and the Taliban militia, that would have been inconceivable only weeks ago.

The Taliban's fanatical version of Sunni Islam did not sit well with Iran's Shiite believers, who fomented their own Islamic revolution in 1979. As odd as it might sound, Iran's ruling clergy would like to see a moderate government take power in the nation with which they share a 600-mile border, experts say.

AJC

"No question about it. [Iran] had poor relations with the Taliban," said David Andrews, a special negotiator for Iran/U.S. claims under former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, a quasi-diplomatic post. "Iran wants a government that is more compatible with them."

Iran has wasted no time sending that signal. In Herat, Iran reopened its consular office as soon as Taliban troops surrendered the town last month. Coincidentally, the building is located across the street from the headquarters of the Hezbi Wahdat, a Shiite faction of the Northern Alliance backed by Iran.

The hoisting of the flag served as a quiet reminder of Iran's concern for Afghanistan's Shiite minority and the influence Iran wields from across the border.

In addition to Wahdat, Iran also supports the Jamiat-i-Islami, another Northern Alliance faction reportedly in control of Herat and the capital, Kabul. With friends in positions of power in parts of Afghanistan, Iran, itself struggling with huge identity problems, can rest a bit easier when looking east. Refugees, opium, energy

More than two decades of war in Afghanistan has had a great impact on Iran, which, according to Hamid Reza, a spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, "has suffered great losses because of insecurity and instability in Afghanistan."

Roughly 1.5 million Afghan refugees call Iran home, at great cost to the unstable Iranian economy. Labeled a terrorist state by the United States, Tehran's Islamic government has not had access to the large amounts of

BACKGROUND: IRAN : Struggle pits theocracy vs. democracy

international aid that have been afforded Pakistan for refugees, said Behrooz Ghamari-Tabrizi, sociology professor at Georgia State University.

Because of the enormous financial strain, Iran would like to see quick repatriation of Afghan refugees and prevent a future influx, Ghamari-Tabrizi said.

Iran's discontent with Afghanistan has other roots as well. For many years, Iran has served as a key smuggling route for opium produced in Afghanistan. International officials estimate that the Taliban once relied on a narcotics trade worth \$10 million to \$50 million annually, undermining the security of the region and leaving Iran and Pakistan with the highest rates of heroin addiction in the world.

Iran's biggest economic concern, however, is oil and gas. Like Russia, Iran is keen to promote its vast reserves while blocking its landlocked Central Asian neighbors' access to crucial markets. Iran provides the most logical energy pipeline route from the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf, but U.S. sanctions have limited Iran's role.

"It's in Iran's national interests that we have pipelines coming through Afghanistan, through Iran and out to the Persian Gulf," said Hosein Abghari, professor of banking and finance at Morehouse College. "Iran is losing a lot on every front --- the pipelines, the sanctions."

Experts see the Afghan conflict as a catalyst for change in the region, though they vary in their opinions on Iran's future. Some say that the war in Afghanistan is providing Iran with a chance for improved ties to Washington. The Iranian clergy's support for the U.S.-led coalition and Iran's role as a stable player in the region could pay off in economic rewards from America. 'Change is coming'

But that could be years down the road, said John Kelly, a former ambassador to Lebanon and former assistant secretary of state for the Near East and South Asia. Iran's fundamentalists, he said, are not likely to disappear any time soon.

"Change in Iran will be evolutionary," said Kelly, who teaches at the Center for International Strategy, Technology and Policy at Georgia Tech.. "So it will be a long time before relations between Iran and the United States see any improvement."

Abghari views growing discontent and public protests as a sure sign that a shift in power is around the corner for Iran. He warned that the Bush administration would be making a mistake if it decided to cozy up now to the hard-liners in Tehran.

"The Islamic government in Iran is in deep trouble. There are demonstrations on the streets every day," he said. "Change is coming. I believe that strongly."

More than two decades after the popular 1979 revolution, Iran is struggling with what Andrews called a schizophrenic society.

On one hand, Iran remains the Islamic state created by the Ayatollah Khomeini, who returned from exile after the overthrow of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi. On the other hand, the so-called reformists fighting to wrest control from hard-line clerics have gained enormous popularity.

"The leitmotif of political life in Iran today seems to be a struggle for power between two political elites, one claiming the support of the people and the other the authenticity of religion and revolution," said a document released this year by the U.N. Commission on Human Rights.

Many Iranian revolutionaries intended to return the country to democracy after years of oppression under the shah. Ghamari-Tabrizi, then a student who demonstrated in the streets of Tehran, said Iranians welcomed the end of the corrupt monarchy and the fear instilled by SAVAK, Iran's ruthless secret police.

"The revolution was a great moment in history for Iran," Ghamari-Tabrizi said. "It was a great way for Iran to reaffirm its power as a nation, for the people to take control of their destiny."

BACKGROUND: IRAN : Struggle pits theocracy vs. democracy

But Khomeini's imposition of hard-line Islam left many Iranian revolutionaries disenchanted. The post-Shah years turned out to be marred by human rights violations, repression and execution of dissidents at home and abroad.

Iran's isolation began when militant students stormed the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and held 52 Americans hostage for 444 days. When Khomeini's government refused to take control of the situation, President Jimmy Carter severed diplomatic ties.

In July, Congress voted to extend for five years sanctions against Iran and Libya that President Bill Clinton imposed in 1996 for terrorist activities and support of groups including the Hezbollah in Lebanon. 'Fruits of the revolution'

Observers of change in Iran say the clerics' tight grip on society has loosened but that Iran has a long way to go.

Ghamari-Tabrizi pointed to high levels of electoral participation, representation of women in public sectors, and higher literacy rates as "fruits of the revolution" now being realized with the help of the reformists. For the first time, there is "real bottom-up politics in Iran," he said.

At the same time, conservative clerics are still able to exercise ultimate authority. In local elections Friday, the Guardian Council --- composed of Islamists appointed by supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei --- disqualified 55 reformist candidates.

"Everything in Iran boils down to the contradictions between mass participation and divine law and the question of where the state draws its legitimacy from," Ghamari-Tabrizi said. "Is the supreme leader subject to the law or not? Any issue in one way or another goes back to this question."

And that issue, Abghari said, is difficult to resolve. "When you have theocracy, it is impossible to have democracy."

Still, Iran's reform movement, led by President Muhammad Khatami, has been struggling to establish what would amount to an Islamic democracy.

Khatami enjoys considerable popular support: He won 77 percent of the vote in the last elections and his party dominates the Majlis, Iran's parliament. By the very nature of his agenda, he is at odds with the powerful clerics.

Last week, speculation swirled when Khatami said he didn't show up at work for health reasons. The London-based Saudi newspaper Asharq al-Awsat, quoting sources close to Khatami's family, said the reason for Khatami's work stoppage was his dispute with Khamenei over Iran's attitude toward the United States.

But Khatami's critics, including Iranian monarchists in the United States, view the Iranian president as the lesser of two evils. They say no change can come to Iran until the clergy is removed from power.

"A vote for Khatami is simply a vote opposing the Islamic government," Abghari said.

Graphic

Map:

Map of Iran and surrounding countries; inset map shows area of detail in relation to Europe, Asia and Africa. / DALE E. DODSON / Staff Photo:

An Afghan girl has tea and her baby brother plays with a spoon in Matakhy camp at Zahendan, Iran. / HASAN SARBAKSHIAN / AP Photo:

President Mohammad Khatami endures frustration: His initiatives can be reversed by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. / RICHARD DREW / Associated Press Photo:

BACKGROUND: IRAN : Struggle pits theocracy vs. democracy

Refugees prepare to cross the border in northeast Iran and return to Afghanistan. / VAHID SALEMI / Associated Press Graphic:

BEHIND THE NEWS

The AJC explores national and international topics daily in Backgrounders.

Recent Backgrounders have addressed:

- > Airport closures following security breaches
- > Mexican President Vicente Fox
- > Unmanned planes of the U.S. military
- > The Pashtuns of Afghanistan

Backgrounders from previous editions are available on:

ajc.com Graphic:

IRAN: TERRORIST STATE OR ISLAMIC DEMOCRACY?

The United States continues to list Iran as a sponsor of terrorism, a charge the Iranians deny. Meanwhile, in a region full of autocratic regimes, Iran has elected a reformist president for a second consecutive term.

> GEOGRAPHY

Land area: 654,400 sq. miles (slightly larger than Alaska)

Climate: Mostly arid or semiarid; subtropical along Caspian coast

> PEOPLE

Population: 66,128,965; United States: 278,058,881

Infant mortality rate: 29.04 deaths/1,000 live births; United States: 6.76 deaths/1,000 live births.

Life expectancy at birth: 69.95 years; United States: 77.26 years

Religions: 89% Shiite Muslim; 10% Sunni Muslim; 1% Zoroastrian, Jewish, Christian and Baha'i; United States: 56% Protestant, 28% Roman Catholic; 2% Jewish; 4% other; 10% none.

Literacy (age 15 and over can read and write): 72.1%;

United States: 97%

> GOVERNMENT

Type: Theocratic republic

Chief of state: Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (since 1989)

Head of government: President Mohammad Khatami (since 1997)

Legislature: Unicameral Islamic Consultative Assembly.

Elections: Leader of the Islamic Revolution appointed for life by the Assembly of Experts; president and legislators elected for four-year terms.

> ECONOMY

Gross domestic product: \$413 billion (2000);

U.S.: \$9.963 trillion (2000)

Gross domestic product per capita: \$6,300 (2000);

United States: \$36,200 (2000)

Population below poverty line: 53% (1996);

United States: 12.7% (1999)

Source: CIA

/ DALE E. DODSON / Staff Map:

IRAN COMPARED WITH THE UNITED STATES

Map of Iran is superimposed over the Eastern-to-middle United States. Georgia is highlighted to show size of Georgia in relation to size of Iran. / DALE E. DODSON / Staff Graphic:

BACKGROUND: IRAN : Struggle pits theocracy vs. democracy

CHRONOLOGY

- > 1921: Reza Khan, a leader in a nationalist movement distressed by foreign powers' domination of the country, seizes control of the military.
- > 1925: A constituent assembly votes to depose the sitting monarch, Ahmad Shah, and to crown Reza Khan, henceforth known as Shah Reza Pahlavi.
- > 1935: The nation's name is changed from Persia to Iran.
- > 1941: Shah Reza Pahlavi, wishing to remain neutral, refuses to side with the Allies in World War II. To maintain supply routes to the Soviet Union, the Allies occupy Iran. The shah abdicates and his eldest son replaces him as Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.
- > 1946: U.S. pressure forces the Soviets to leave Iran.
- > 1951: Parliament votes to nationalize the oil industry, leading to a British boycott of Iranian oil. A power struggle between the shah and Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq ensues.
- > 1953: The shah overthrows Mossadeq with the help of Western powers.
- > 1963: The shah begins a modernization campaign that includes land reform and women's suffrage. The Ayatollah Khomeini, who opposes these reforms, is arrested and later exiled. The shah becomes increasingly dependent on SAVAK, the secret police, to control opposition movements.
- > 1978: The shah's authoritarian rule leads to riots and mass demonstrations by the opposition, now united behind Khomeini. Martial law is imposed.
- > 1979: The shah is forced into exile. Khomeini returns to Tehran and proclaims the Islamic Republic of Iran. Militants take 52 Americans hostage in the U.S. Embassy, demanding the extradition of the shah to face trial in Iran.
- > 1980: The shah dies of cancer in Egypt. Iraq invades Iran following disputes over the border and the Shatt al-Arab waterway.
- > 1981: U.S. hostages are released after 444 days as captives.
- > 1985: The Iran-Contra affair unfolds. It becomes known that the United States offered secret arms deals in exchange for release of American hostages in Lebanon.
- > 1988: The USS Vincennes mistakenly shoots down Iran Air jetliner. Iran accepts a cease-fire with Iraq.
- > 1989: Khomeini issues a religious order for Muslims to kill author Salman Rushdie. The Briton's book, "The Satanic Verses," is considered blasphemous to Islam. Khomeini dies. President Khamenei is appointed as new supreme leader. The United States releases \$567 million of frozen Iranian assets.
- > 1990: An earthquake kills 40,000 people. Iran remains neutral after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Iran and Iraq resume diplomatic relations.
- > 1995: The United States imposes economic sanctions against Iran for alleged sponsorship of terrorism, seeking to acquire nuclear arms, and hostility to the Middle East process. Iran denies the charges.
- > 1997: Reformer Mohammad Khatami wins the presidential election by a landslide, defeating the conservative ruling elite.
- > 1998: Iran deploys thousands of troops on its border with Afghanistan.
- > 1999: Students engage in pro-democracy marches. More than 1,000 are arrested.
- > 2000: Liberals and supporters of Khatami gain control of the parliament. Sixteen reformist publications are banned by the judiciary. Senior clerics allow women to lead religious congregations of women worshippers. Parliament approves a bill aimed at attracting foreign investment.
- > 2001: Iran and Saudi Arabia sign a security pact to fight terrorism, drug trafficking and organized crime. Khatami is re-elected.

--- Source: BBC, Encyclopaedia Britannica Photo:

Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, wife Farah in 1979. / Associated Press Photo:

Khomeini

BACKGROUND: IRAN : Struggle pits theocracy vs. democracy

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Looking for trouble

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Body

He's been under siege, shot at and kidnapped, but for Robert Young Pelton it's all in a day's work, as he charts the world's war zones for a series of travel guides that combine behind-the-lines reportage with let's go-style tips on touring some of the planet's most perilous places

It's mid-July, and Robert Young Pelton is sitting by his picture window in Redondo Beach, California, watching a school of dolphins leaping through the Pacific waves. He has risen early, and although it's now mid-morning, he's still in his dressing gown. But this picture of serenity masks much of the reality of his existence. For roughly seven months of the year, Pelton, 48, journeys to wild and often war-torn countries, hangs out with local politicians, peace-makers and mercenaries, then returns home to write a provocative, perceptive and intentionally hilarious book about the globe's least likely travel destinations.

The World's Most Dangerous Places is a travel guide like no other. Mixing behind-the-lines reportage with practical tips on getting into, around, and out of 25 dangerous countries, it has been described as "the single best source for unclassified intelligence information" (by a US Military Deployment Officer) and as reading "like Soldier of Fortune magazine meets National Geographic". One could add to that P. J. O'Rourke's Holidays in Hell.

"Ultimately," says Pelton, whose other books include an autobiography called The Adventurist and survival manual Come Back Alive, "it's about how a normal person can go into an area of conflict, understand the situation and come out safely."

Pelton has been on the ground with elite US Special Forces in Afghanistan, bunkered with rebel leaders in under-siege Grozny, and earlier this year survived a ten-day kidnap ordeal at the hands of right-wing paramilitaries while hiking in Colombia. His readers include soldiers, spooks, students, and, perhaps surprisingly for such a gung-ho-sounding tome, a significantly large number of middle-aged American women.

Dangerous Places - DP for short - awards up to five stars depending on how dangerous a place is: a single star is awarded to the Balkans, Iran, North Korea, Lebanon and - for punch and polemic effect - the United States. "If you try hard enough, you could get waylaid or interred for being a complete idiot," the book explains. A five-star rating is reserved for the unquestionably terrifying Colombia, Chechnya and Liberia, but there are stacks of practical and useful tips to be found on places that aren't only on the itineraries of people who wish they'd joined the SAS. India, Nepal (two stars each), the Philippines and South Africa (three apiece) are by no means off the beaten track; and knowing what and where is dangerous before it's too late is the sort of pre-trip research that could save your life.

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The US is in there because that's where most of DP's readers live, and Pelton is keen to get his points across. But anyone who thinks that the country isn't dangerous had better think again. As DP points out, in its inimitable style, there were plenty of potential problems even before the threat of terrorist outrages became all too real. "There are more than 200 million guns in the possession of Americans, and few of them are owned by upright pioneers seeking to defend their wagons from marauding Indians," it says.

The deliberately apolitical book also stresses the dangerous nature of any administration that can call on the sort of armaments the US has at its disposal. So Pelton's unhappiness with what he witnessed in postwar Iraq is not solely because recent events have rendered DP's fifth edition already out of date.

"If someone's beating up your dog, and ten men with machine guns show up and take that person off to prison, then you're happy," Pelton says as he tries to explain why American troops are still being attacked in Iraq. "If those ten men sit there with their machine guns outside your house for the next six months, you kind of wonder why they're there. Iraqis are thinking, 'Holy shit, you guys have occupied us.'"

Pelton was supposed to join his friends in US Special Forces for the Iraq war, but things didn't go to plan. "It wasn't an official embed, it was sort of by the back door," he explains. "They'd asked me to go with them, so I went to Jordan to meet them. But I didn't realise that Jordan refused to admit there were American troops stationed in the country. The Jordanians wouldn't let me on the base. They kept saying, 'No, there's no Americans here.' And I could see the helicopters!"

He befriended the Special Forces when he worked for a month as a journalist - a label, like all others, he usually shuns - for CNN in northern Afghanistan late in 2001. His bonding with the Green Berets began when some of the soldiers recognised him as the author of the only book they'd read that provided any kind of background to their mission, and was cemented when he wrote about his time with the men he called "The Regulators" in National Geographic. That piece is reprinted in DP5, but even this sort of high-level networking couldn't get him into Iraq during what he says soldiers now refer to not as "the war" but as "the ass-whupping".

"It's a new level of warfare," Pelton says drolly. "Somewhere between 'low-intensity conflict' and 'all-out war'. And I spent it embedded with journalists!"

He laughs as he warms to a favourite theme - pointing out the shortcomings of many of the world's newsgatherers, who remain reluctant to go into countries Pelton thinks nothing of visiting, unless there's a bulging expense account and a five-star hotel in which to spend it.

"I was defending Mahogany Ridge with this crack elite corps of journalists at the Intercontinental in Amman," he grins. "I got to see the entire war from the journalists' point of view. Of course, I never do this normally, so it was fascinating. It was like Peyton Place - who's banging who, who's getting fired, who's there in a last-ditch attempt to salvage their career: who gets to be the star and who doesn't."

"I'm an outsider and an insider at the same time," he reasons. "A lot of these people know me and know my book, but at the same time they fear me because I'm the guy that actually writes about how f*****-up journalists are. They'll say, 'Well, off the record...' and I'll look at them and laugh."

Yet it is Pelton and his unconventional approach that often gets to the stories the rest of the media yearn for. It was Pelton's videotaped interview that alerted the world to the existence of John Walker Lindh, the so-called American Taliban, and his reportage of the conflict as it unfolded has helped DP's stock rise.

"I've been in more impressive stories, and more dramatic and more violent places, and people just didn't care," he says. "But because it was 'our war', because of September 11, what I did all of a sudden became of great importance and interest."

Canadian-born Pelton came up with the idea for DP when he realised that his marketing career was boring him to tears. Thinking he would be happier working in travel publishing, he bought the guide book company Fielding's in 1993, and took their list from fewer than a dozen titles to more than 50. But cruise guides to the Caribbean weren't

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sufficiently pulse-raising, so the irreverent DP became his focus. 1995's first edition was a surprise hit, in no small part because of the often very black humour Pelton and his co-authors brought to their work. "I originally wrote it in a very serious tone," Pelton remembers, "but it was ridiculously boring. So I drew upon my own sensibility, basically wrote it in my own voice, and it became very funny."

Pelton has enlisted several like-minded souls for his journeys to the world's hearts of darkness, and of the newcomers to DP's fifth edition, two are based in Britain. Andrew Mueller, 33, is an Australian music journalist who got bitten by the travel bug when working for Melody Maker in the early Nineties, and has since visited Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine and Lebanon for various British and Australian titles. James Brabazon, 30, a British photojournalist, tired of portraiture - his subjects have included the Queen - and switched to front-line reportage. He has covered conflicts in Kosovo, Northern Ireland and Kashmir, and was the first journalist to have sampled life behind the lines of the Liberian rebel force, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy, or LURD. His film on Liberia, shown on Newsnight in January, was nominated for the One World Media Awards. The two men are united by a common passion: to spend time with people whose stories are rarely heard, and to tell those stories to as wide an audience as possible. While Brabazon's initiation to the DP fold was a baptism of fire, an interview for a lads' mag that turned into three weeks with Pelton in war-torn Sierra Leone, Mueller had a rather more sedate introduction, which helps to explain the book's wide appeal. "It was like hearing a great record for the first time," he explains. "It was such a great idea - a Let's Go guide for war zones. I thought the sensibility of it was fantastic, the writing was terrific, and it was very, very funny. So I wrote to Robert to say I liked the book. We stayed in touch, and when the fifth edition came up, he asked me if I wanted to be involved. If I could pursue that analogy a bit further, it's like hearing that really great record, and then the people who made it ask you to join the band."

Which all sounds very cosy and back-slappy, but there is real sharp-end work being done by both men. Mueller's work in DP5 includes an account of being pinned down in a firefight between Israelis and Palestinians in Ramallah, and he has asked questions of the likes of Taleban zealots and Hezbollah officials that other journalists would have shied away from.

"I'd been talking to these two humourless drones in what passed for the Taleban's intelligence service for the entire bloody afternoon," he drawls of his 1998 trip to Kabul. "I was desperate. I was trying to think of anything I could ask that would get across any part of their character other than 'doctrinaire religious crank'. So I asked them who they thought would win the World Cup. Unfortunately, they announced that they were concerned about my spiritual preparation for the next life, and asked me to stay in Afghanistan to join the Taleban and become part of their jihad. It was sweet of them, and I was trying to find a way to decline politely when, mercifully, we were interrupted by an earthquake."

Brabazon's experiences in Liberia are recounted in detail in DP, although he has omitted another story that shows how close he came to dying. "I was with a group of LURD people standing beside a wall who were engaging (Liberian President) Taylor's troops with a light machine gun," he begins, recalling the incident in the frontline town of Tubmanburg. "It had taken me a very long time to get to this point, then they told me that I had to withdraw because they'd run out of rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs). I got really anxious about this, and really annoyed, because I'd just spent two hours inching my way there. But they were adamant that I withdrew. I was about 35 yards from them, when an RPG went straight into the group I'd been standing with. I stood up, and the guy next to me looked at me, and I looked at him. I said, 'That was close.' He smiled at me, and then a high-velocity bullet went in between our faces, and hit the wall of the building next to us. We just looked at each other and ran." He laughs.

There is an element of the whole DP ethos that might strike one as somewhat macho, but Pelton refutes the notion. "One dirty secret is that one of the largest groups of DP readers is women over 50," he smiles. "That's because women over 50 are smart enough to go and buy a book on being safe before they head off to some remote region! But they also care about things, they want to know more about what's going on. But I think anybody who has an interest in world affairs would buy DP."

He does admit, though, that his book can make the notion of travelling to war zones or dangerous places seem swashbuckling, exciting, or glamorous.

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In fact, he is unrepentant about it.

"What I'm trying to communicate is that, yes, it is kinda cool understanding why some people want to die for a cause," he begins. "It is kinda cool to go to a small African village and make friends and try to help them figure things out. And when you come back, people will think you're cool because you're smarter and you've got knowledge and intelligence. I don't have any problem with encouraging people to challenge their fears and to go to places that they have concerns about, and bypassing the whole media force-feeding of what's there and what it's like.

Everyone should find out for themselves.

"I have two 19-year-old daughters," Pelton continues, "and I spend a lot of time with young people. And the thing that blows me away is that the most important thing in our life, which is world peace, world hunger, understanding how the rest of the globe works, is not hip any more. We're raising a generation of people who think it's more important to be a TV survival show celebrity than it is to actually go out there and help people survive. So I'm just trying to put a little hipness into the idea of caring."

"Ironically enough," Mueller maintains, "I actually think the central thrust of the book is that it's trying very hard to point out that the world is actually not as scary as we keep being told it is. I think it's a really empowering book. It says, 'You can do this. We've done it, so you can too. And here's how we did it.' I honestly don't see a reason why people shouldn't take holidays in Iraq. I think the world would be a better place if more people did."

"Well, that's the secret mission of the book," Pelton admits. "The initial idea was to provide information, and then I suddenly realised that the people who used this information would be less fearful and more engaged.

Andrew's comment on Iraq is completely appropriate, because wars are caused by lack of knowledge and unwarranted fears of a certain culture or group.

The more people who get to know these groups, the more comfortable we are in negotiating problems and solving things. And the last thing you want to do is annihilate them."

Pelton, unsurprisingly, is planning his return to Iraq. It sounds hair-raising, and his prognosis for the country, and for America's future involvement, is bleak. "They're going to be there for a very long time," he says of the US troops. "A very, very long time. What I'm expecting to see when I go back this time is the same kind of low-level counter-insurgency that the Russians conducted in Afghanistan in the Eighties."

He pauses, smiles, and turns back to watch the dolphins.

The World's Most Dangerous Places (DP5) by Robert Young Pelton is published by HarperCollins USA and is available at the Books Direct price of Pounds 11.99 (RRP Pounds 14.99) plus Pounds 1.95 p&p on 0870 160 8080; www.timesdirect.co.uk/booksdirect.

For more on Robert Pelton, visit www.comebackalive.com

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Legend of Ali continuing to grow: It was 40 years ago that Cassius Marcellus Clay burst into the spotlight, and it has never left the one they call 'The Greatest,' writes Bruce Garvey.

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Body

Most of them are gone now, and those who haven't have faded dimly into the history of that extraordinary decade of the '60s -- forgotten icons of long-past days, amid the ghosts that still walk among us from those glittering, explosive times.

The Kennedys and Martin Luther King, John Lennon, Mickey Mantle and Sandy Koufax, Elvis and Vince Lombardi.

One of them survives, endures: The one they called "The Greatest."

It was 40 tumultuous years ago that Cassius Marcellus Clay, alias Muhammad Ali, literally screamed, danced and jabbed his way into a worldwide spotlight that would never leave him. Not even today.

The Ottawa Citizen

He's a shuffling, sick man, almost speechless from the ravages of Parkinson's disease and too many punches. Yet Ali, 62, still basks in the limelight that becomes a living legend, and his tragic physical plight only reinforces how truly great he was.

Incredibly, the legend is still a work in progress as it soars to mythical proportions. An America that grew up hating the mouthy, young black upstart, draft dodger and Muslim has come to love him.

Nobody put it better than Pulitzer Prize-winning author David Remnick, in his book *King of the World*: "Ali is an American myth who has come to mean many things to many people: a symbol of faith, a symbol of conviction and defiance, a symbol of beauty and skill and courage, a symbol of racial pride, of wit and love.

"Ali's physical condition is shocking not least because it is an accelerated form of what we all fear, the progression of aging, the unpredictability and danger of life. In Ali we see the frailty even of a man whose job it was to be the most fearsome figure on the globe ... Ali is a living symbol, as ambiguous and free-floating as many symbols are, but he remains important."

And, if you ever met him, unforgettable.

At the height of his ring career, he was arguably the best-known human being on the planet, and I'll never forget a happy reminder of it that came one day in the dusty squalor of a Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon.

Legend of Ali continuing to grow: It was 40 years ago that Cassius Marcellus Clay burst into the spotlight, and it has never left the one they call 'The Greatest....

It was one of those UN slums that are a breeding ground for Hezbollah and the like, an incubator for hopeless Muslim resentment and the terrorism it fosters.

On this day, a gathering crowd of ragged teenagers was getting increasingly agitated by the presence of a TV news crew, egged on by a few older militants toting AK-47s. It had all the makings of an ugly scene with a nasty ending once the first rock was thrown.

One big kid in the forefront edged ever closer, a rock in one hand, the other a fist, and, for reasons that I still can't fathom, I yelled out to him: "Who're you, Muhammad Ali?"

A broad grin sprang onto his face and in an instant he was up on his toes, doing the Ali shuffle and throwing jabs and combinations. They all were. The tension vanished, and in minutes we were swapping Ali stories. Thanks, champ.

Let's go back to the beginning, to Feb. 25, 1964.

He was Cassius Clay back then -- an Olympic gold-medal winner turned pro who had slashed his way through the ranks of contenders for a crack at the reigning heavyweight champ, Sonny Liston. They called him the Louisville Lip for his non-stop motormouth, quoting one-syllable poetic paeans to his demigod looks and boxing prowess. However, he was also big and lightning fast, with the speed and mobility of a middleweight.

Nobody gave him a chance against Liston, the epitome of the old fight game: a Las Vegas-based ex-con, surrounded by the mob; huge, hulking, glowering, with a devastating punch and a disposition as dark as his complexion.

He brushed off Ali as a "crazy nigger faggot," and young Cassius did his best to oblige with a near-hysterical pre-fight performance that sent him into the Miami Beach ring that night as a 7-1 underdog.

Then he made history. With footwork like a ballet dancer, Ali circled the plodding Liston with that skipping-sideways motion of his, hammering him all the time with a barrage from both hands. Liston barely landed a solid punch. After six rounds, with his face a lumpy mess, he threw in the towel and his title with it.

The world might not have been ready for him, but Cassius Clay had arrived. He was heavyweight champion of the world, and the very next day he dropped his first bombshell.

With Malcolm X at his side, he announced he was dropping his "slave name." Now he was Muhammad Ali, a Muslim, a member of the Chicago-based Nation of Islam, the black separatist cult that was white America's worst nightmare.

These were the days of George Wallace and Selma, Alabama, with Bull Connor's police dogs and firehoses on the bridge. America teetered on the edge of the racial abyss, with all-out race war just a gunshot away. The great civil rights revolution was gaining momentum, but President Lyndon Johnson's enactment of the Kennedy dream was still a wave of race riots away.

Years later, sprawled in a white leather armchair in a white-carpeted mansion in Chicago, Ali recalled those days in his animated, dramatic story-telling style, complete with a range of facial expressions that would flatter a Shakespearean actor.

"I went to a Muslim meeting ... Man preaching there. Women on one side, men on the other. He said, 'Why are we called Negroes? Chinese are named after China. Cubans after Cuba. Russians after Russia. Canadians after Canada. What country is called Negroes?'

"I say, 'Hey man, I better get out of here. These people gonna brainwash me.'"

Criticized by Dr. King

Legend of Ali continuing to grow: It was 40 years ago that Cassius Marcellus Clay burst into the spotlight, and it has never left the one they call 'The Greatest....

Brainwash him, they did, and even Martin Luther King denounced him.

"When Cassius joined the Black Muslims he became a champion of racial segregation and that is what we were fighting against," Dr. King said.

In the ring at this time, Ali was unbeatable. He "whipped" the American contenders; the Brits, Brian London and Henry Cooper; and Toronto's George Chuvalo.

Outside the ring, the worst was yet to come.

Vietnam was building into the decade-long disaster it would become as the anti-war backlash began. Before it was through, it would make today's Iraq controversy look like a picnic.

Ali's mentor, Malcolm X, was gunned down in New York by religious rivals and the image of the Muslims plummeted further. Then, as though pressing some pre-planted self-destruct button, Ali waded into the war issue.

"When they draft me, I won't go," he declared, "I ain't got no trouble with them Viet Cong. It ain't right. They never called me nigger. They never put dogs on me. How am I gonna shoot them? They're poor little black people, little babies."

The Black Muslim champ was now a draft-dodger. The "traitor" was sentenced to five years in jail (which he never served) for refusing induction into the army and was banned from the ring for 3 1/2 of his best fighting years: a disgrace to boxing, a disgrace to America.

With the money tap turned abruptly off, Ali joined the college-campus speaking tour, honing his folksy anecdotes of Muslim wisdom and American racism into a glib patter that he knew by heart.

Outside of the peace movement, he was effectively isolated and ostracized, while the political establishment sought to keep his "white man's war" message out of the ghettos that were filling a disproportionate number of body bags.

It wasn't until 1971 that the United States Supreme Court quashed his conviction and Ali launched into Phase 2 of his interrupted career. They thought he could never come back from that long, enforced layoff, but, as the hate-Ali groundswell began to settle, grudgingly at first, America began to realize the best was yet to come.

It wasn't all triumph. He rushed his comeback into the first of his three epic battles with Joe Frazier and lost in 15 of the best rounds of boxing ever fought. A couple of times he goofed. Ken Norton broke his jaw when he skipped training once too often, and Leon Spinks, a ghetto kid with a toothless grin, beat him for the same reason. He came back and "whipped" them both in rematches, along with all the rest.

He went on to rope-a-dope the man-mountain George Foreman in the famous "Rumble in the Jungle," and he beat Frazier twice to complete the brutal trilogy that blunted the edge of them both as fighters.

With Ali, though, in and out of the ring, it was always about race. Because in those days America was all about race.

He loved to tell the story of his Olympic medal and repeated it with a relish when we sat in his all-white Chicago mansion in 1978, with the Rolls parked outside on the gravel driveway. He told it, as usual, with panache.

"I just returned from Rome to my hometown Louisville and I'm proud. I beat the Russian and the Pole, fought for America, and I walk into this restaurant and girl says, 'We don't serve Negroes.' I says, 'I don't eat 'em, either. Just give me two hamburgers and a vanilla shake.'

"She gets the manager. I tell him, 'I'm Cassius Clay, the world Olympic champion. You telling me I can't eat in my own town?' He say, 'I don't care who you are. We don't have niggers in here.'

Legend of Ali continuing to grow: It was 40 years ago that Cassius Marcellus Clay burst into the spotlight, and it has never left the one they call 'The Greatest....

"Can't even eat in my own town. I went out thinking this big old medal is a fake. I took it off, threw it in the Ohio River."

For all his charm and wit, there was another side to Ali that the TV cameras never saw, and there was never a hint of it in the month I spent filming a Global TV documentary of Ali that was nominated for an International Emmy.

Ali sparkled like the star that fate had made him, but his vicious contempt for former champion Floyd Patterson and his deliberately prolonged punishment of him in the ring wasn't pretty. He called Patterson the "rabbit" and an "Uncle Tom nigger" and taunted the fundamentally decent, God-fearing Patterson ceaselessly.

He heaped the same scathing tirades on Frazier -- "the gorilla" -- and humiliated the none-too-bright Joe with a repeated public baiting that was both cruel and crude. And Frazier had loaned Ali money when he was banned from the ring and nearly broke. Eventually, Joe exploded in a rage of hatred that survives until this day.

Then there were the women. Hundreds of them. Ali -- by his own admission -- was insatiable; handsome as some kind of coffee-coloured Greek god, he was also close to irresistible. It was a troublesome combination, and almost certainly was responsible for his shocking loss to Spinks.

Indulging in a little jock talk in Chicago shortly before the fight, he told me:

"Women, can't get enough of 'em. Three, four a day sometimes. Shit."

His loyal doctor, Ferdie Pacheco, once jokingly referred to Ali as a "pelvic missionary."

Four wives, all of them Muslim, and if Ali's attitude didn't measure up to today's feminist tendencies then blame it on Islam. It cost him his first wife, Sonji, for sure. If he didn't exactly want to dress her in a burqa, he showed her the door when she balked at the Muslim brothers' objections to cleavage and miniskirts.

During training for the Frazier "Thrilla in Manila," No. 2 wife Belinda fought it out with girlfriend Veronica, who became No. 3.

It all added a bit more spice to the Ali road show, with a vast entourage of hangers-on all feeding at the bottomless pit of the Ali growth industry. Although Ali will never need a tag-day, only Allah knows how much the Muslims siphoned off from their athletic poster boy.

Pacheco issued warnings

Ironically, it was after the Manila fight that Ferdie Pacheco first warned Ali that to carry on fighting was to risk serious brain damage. Ali brushed it aside, but the pattern of his fights had dramatically changed. In the early days, his fancy, dancing footwork carried him through a fight with scarcely a glove connecting.

Now, though, more and more, every contest was a slugfest with the champ absorbing more and more punishment. More and more he was relying on an amazing ability to take a punch. He even built entire fight strategies around it, such as lying on the ropes and taking an incredible pounding from Foreman in the famous rope-a-dope victory in Zaire.

After Ali snatched a dramatic decision against tough journeyman Earnie Shavers with a 15th-round flurry in 1977, Pacheco quit and retired from the fight game. The decline was on. Fighters Ali would have dispatched in a couple of rounds in the early days now pushed him hard, and the toll it took was mounting.

"They didn't understand that these victories were costing him physically," Pacheco said. "They didn't accept it, in spite of the fact that the punch-drunk symptom is common in any boxing gym you walk into. They couldn't relate that to this big, wonderful, handsome guy who still looked the same.

"That's the trouble, they still look the same."

Legend of Ali continuing to grow: It was 40 years ago that Cassius Marcellus Clay burst into the spotlight, and it has never left the one they call 'The Greatest....

It ended as if it had to end. Ali took a humiliating beating from Larry Holmes, a former sparring partner, in a 1981 fight that should never have been licensed. Then he struggled through a final, farcical contest with Canadian Trevor Berbick in the Bahamas and it was over.

What had driven him to this sad exit?

Money? Probably. He still had an entourage and lifestyle.

The Muslims? Probably. He was still a valuable asset.

Ego? Surely. He was still The Greatest.

I last saw Ali late in the '80s, in Halifax. He was there with Holmes for some kind of promotional appearance, to push a tournament or maybe boost a Berbick fight. I can't remember, and I can't forget.

It was in some kind of storefront boys' club and there he sat, his face puffy, eyes kind of glazed over. He had a cold and a thick nasal discharge rolled down to his lip. He brushed it away on an expensive coatsleeve and, with a shaking hand, turned to the task at hand, an autograph.

"Peace, Ali " he wrote in a shaky, spidery script, and I swear it took him a full, painstaking minute or more.

His only response to well-wishers' greetings and questions was little more than a hoarse, whispery grunt, while the vacant eyes stared into space.

Outside he paused before a gaggle of youngsters hanging out by the door and went into a familiar routine as though someone had thrown a switch on a robot. The eyes narrowed in mock anger, the lips curled in a snarl and the feet broke into a mini-shuffle as the left hand jab shot out like a piston. For a minute or two, he feinted and pawed at the delighted youngsters, before the eyes faded back to glaze and he eased himself heavily into the waiting limousine.

You could have cried.

Cried for what he had been, cried for what he'd become.

Yet, there is some solace in the tragedy of Muhammad Ali, and in itself it's a testimony to the indomitable courage of the man.

Those close to him say that, within his affliction, he's devout, and at peace with himself and the world. Serene.

"I know why this has happened," he told David Remnick. "God's showing me that I'm just a man like everyone else. I don't worry about disease. Don't worry about anything. Allah will protect me. He always does."

Graphic

Colour Photo: John Rooney, The Associated Press; Unforgettable Then and Now: Muhammad Ali, then known as Cassius Clay, stands over a fallen Sonny Liston in the first round of their rematch on May 25, 1965, at Lewiston, Maine.; Photo: jeff christensen, Reuters; Former world champion Muhammad Ali and his daughter, boxer Laila Ali, visit New York City's Harlem neighborhood Feb. 5.

Load-Date: February 14, 2004

Legend of Ali continuing to grow: It was 40 years ago that Cassius Marcellus Clay burst into the spotlight, and it has never left the one they call 'The Greatest....

End of Document

Fundamental Mistakes

The Sunday Herald

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Byline: By Yasir Suleiman

Body

Islam is the religion of approximately one and a half billion people. Although the Middle East is its historical heartland and the Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula were its first adherents in the seventh century, most Muslims originate and live outside this region.

For the most part, Islam spread in the world through migration, trade, the dissemination of Islamic learning or as a result of the desire on the part of individuals and communities to avail themselves of socio-political opportunities obtaining in the lands of Islam. There is nothing unusual about this. Christianity expanded through similar means. The idea that Islam spread by the sword - or that it sees in the sword its most eloquent tool of persuasion - is an abomination of the truth and one that is unworthy of serious consideration.

Perceptions of Islam as doctrine and civilisation have often suffered from over-generalisation. It is, therefore, not surprising that Islam has been variably imagined by its followers and non-followers as a monolithic system of belief, thought and practice. Failure to perceive the diversity in Islam - or to recognise its significance when perceived - is responsible for some of the major conflicts, social and political, that infect our world today.

Equally dangerous in the modern world is the view among many Arabs and Muslims that sees the West as a monolithic civilisation and structure of political power and domination. For a person whose life straddles these two perceptions of "the other" - the West and Islam - there is no escaping the conclusion that misunderstanding, fear and both cancerous and benign prejudice are the driving forces behind many of the antagonisms we see around us today. As long as Westerners and Muslims continue to "play the vis-a-vis" as a mode of defining the self or abstracting the self-hood of the other, antagonisms will persist and will do so dangerously.

The Muslim world is a compilation of doctrinal, political, economic, cultural and ethnic identities. It is important to recognise this fact if we are to formulate a better understanding of and response to a world that some believe is at war with the West. Shiite Iran and the Lebanese *Hezbollah* are united doctrinally but they are separated ethnically, linguistically, politically and culturally. North Africa exhibits its own ethnic variations within the body politic of Islam, with Berbers asserting a different identity from their Arab co-religionists. Secularist but Muslim Turkey views Islam with suspicion and fear and denies its Kurdish and Arab populations some of their basic rights, including the right to define oneself ethnically and to use one's mother tongue in public and in education. Iraq and Syria present mosaics of identities within Islam that are far from doctrinally uniform.

Even in Scotland, there have been occasions when the mosques in Edinburgh and Glasgow have been unable to agree on a common day to celebrate the end of the fasting month of Ramadan.

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And yet there are unities of feelings and empathy among Muslims that cannot be ignored, although they may be hard to explain. It is these feelings that override the variations I have just mentioned. It is also these feelings, more than anything else, that act as the trigger in the response by Muslims to what they see as the attack against them by the West, militarily, politically, economically, doctrinally and culturally through the forces of globalisation. This feeling of being under attack acts as a bonding agent in Muslim life. It creates a network of currents that orient themselves defensively against external threats, imagined or real.

For many Westerners, political expressions of Islam are often dubbed "fundamentalist". In most Western circles, this term has negative connotations that effectively brand the Muslims as a pre-modern people in a post-Christian and post-modern world. Some Muslims laugh at this construction of Islamic fundamentalism. They point out that, if returning to the fundamental principles of one's faith is a form of fundamentalism, then Muslims should be proud of being called fundamentalists by the "godless" West. These people also point out that, if Westerners are happy to have "fractured" identities or what is sometimes called lifestyles, this does not mean that Muslims should follow suit.

But fundamentalism in the West does not signify just the neutral return to the fundamentals of one's religion. As a political concept, it is intended to denote the violent expression of religious identity and the indiscriminate targeting for attack of Westerners and Western interests, as happened in New York on September 11. But Muslims are not convinced of this definition, although there has been a near universal condemnation of the atrocities in America in Muslim countries and elsewhere. Some point out that the definition is carved deliberately to fit fringe expressions of Islam. Others add that the definition is Western-centric. It ignores similar expressions of fundamentalist identity among Jews, Christians and others who have targeted Muslims in acts of violence of unimaginably cruel proportions.

On a different level, the Western definition of fundamentalism is seen as an example of the intellectual duplicity and the policy of double standards that the West practices towards Muslims. Why is it, some Muslims scholars point out, that what is sauce for the goose is not sauce for the gander?

The Arabs have an expression for this - "doling out in unequal measures". And, in a religion that curses those who do not use the same measure for all in their commercial and, by extension, intellectual transactions, the fashioning of definition in a way that exonerates the Western self and condemns the Muslim "other" is regarded as a form of hypocrisy. It is this feeling of being morally and intellectually wronged that animates some Muslims with a feeling of injustice that sometimes spills into acts of defiance and terror. It is also this feeling that makes Muslims feel demonised and, for some, prepared to lash out against those who seem to be the demonisers.

The attacks on the United States constitute a criminal act that Islam condemns. However, the suspected involvement of Muslims in this act, if proven, would serve to show the depth of feeling among some Muslims against those whom they see as the adversary. On this occasion, the adversary is the United States and what the perpetrators of the New York atrocity believe America stands for: democracy at home but support for dictatorships abroad; human rights at home but tolerance of abuses of human rights abroad; prosperity at home but poverty in the underdeveloped world; tolerance of Israeli killings of Palestinians and the occupation of their land but unjust condemnation of the resistance by Palestinians; support for Saddam Hussein in his war against Iran but a total onslaught against Iraq for its invasion of Kuwait. The fact that America is regarded as a source of stability and economic aid in the area is brushed aside as an irrelevance when compared to the economic benefit it derives from oil production in the Gulf.

But America is not the only adversary for those who feel a sense of injustice in the Muslim world. Some Muslim rulers stand accused of being lackeys of the West, led by America. By putting their own survival above the national interest, these rulers are said to have sold their souls to the devil. Getting at America is therefore getting at them. Their turn, we are told, will undoubtedly come and they will be made to pay the price for whatever ills are conjured up against them.

Understanding fundamentalism does not mean accepting it or approving of the actions taken in its name. The same must be true of terrorism. There is no doubt that the attack on America, regardless of who was behind it, is an

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outrageous atrocity. But we need to go beyond this to reflect on how the concept of terrorism is understood by some of the countries that have rallied to the cause of America.

There is no doubt that the Russian support for the American-led fight against terrorism is motivated by internal considerations that seek to brand the Chechen rebels as terrorists. The fact that the Chechen rebels are Muslim is regarded by the Russians as sufficient proof of their identity as terrorists. Similar considerations apply to the Chinese. India has been very staunch in its support for the Americans because it wishes to brand the Kashmiri fighters as Muslim terrorists and to move to fight them on that basis under a new international umbrella. Israel has used the attacks on the United States to press the point that the Americans will now understand what the Israelis have been experiencing over the past year of the intifada. In a curious twist of self-defeating logic, the Israeli premier Ariel Sharon has been calling Yasser Arafat Israel's Osama bin Laden.

All of this is bound to add to the Muslim and, in the case of Israel, Arab sense of anxiety and alienation. Muslims and Arabs will point to these attempts as examples of how some countries will seek to confuse the legitimate issue of American self-defence with their own ruthless oppression of those fighting for freedom on their territories. The success of Arab and Muslim governments to make it clear that there is a world of difference between terrorism of the kind we have seen in America and legitimate acts of resistance against an occupier will therefore be crucial in the following weeks and months. Failure to understand this distinction by the international community is bound to enrage Islamic activists, who will treat it as further evidence of prejudice against Muslims and the total disregard with which they are held by America, the power that counts.

The Americans seem to have understood this recently. At least, one hopes this is the case. They seem to have put pressure on Israel to stop its massive attacks on the Palestinians. According to some reports, Ariel Sharon has been asked by US President George W Bush to stop describing Yasser Arafat as Israel's Osama bin Laden. This is an encouraging start, which will make it easier for many Arab and Muslim rulers to assist the Americans in their fight against terrorism. Part of the strategy of Arab and Muslim rulers will, therefore, be to try to develop a definition of terrorism that encompasses the acts carried out by Israel against the Palestinians.

This is a risky strategy. It is unlikely that America will go down that road. It is possible however that the Bush administration may get more directly involved in the peace process in the Middle East. But this would need to be a sustained and more balanced involvement if America is to avoid being accused of duplicity and of "doling out in unequal measures". Such a perception would be grist to the mill of those who argue that the Americans are more interested in supporting Israel, for domestic reasons, than supporting justice and the legitimate rights of the Palestinians. If that were to happen, we would see more violence and greater moral outrage. The Americans and their European allies would have to understand this if the vicious cycle of misunderstandings and counter-misunderstandings is to be broken.

Osama bin Laden and his supporters have always traded on what they see as the moral bankruptcy of American policies in the Arab and Muslim world. To fight them, the Americans and their allies would have to activate the semantics of "Operation Infinite Justice" to the full. They must be able to show that justice is not divisible. They must also sustain a commitment to this interpretation of justice. The name must not be part of the tactics of an anti-terrorism policy but the very backbone of such a strategy of confrontation. The oxygen that the terrorists breathe is not only the material help they get by way of finance and sanctuary but the ability to exploit the feelings of dismay and injustice on the part of many Arabs and Muslims. Terrorism experts may counsel otherwise but they are bound to do so because a real solution that goes beyond dealing with the symptoms to attending to the cause would deprive them of the oxygen of their profession and the *raison d'être* of their academic power.

The danger with the current concern with terrorism is that it tends to draw attention to the instruments of terrorism away from its roots. Semantics again comes into play here. Recent descriptions of the American war on terrorism as a "crusade" has angered many Muslims and Arabs. Although the term was used inadvertently by President Bush in its neutral dictionary meaning to signify a "campaign against something", the fact that this term could be translated only by a word with loaded historical associations in Arabic has raised concerns in Arab and Muslim countries and it allowed the Taliban leaders to use it to their advantage in their news conference on Friday morning.

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In response, it has been pointed out that the Muslims do not have a problem with Christianity. On this, even Osama bin Laden agrees. Trying to depict the fight against terrorism as a fight against Muslims - even through this was a slip of the tongue - has been depicted by some people as a Freudian indication of how the American policymakers see the world. Here again, "playing the vis-a-vis" raises its ugly head. Communicating across cultures has proven to be a potentially disruptive process. This is why intemperate language can be a catalyst for further strife. Believing in Arab and Muslim exceptionalism or particularism is equally dangerous. Treating Islam as an aberration because of its views on martyrdom is bound to antagonise rather than conciliate Muslims. Yes, Muslims believe that those who die for a good cause go to heaven. But they also believe that those who die for an unjust cause go to hell. A survey of the views of Muslim scholars on the recent atrocities in America would indicate that the perpetrators of the crime, whoever they were, must be on their way to hell, not to heaven.

There is a message in all this. The Americans and their allies would do well, as they have done so far, to engage Muslims positively. President Bush's visit to an Islamic centre in Washington is the correct approach. But it is not right that FBI agents stopped Friday prayers in Cleveland, Ohio, to elicit information from the congregation on some of the suspects in the hijackings. They could have waited until prayers were over before they asked for help. One can understand the feelings of outrage and urgency the FBI agents must have been experiencing, but this does not justify their actions.

The Arab and Muslim media have been following these events, including the attacks on Muslims in Britain, and reading them as evidence of the prejudice against Arabs and Muslims in the West. The fight against terrorism is a moral fight. It is interesting to note in this context that part of the appeal of Osama bin Laden for some Muslims is the fact that he is a rich man who turned his back on the materialism of the modern world. Some people have tried to undermine him by pointing out that he displayed an appetite for alcohol and beautiful women in his youth.

However, what some people in the West do not know is that, from an Islamic perspective, bin Laden gets brownie points for having sinned and repented. If the aim of using this information is to damage him morally in the eyes of those who support him or are sympathetic to him, then those who wish to inflict this moral damage should beware of scoring an own goal.

Graphic

A Pakistani boy holds a toy rifle during a peaceful rally in support of the Taliban and Osama bin Laden in Karachi
Photograph: Reuters/Akbar Baloch
Once the glittering symbol of capitalism's dominance, the World Financial Centre is now a ruin
Photograph: Reuters/US nav

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End of Document

A nation prepares for war

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Body

When Iraqi Scud missiles landed in Israel during the 1991 Persian Gulf War, Israeli officials and analysts recall, Israel depended on sluggish warnings from the United States, U.S. Patriot antimissile batteries failed to stop a single incoming Scud and more Israelis died of heart attacks in the panic to pull on gas masks and seek cover than were killed by the missiles.

Times have changed. On the eve of a widely expected new war against Iraq, Israel is deploying one of the most sophisticated missile defence systems in the world, has its own spy satellite and radar warning system and has created a vast Home Front Command to prepare citizens and medical services for potential attacks.

For the past month, Israeli military and civilian disaster preparedness teams have conducted drills for conventional, chemical and biological missile attacks in some of the country's biggest cities.

Last week, U.S. and Israeli military forces began joint land and sea exercises in preparation for what might happen here in the event of a U.S. war against President Saddam Hussein's government, which officials here believe could begin within a few weeks.

The Washington Post

"Our situation is much better today than it was 12 years ago," the Israeli army chief of staff, Lieut.-Gen. Moshe Yaalon, said at a recent national security conference here that focused on military readiness. "Israel is perhaps the most protected country in the world against these kinds of threats."

Even so, military officials acknowledge that the billions of dollars spent on improving readiness in the past decade, including the showcase Arrow missile defence system financed largely by the United States, falls far short of fail-safe protection for the cities and citizens considered most vulnerable to an Iraqi attack.

"One should not be mistaken," a senior Israeli military official said. "(The Arrow) has never been tested in a live war. There is a huge difference if you are taking Iraqi incoming missiles. Even if only one gets through all these layers here in Tel Aviv, the damage would be very great."

As a result, Israel has also improved its ability to strike back at Iraq and other potential enemies. In addition to nuclear-capable surface-to-surface missiles, air-to-surface missiles and bombs, Israel is arming three diesel-powered submarines with cruise missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads, according to former Pentagon and

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State Department officials and a book published this summer by the Washington-based Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Israel has long refused to confirm or deny possession of nuclear weapons, saying it would not introduce them into the Middle East. But Issam Mahoul, an Arab member of the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, said last year that Israel has up to 300 nuclear devices. Foreign arms monitoring groups and think-tanks have cited similar figures ranging from 250 to 400 devices.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and his top military leaders say that, in contrast to 1991, they have given the United States no assurances that Israel will not retaliate if attacked by Iraq.

Officials have said the level of a counterattack would depend on the type of weapon used and the number of casualties inflicted.

"It is not our war, and during my visit to the United States (last month) I made clear that we will not take the initiative and intervene," Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz said in an interview Friday in the newspaper Maariv. "But if we are attacked during the operation, we will have every right in the world to protect Israeli citizens."

He added, "If, God forbid, they use chemical or biological weapons against us, I believe we will have to respond. The decision on how we will respond must be kept secret ... (but) it will be a very tough and painful action."

If the United States refuses -- as it did in the Gulf War -- to provide the "identification of friend or foe" codes, known as IFFs, that would allow Israeli aircraft to fly through U.S.-patrolled airspace to conduct strikes against Iraq, Israel now has land- and sea-based missiles that could be used, according to military analysts.

"We can do anything, from nuclear to nothing," said Reuven Pedatzur, a professor in Tel Aviv University's security studies program and one of Israel's most prominent military analysts.

In November, Brig.-Gen. Yair Dori, commander of Israel's air defence forces, gathered a group of reporters around the weapon that has come to symbolize Israel's effort to thwart a repeat of the 39 Iraqi Scud missiles that terrorized this nation for weeks during the Gulf War.

"Since 1991 we have built a huge, active defence system that will give Israel the ability to survive and make civilians feel safe in the next conflict," Dori declared, standing before an Arrow-2 antiballistic missile battery at the Palmachim Air Force Base on the Mediterranean coast near Tel Aviv. "In 1991, we had almost nothing. Now we have a very active, robust defence."

Of all Israel's efforts to improve defences, no single program has consumed more money, evoked a greater image of high-technology advances or created a grander aura of a military safety net than the Arrow missile defence system.

Thus far, it has cost just over \$2 billion US to develop and build. The United States has financed about \$1 billion of that, according to data provided to several congressional subcommittees that have monitored the system. Military analysts estimate it will cost another billion dollars to complete.

Two Arrow batteries have been deployed, Israeli officials say, one at the Palmachim base to provide cover for Tel Aviv and another near the northern city of Hadera. A third battery is under development.

Israeli officials describe the Arrow-2 as the world's first antiballistic missile system designed to destroy or intercept medium- or short-range missiles in the stratosphere. It is supposed to detect and track missiles as far away as 500 kilometres, launch a missile at nine times the speed of sound and intercept an incoming missile up to 90 kilometres away, according to military analysts.

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The Arrow missile is designed to disable an incoming warhead by exploding within 35 to 45 metres of its target, and the battery has a command and control system created to intercept as many as 14 incoming warheads, according to military specialists.

However, military officials acknowledge that all previous tests have involved a single target. The first simulated test of the Arrow against multiple incoming missiles took place yesterday, according to the Defence Ministry.

"The Arrow test program has been far too limited, narrow in coverage and rushed to make a convincing war-fighting case for the system," Anthony H. Cordesman of the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies warned the Senate Foreign Relations Committee five months ago.

Israel also has a limited stockpile of Arrow missiles, according to U.S. and Israeli military officials. In the most recent U.S. defence budget, Congress approved an extra \$70 million to help increase production from two per month to six per month, according to congressional testimony. The additional missiles will be built by Boeing Co. in the United States.

To back up the Arrow defence system, the United States is providing at least two additional Patriot missile batteries to supplement three Patriot batteries already in Israel. The Patriot missiles, which have undergone improvements since the 1991 war, are designed to intercept missiles at lower altitude and shorter ranges than the Arrow, essentially targeting missiles that the Arrow misses.

About 1,000 U.S. troops and officers just began a two-week training exercise that Israeli and U.S. officials said is the first test of interoperability among the Patriot and Arrow missile systems, and the radar and warning systems, aboard a U.S. Aegis-equipped cruiser stationed off Israel.

The Patriot missile, designed to intercept aircraft and later modified to target missiles, performed dismally here against Iraqi Scuds during the Persian Gulf War, military analyses determined after the war.

"The findings and analysis carried out in Israel during and after the war produced no authenticated proof that al-Hussein (Scud) warheads were hit or destroyed by Patriot missiles," Tel Aviv University's Pedatzur told the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Government Operations.

Studies by Pedatzur and others of videos and Patriot data found that the Patriot often missed incoming warheads by hundreds of metres and often could not distinguish between a Scud's warhead and missile fragments when the weapon began breaking up.

When Patriot missiles exploded near an incoming Scud, they frequently just knocked the Scud off course and sent it smashing into nearby neighbourhoods.

Some U.S. military officials dispute those findings. Since the U.S. rushed seven Patriot batteries to Israel in the 1991 war, the U.S. military has invested heavily in improving the Patriot.

But congressional testimony this summer revealed continuing operational problems with the missiles and development of a new version that has not yet been deployed.

When questioned about the Patriot's accuracy by the Senate Armed Services Committee 18 months ago, Deputy Defence Secretary Paul Wolfowitz testified, "Today our capacity to shoot down a Scud missile is not much improved from 1991."

The danger of an Iraqi attack is only part of the equation guiding Israel's military investments over the past decade, say senior officers.

Yaalon, the Israeli chief of staff, told participants in the military conference that war against Iraq "could accelerate into a regional war."

A nation prepares for war

Surrounded by hostile neighbours -- Iraq, Iran, Syria and Libya -- Israel has funded military improvements with a range of potential enemies in mind. Israeli military officials also have said they fear Hezbollah forces in Lebanon could take advantage of a U.S.-Iraq war to launch missiles across Israel's northern border.

In May, the military launched a new spy satellite, the Ofek-5, which circles the globe 370 kilometres above the Earth and reportedly can photograph objects as small as a metre long.

Israeli media reports have quoted anonymous military officials as saying the satellite has concentrated its cameras primarily on Israel's neighbours, particularly Iraq.

The Arrow missile's Green Pine radar system is supposed to give military officials a five- to seven-minute warning of a missile launch, a jump over the three minutes or less that Israel received during the first Scud attacks in 1991, when launch information was fed from U.S. satellites back to the U.S. and then bounced to Israeli officials.

Even so, U.S. military experts said Israel would lean heavily on improved U.S. satellite and early warning systems in any conflict with Iraq.

In recent years, the Israeli navy has purchased three Dolphin-class submarines from German contractors at a cost of about \$1 billion.

The Carnegie endowment published a report this summer saying that with modifications to its submarine-based missiles, Israel had completed the last leg of its nuclear triad.

The sea-based nuclear capability would dramatically enhance Israel's ability to retaliate if an attack incapacitated its land or air defences.

Although the Israeli military has refused to comment on the reports, the navy commander, Yedidya Yaari, said at the military conference, "What we can do at sea is totally different from ... what we have known in the past."

He added that the sea service is now "available and flexible for a whole gamut of capabilities."

Minutes after the sun set on an overcast winter day two weeks ago, military commanders and civil authorities received an alert saying a Scud missile had smashed into a densely populated working-class suburb of Tel Aviv.

Over the next 25 minutes, as police, fire and military vehicles converged on the neighbourhood, two more explosions sounded nearby.

Startled neighbours peered out windows or dashed to the scene. Some said they expected to find yet another suicide bombing or other terrorist attack.

Instead, they came upon one of the numerous drills Israel's Home Front Command has been staging in recent weeks in preparation for a possible attack from Iraq.

For Col. Gili Shenhar, who has been chief of development for the Home Front Command, the debate over whether the Arrow and Patriot missile systems can stop an incoming missile is all but irrelevant.

"We don't deal with asking whether (a missile attack) will or won't happen," Shenhar said. "We ask, 'Are we well prepared?' Nuclear, chemical or biological missiles can hit one of our cities. Our goal is to prepare our country for that."

During the 1991 war, 74 Israelis died during missile attacks, but only two were killed by Scuds. Four suffocated from improper use of their gas masks, and 68 died from heart failure or heart attacks blamed on war-related stress, according to the National Insurance Institute.

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Created in the aftermath of that conflict, the Home Front Command has become a major component of the Israeli military. During peacetime, the command drills and trains for crises.

During a domestic disaster or war, it has the authority to take control over local police, civil authorities and emergency medical services to organize the response.

"What happened in Israel after the Gulf War is the same that happened in the U.S. after Sept. 11," said Shenhar, noting that before the Gulf War, Israeli urban areas were generally spared.

"This was a new situation for us, that we could be hit by surface-to-surface missiles, airplanes, terrorists. We understand we have to be better prepared."

In recent weeks, as the command has increased the tempo of its emergency drills, it has also revved up notices to the public to prepare emergency shelters, trade in old masks for new ones and brace for a possible attack.

As a result, the command has been pelted with almost daily newspaper headlines criticizing its orders and questioning its capabilities.

This week, gas masks were the target, with local newspapers reporting that one-third of the masks distributed by the Home Front Command were ineffective.

"We've found our gas mask is one of the best gas masks in the world," said Shenhar. "We're always trying to improve them. We're in the middle of research and development of new masks."

During the recent drill in suburban Tel Aviv, members of a medical team fumbled with the straps of a stretcher carrying a **female** soldier playing the victim of a chemical missile attack just a few dozen yards from the simulated blast site.

The tag on her wrist said she suffered from blisters all over her body.

One soldier took off his rubber gloves to better grasp the straps, another struggled to put on his gas mask, and a third had a wide gap between one leg of his protective suit and his boots.

"I'm dying," moaned the patient on the stretcher.

"Why aren't you working faster?" asked an observer watching the drill.

"This close to the blast, we'd all be dead anyway," replied one of the soldiers.

Graphic

Photo: Photographs by Eitan Hess-Ashkenazi, the Associated Press; At a school in Tel Aviv, an Israeli boy tries on a gas mask during a lesson. During the Persian Gulf War in 1991, more Israelis died of heart attacks in the panic to pull on gas masks and seek cover than were killed by the missiles. For the past month, the Israeli army's Home Front Command has been preparing Israeli citizens for potential missile attacks.; Photo: Eitan Hess-Ashkenazi, the Associated Press; An Arrow missile, part of an antimissile system, is launched in a test in central Israel. The launching of the Arrow missiles were described as a dress rehearsal for a possible attack by Iraq.

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Inside the world of the Palestinian suicide bomber

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Body

AT precisely 8pm last Saturday a battered car flashed its headlights twice as I waited on a dark and dusty road in the Gaza Strip. My journey into the world of the Palestinian suicide bombers was beginning.

After a bumpy 10-minute drive, I stepped out of the car to be greeted by a masked man I would come to know as the commander of a small cell of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, a group that has claimed responsibility for nine highly publicised suicide attacks this year in which 43 people have died.

I was to spend the next four days with this cell, seeking insights into the selection and training of the suicide bombers and also into their minds and motives.

Attacks by groups such as the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades and military action by the Israelis have spiralled in recent weeks in the worst violence of the 18-month Palestinian intifada, or uprising.

While the West and Israel regard those who attack unarmed civilians as terrorists - the administration of President George W Bush announced last week it would classify the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades as a terrorist organisation - many in the Muslim world and particularly in the Palestinian territories claim they are martyrs fulfilling a religious obligation to die in the face of "oppression".

The walls of thousands of bare, concrete homes in the Gaza Strip are covered with colourful graffiti dedicated to those who have died fighting Ariel Sharon, the Israeli prime minister, in a quest to "liberate" Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza for the Palestinians.

I was about to meet two men chosen to become Al-Aqsa martyrs and to discover that they did not conform to the stereotype of poverty-stricken young militants exploited for mindless acts of terrorism.

But first their commander, who introduced himself as Abu Fatah, firmly but politely asked me to put on a blindfold and lie down in the vehicle, in the well between front and rear seats. Security was imperative, he said.

After 20 minutes our Mercedes came to a halt and I was led down a flight of steps. Removing my blindfold, I found myself in a room strewn with cushions and loosely covered sponge mattresses. Pictures of the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem adorned the walls and heavy floral curtains blocked any glimpse of the outside.

I faced an initial grilling in which it was established that I was Lebanese, a Muslim and author of a book about the militant group Hezbollah. In the early hours of the morning, a number of fighters began to join us. One by one they

Inside the world of the Palestinian suicide bomber

walked in from the darkness, all masked, dressed in military fatigues and armed with Kalashnikovs and hand grenades.

They sat on the cushions round a large oil lamp that cast shadows across the room. In the distance the sound of Israeli warplanes pierced the night, followed by machinegun fire and the thudding of home-made bombs. As I would soon realise, this was a nightly routine.

Having gained the group's confidence, I was introduced to Yunis, a 27-year-old art graduate who was preparing for a suicide mission that might be days or weeks away.

His face covered by a keffiyeh, or headdress, to conceal his identity, Yunis spoke first about the paintings of Michelangelo, da Vinci and Picasso, then abruptly changed the subject and described - with equal passion - his urge to become a martyr.

"We are educated strugglers," he said. "We are not terrorists and the world should recognise that our acts are not intended to be pure, cold-blooded murder."

The Palestinian people had sought help from Arab countries, the United States and Europe in their attempts to establish an independent state, he said, but to little or no avail.

"Finally, I searched for my God in the holy Koran and found it filled with verses and commands on how to end my oppression," he added, eyes blazing. "I discovered late that victory is only granted by God and not by (Tony) Blair or Bush. My aim is to liberate my land and to transfer the triangle of fear to (the Israeli) environment."

Delivered with emphatic gestures, this was his chilling justification for the mission he would soon undertake: "Israel attacked my honour, inflicted pain on our mothers and fathers and I have to inflict the same on them until Israeli mothers scream at their government and plead with the world to end the conflict. I will persist until they experience the same fear and pain our mothers feel daily.

"I know I cannot stand in front of a tank that would wipe me out within seconds, so I will use myself as a weapon. They call it terrorism. I say it is self-defence. When I embark on my mission I will be carrying out two obligations: one to my God and the other to defend myself and my country."

Yunis lit a cigarette and declared that life was "precious". He would rather be enjoying "normal days and nights, parties, family gatherings and seaside picnics", he said. "We are denied this as long as we are under occupation and until liberation we have no choice but to fight."

Until the day of his mission dawns, Yunis will remain engrossed in study of the Koran. He is convinced he has no choice but to follow the path assigned to him, and nothing could sway him from it. "Freedom is not handed as a gift. History is testimony to the fact that major sacrifices have to be made to attain it," he said.

"At the moment of executing my mission, it will not be purely to kill Israelis. The killing is not my ultimate goal, though it is part of the equation. My act will carry a message beyond to those responsible and the world at large that the ugliest thing is for a human being to be forced to live without freedom."

Like Yunis, Abu Fatah, his commander, is an educated man - a second-year university student of international law. He delivered a brief history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that culminated in the first intifada, starting in 1987, the Middle East peace process and the second intifada, which began in September 2000.

He railed against Israeli settlements, political detentions and restrictions on the movements of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians within and between their territories.

After "self-restraint" during the first year of the latest intifada, he explained, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades - a branch of the Fatah organisation of Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader - decided to follow the example of the more radical Islamic group, Hamas, and launch suicide attacks. It has no shortage of volunteers.

Inside the world of the Palestinian suicide bomber

A specialist unit is responsible for selecting candidates. Anyone under 18 is rejected; so are married men with children and anyone without a sibling who may be a family's sole breadwinner.

Those who excel militarily and show steely composure in stressful situations are most likely to be chosen. The young men must be reasonably religious, convinced of the meaning of "martyrdom and jihad (holy war)". They should also be of a build and shape that will enable them to move easily among Israelis - disguised if necessary in skull cap and wig, with ringlets down the side of the face - as they wait for the moment to strike.

The commander observes candidates over several days as they go about their routine business in public and at home. If the assessment is positive, he informs them of their selection.

An intense 20-day period of religious study and discussion ensues between the commander and each candidate. Verses from the Koran about a martyr's attainment of paradise are recited constantly.

The candidate is reminded of the good fortune that awaits him in the presence of prophets and saints, of the unimaginable beauty of the houri, or beautiful young woman, who will welcome him and of the chance he will have to intercede on behalf of 70 loved ones on doomsday. Not least, he is told of the service he will perform for his fellow countrymen with his sacrifice.

"Of course I am deeply saddened when I have to use a suicide attacker. I am very emotional and at times I cry when I say goodbye to them," the commander said softly. "These men were not found on the streets. These are educated men who under normal circumstances would have the potential of being constructive members of society. If they did not have to carry out such a mission, they could have become a doctor, a lawyer or a teacher."

Once the bomber's preparations are complete, he is collected by another member of the unit who accompanies him on the final journey to his target. It is only just before the assault that he is told the details of his operation, whether he will be a bomber or will attack with grenades and guns until he is shot dead.

Ten to 15 minutes before being dropped at the target, the bomber straps on a hand-tailored vest filled with about 10 kilos of explosive and five kilos of nails and metal. He is then given his final instructions about the precise point at which he should detonate himself.

"The later he knows the better for the martyr, since he will not have much time to think of the target nor to experience doubts," the commander said. A separate unit has the job of finding potential targets for suicide attacks.

Asked whether the recent killings of innocent young civilians by suicide bombers in cafes and restaurants could be condoned, Abu Fatah's tone hardened. "Do you think when an Israeli tank shells a house it considers whether there are children at home?" he snapped. "There are ugly consequences for both sides in a war."

Ahmad, the second suicide attacker, has no reservations. A 27-year-old student from the Gaza Strip, he carries the deeds and keys to the family house in Jaffa from which his grandmother was driven when the modern state of Israel was established as a Jewish homeland in 1948.

"My grandmother represented the history of the Palestinian people," said the quietly-spoken Ahmad, one of eight children who lives with his mother.

"She spoke to us of Jaffa, its grape vines and the seaside. She instilled in us a love for the home we did not know and over many tears recounted old stories of life once upon a time in Palestine." Ahmad said he fell in love with Jaffa through his grandmother's tales and longed for the day when he would have a chance to visit the old place. Instead, he grew up in a small concrete house allotted to the family by the United Nations.

He was 12 when the first intifada began and his anger at what he regarded as the humiliation of his family under occupation eventually made him determined to fight for "dignity".

Inside the world of the Palestinian suicide bomber

"I did not join Fatah to kill. My aim in joining was to try and provide security, if only to my immediate family. Were it not for the occupation, I would not have become a Fatah member in the first place. I let go of my dreams of Jaffa and of ever reclaiming my grandmother's house. I was never a person who sought to annihilate the Israelis.

"I gave them the land that originally belonged to me but instead of accepting it graciously I found them still seeking to deprive me of the right to live freely and peacefully in my tiny few square metres."

The failure of the peace process meant "having to live in an area where most of us were denied the ability to move freely", he said.

"How can I live in a state without sovereignty where I am forced to show an identity card at an Israeli checkpoint for permission to move? They control our electricity and water supply and our lives, and people still ask why we are rising up."

A band of fighters gathering around him as he spoke nodded in agreement. "I am committed to carry out a martyr's mission to show my rejection of being forced to live under this oppression," he said to cries of "Allahu akbar (God is greatest)".

"My aim is to prohibit settlers from enjoying their lives here. My aim is to force the Israeli checkpoint out of my territory. If they leave in peace, I have no intention of following them into their areas. But if they remain here then I shall use the methods at my disposal to force them out.

"I and many others like me are now prepared and waiting to carry out spectacular attacks against the enemy. We are not afraid and will not cease until they withdraw totally from our areas. You can call us terrorists all you like, but we have faith that justice is on our side and that victory will be ours."

Religion was a constant topic of conversation throughout the time I spent with the cell. They also watched videos of past "martyrs", analysing the operations carried out. Casualties were described purely in terms of numbers, without reference to the gender or age of the victims. There was little room here for sentimentality.

They recited the names of all the group's previous attackers and talked about the "courage" of Mohammed Farhat, 19, who infiltrated the Israeli settlement of Gush Katif earlier this month, killing five Israelis before he was gunned down.

A few hours before his attack, he had called his mother from his mobile phone to ask her advice. His mother, Um Nidal, told me that she had replied: "Take care my son, remember God, repeat the verses, pay attention to everything you see, concentrate on the task ahead, pick your moment. May God bless you with success and may you be granted the martyrdom you deserve.

"Be strong, my boy, in this, your first major battle, and remember Allah in every move you make. Do not hesitate, my boy, and strike as harshly as you can against the enemy." She then asked him to switch off his mobile for the last time.

Um Nidal stayed in front of her television waiting for news of her son's attack, fearful that he might be injured, arrested and denied the "martyrdom" he sought.

She knew of her son's selection for a mission a month in advance: "I cried for a whole month every time I looked at him. I would tell him not to let my tears stop him from going on his mission. I watched him like a baby that whole month."

"My heart is not made of stone," she added, but she had been "willing to sacrifice him for something more precious and sanctified than our earthly world".

Suddenly a fighter appeared in our group with "very important news". It was perhaps the most incongruous of many startling moments during my stay.

Inside the world of the Palestinian suicide bomber

"Manchester United 5, West Ham 3," he declared, announcing the score of a match last weekend. "David Beckham two score," he informed me in English. "Very good Manchester."

The announcement was greeted with unanimous pleasure, amid further calls of "Allahu akbar".

THE ATTACKS

January 17: Gunman opens fire at bar mitzvah in Hadera, killing six.

January 30: Wafa Idris, 27, is first **female** suicide bomber, blowing herself up on busy Jerusalem street, killing one.

March 2: Suicide attacker detonates nail bomb in a crowd of orthodox Jews in west Jerusalem, killing 10.

March 6: Gunman opens fire in Tel Aviv restaurant, killing three. Suicide bomber blows up a bus in Afula, killing one.

March 7: Gunman kills five teenage boys at seminary in Jewish settlement of Atzmona in Gaza.

March 9: Suicide bomber kills 11 in Jerusalem cafe. Two gunmen open fire in the seaside town of Netanya, killing three.

March 21: Suicide bomber detonates nail bomb in central Jerusalem, killing three.

Load-Date: March 25, 2002

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Letters to the Editor

The Daily Telegraph (Sydney, Australia)

February 20, 2004 Friday

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Section: FEATURES-TYPE- LETTER-COLUMN- LETTERS; Pg. 28

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Body

Why Carr is slow to budge

In the US, supermarkets, convenience stores and petrol stations have been selling liquor for years.

The Premier's resistance to similar conditions on the sale of alcohol in NSW is politically driven.

This is the same Premier who greeted the opening of the Sydney Star City Casino as "the day Sydney's been waiting for". What, a casino environment poses no problems?

R. Norton, Punchbowl

Lucky majority

So the Redfern riots have caused some people (including Matthew Britton, Letters, February 18) to indicate a waning in their support for Aboriginal rights and have "caused more animosity towards Aboriginal people" from non-Aboriginal people.

MATP

This is a typical kneejerk reaction from the moral majority towards an oppressed minority.

Why is it that when a small group of people from a minority group commit a crime, it is somehow a reflection upon the group as a whole? There are 400,000 other Aboriginal people in Australia, most of whom denounce such violent acts. Also, most Aboriginal people in Australia have never even been to Redfern.

When drunken non-Aboriginal youths rampaged through Bondi last year, did this reflect poorly upon the whole non-Aboriginal population? Of course not.

Non-Aboriginal people should realise how lucky they are to be a part of the majority and not have to live with undeserved associations with negative images.

What surprises me most is that incidents such as the Redfern riot don't happen more often. What do non-Aboriginal people expect?

Don Cruttenden,

Elizabeth Bay

Letters to the Editor

The recent riot at Redfern again highlighted the results of the Government's "softly softly" approach to law and order.

As a police officer of 16 years, I was embarrassed to watch those officers involved in the riot stand there and accept the woeful actions of these rioters. Once again, the policy of "contain and negotiate" failed miserably, and resulted in injuries to officers.

When is the Government going to realise that zero tolerance policing should be used?

Mandatory jail sentences should be introduced for any assaults on police, be it rioting, affray or resisting arrest. Harsh penalties should be introduced for those who make unfounded allegations against police.

Lawbreakers should realise that the police are running the show. If turning this country into a police state is the only way for the community to live safely, then so be it.

Lisa Everitt, Murrurundi

Spies get it right,

some of the time

I am amazed that people appear to believe that intelligence gathering is an exact science. It's not: the best that can be said is that it has improved.

Like weather forecasting, sometimes it's right, others far from it. On how many occasions have we carried an umbrella because we were told it was going to rain, but instead the sun shone? Intelligence is like meteorology -- it should be right, but on the other hand there is an element of doubt.

Any ex-serviceman who has been in combat (I'm one) will tell you that at best, intelligence information is 50/50.

A joint congressional committee appointed in 1945 to determine what went wrong at Pearl Harbour found, among other things, that Washington officials should be censured for not giving sufficient credit to intelligence reports that Japan might attack.

Damned if you do, damned if you don't. Who wants to make the call? I don't.

David Syme, Mollymook

Slack service

I am constantly amazed at the lack of service extended to me in the City of Sydney. Is it because I am **female**?

Recently, when I paid an account at a large department store, the sales assistant acknowledged me as she was attending to a customer over the phone. I thought after she completed the conversation that she would attend to me, but

no, another **female** approached the desk with a single purchase and was attended to first.

The assistant acknowledged my annoyance but at no time did she say to the other customer that I was first.

Then, at a cafe in Skygarden, I was served an iced coffee with cream that had soured. I told the assistant, who removed the inferior iced coffee and said they had no cream and would I be happy without it.

I agreed but was surprised to receive the bill, \$5, which included the iced coffee.

If they wanted my repeat custom they should have not charged me for an inferior product. There is no excuse for bad service.

Letters to the Editor

V. Barrass, Bronte

Sloppy in our speech

To show that politicians are serious about improving the education of our children, they should start immediately with the pronunciation of our country's name. Without any exaggeration, I hear Austraya, Austrya, Straya and Strya.

Could it get any worse? Sadly, Australians seem to be the worst offenders.

Teachers too should do the same, so that at least when children leave school they know what country they live in. No sportsman and woman should be allowed to represent our country unless they know how to pronounce the name of it correctly.

K. Beecraft, Balgowlah

Green and gold must come first

I'm all for the Australian Soccer Association's tough stand in enforcing FIFA match bans on Socceroos players who do not turn up for national team matches without good reason. The Socceroos' first squad plays together rarely enough as it is.

Top players who threaten to walk away from the national team should be left out of upcoming games and the whole of the 2006 World Cup campaign.

How successful have the once-in-a-blue-moon stars been in any case? Australia would be much better off with a match-hardened team of lesser lights.

David Beynon, Earlwood

Clogged arteries

Graeme Harris (Letters, February 19) is right to describe the M5 as a virtual linear car park. Unfortunately, the record worldwide is that all freeways become carparks. When they first start they appear to work, but it does not take long for them to clog up.

The most effective way to permanently reduce traffic is to improve public transport infrastructure. If we are going to add to the two lanes each way, let the third be

a bus transitway, capable of conversion to light rail.

And before we build new freeways, let's get on with the plans that have been on the drawing board for decades: the Hurstville to Strathfield line, the Parramatta to Epping line, and freight lines to get trucks off the road.

The disaster of our trains demonstrates the rewards of poor planning. It's time we learnt our lesson and got on with building public transport so that all of us can get

to work on time and get home in one piece to our families.

Soraya Kassim, Kogarah

I am embarrassed to be a commuter after seeing what happened at Town Hall station on Wednesday.

A train pulled in for an express service to Emu Plains. As I live in that area, I had to get on.

Somehow I was lucky enough, but quite a few people after me could not get on.

The vestibule was packed, but the carriage was practically empty. The people in the vestibule were standing there to alight at Central.

Letters to the Editor

When I asked if I could get through to the carriage, people tried to have a go at me. The attitude is: "I'm right mate, I don't care that you've been at work all day too, I have a spot on the train. You catch the next one."

Roze Franks, Pendle Hill

Did it ever occur to David Penberthy ("All aboard the disorient express," Daily Telegraph, February 18) that maybe the train drivers were not trying to squeeze more money out of the Government but were simply trying to highlight the incompetence of management and a system that relies on huge amounts of overtime just to run?

It is the easy way out to kick the people at the bottom of the ladder.

As for unpaid white-collar overtime, who is to blame for the amount being worked? Maybe if the white-collar brigade took a leaf out of the blue-collar book, where conditions are protected, they would not have to worry about being late to pick

up the kids.

Congratulations to the brave drivers who decided that enough was enough and decided to highlight this severe mis-management of a decaying essential service.

D. Staples, Cronulla

Consistent tune

In response to your article headed "Telstra deal 'buy-off bid'" (Daily Telegraph, State edition, February 18), I reject the suggestion that the NSW Farmers Association or myself have changed tune on the further sale of Telstra.

After examining offers by all major telecommunications carriers, Telstra Country Wide had the best deal to provide our members with savings on their phone and internet bills.

We still oppose further privatisation until services are up to scratch in the bush. Claims that Telstra is trying to buy us off by offering sponsorship are ludicrous.

Mal Peters, president,

NSW Farmers Association

To the point

It seems to me that if Sheik Taj el-dene Elhilaly is so often misinterpreted and taken out of context, he should learn to speak English (Daily Telegraph, February 19).

Victoria Brown, Ingleburn

Sheik Hilaly had better be careful or he will have to apologise to the Aborigines for Arab Muslims invading their land.

Colin Clowes, Berala

Sheik Hilaly visited Sheik Nasrallah, the head of Hezbollah -- a terrorist group that is banned in Australia -- blessing the organisation and praising its sacrifice. Sheik Hilaly should be arrested the moment he returns to Australia.

Edward Baral, Crows Nest

The Mufti has really crossed the line in his alleged support for violence in different parts of the world. One would have hoped that in his sermon to his Muslim brothers in Lebanon he would call for peaceful negotiation and not jihad and martyrdom.

Letters to the Editor

Yosi Tal, Leichhardt

I have a simple solution -- give the Redfern Aborigines something to do. How about a two-year year stint learning to be train drivers?

Rex Grout, Tamworth

Exchange

QCan anyone tell me whether Mike Batt's Tarot Suite and Hunting of the Snark have been released on CD?

Jo Connelly, Blacktown

My copy of Hunting of the Snark CD is on CBS 467305 2.

Joyce Armstrong, City

Questions

When I was residing in the Philippines in the 1950s and '60s, Tony Bennett had numerous hit singles. I am searching for four songs which do not appear in my collection so far. They are: King of Broken Hearts; From the Candy Store on the Corner to the Chapel on the Hill; Congratulations to Someone; and Alone At Last. Where or how might I come to own these last songs for my Tony Bennett collection?

Narciso Rufo, St Clair

Who knows the rest of this childhood poem? "Grasshopper green is a comical chap. He lives on the best of fare. Bright green trousers, jacket and cap, these are his summer wear." I would really appreciate all of this poem, if anyone can help.

Mary McEvoy, East Gosford

Australia has taken the Southern Cross as its own, although all the countries in the southern hemisphere can equally claim it as theirs, but just how many countries are able to see the Southern Cross at night? I'm thinking of those countries beneath the equator, although it can be seen north of the equator for a short distance.

Ken Harley, Towradgi

Why do rock stars keep shouting "two, two, two" when they tune up? Don't they know any other number?

Philip Daley, Redfern

* Is there a question to which you've always wanted to know the answer? Or can you answer a question? Send questions or answers to Exchange, Letters Editor, PO Box 2808, GPO Sydney NSW 2001 or email letters@dailytelegraph.com.au. A selection will be published but we are not able to enter into individual correspondence.

What's news

1 What was the score in yesterday's soccer international between Australia and Venezuela?

2 How many primaries has US Democrat presidential candidate John Kerry won?

3 Name the chief executive and the chairman of telecommunications giant Telstra.

4 Actor Lisa McCune had a birthday yesterday. How old is she?

5 How old is former world heavyweight boxing champion George Foreman, who intends to have one last fight?

Letters to the Editor

6 Name the chief executive officer of RailCorp.

ANSWERS

1: Australia 1, Venezuela 1. 2: 15. 3: Ziggy Switkowski and Bob Mansfield. 4: 33. 5: 55. 6: Vince Graham.

In search

SYLVIA and ELAINE JAMESON

Seeking sisters Sylvia and Elaine Jameson, who lived in Prospect Rd, Canley Vale, in the 1950s. Alice's grandson Les used to visit. Contact lesandlyn@hotmail.com or 82472238 during working hours.

ROBERT C. TAYLOR

Seeking information on Robert C. Taylor, born 1929-30, son of Alfred Taylor and Dorothy Hughes. Any information to kat2@ceinternet.com.au

ERNIE PATFIELD

I am seeking relatives of Ernie Patfield, who played rugby league in Newcastle from 1908-1912 and was one of the founders of the game in that city. Please contact David Middleton, 0411180320.

CAMPBELLTOWN HIGH SCHOOL

A reunion is being held on Saturday, March 6, at Campbelltown Catholic Club for students who attended Campbelltown High School Year 10 1977-Year 12 1979. The cost is \$40 per person and partners are welcome. For information, contact Kate McManus at kate.mcmanus@bigpond.com or 0428937523 or Ian Donaghy at iadonaghy@froggy.com.au or 0418573406.

GLYNIS DUNFORD

I am looking for an old school friend, Glynis Dunford. We went to high school together at Kogarah High around 1962 to 1965. She lived at Trangie and Gunnedah as a youngster. When I knew her she lived at Menai and used to row a dinghy to Como railway station to catch the train to school. Please contact Ingrid Koppers (nee Smid) on 69772433, 0408630607, or ingridkoppers@dragnet.com.au

NORTH RYDE HIGH SCHOOL

The school is having a double celebration reunion on February 28 for 4th Form 1970 to 6th Form 1972 and 4th Form 1971 to 6th Form 1973. Rooms are separate with traffic in between at the North Ryde RSL Club. Don't delay - contact 46207143 for more information and tickets. Ticket sales finish soon.

NARWEE PRIMARY SCHOOL

A reunion is being held at the Riverwood Legion Club, 32 Littleton St, Riverwood, on Saturday, February 28, 2004. If you passed through 6th class prior to and including 1964 you are invited to attend. For further details please contact Geoffrey Dempsey on 93727561 (bh) or e-mail geoffrey.dempsey@commerce.nsw.gov.au

commerce.nsw.gov.au

MONARO HIGH SCHOOL

Monaro High School in Cooma will celebrate its 50th anniversary with a reunion of former students at the school, April 9-10, 2004. All interested students can obtain further information and registration forms by visiting www.monarostudents.org or phoning 64553955. Registration must be made by February 27.

Letters to the Editor

VI LLOYD and PETER SCHULTZ

Seeking Vi Lloyd ex SPA and Land Tax Dept and Peter Schultz ex SPA and Department of Housing. Contact Lynne Johnston, 95205768, or 0409456796 re SPA reunion February 28.

THIRD GRADE GRAND FINALS

I am looking for a copy on film or video of the 1971 and/or 1972 Third Grade Grand Finals played between St George and Canterbury Bankstown. Contact Terry, 0418860491, or e-mail gunnadoo@tech2u.com.au

If you have a reunion or are seeking information, send the details to In Search, Letters Editor, PO Box 2808, GPO Sydney, NSW 2001 or email us at letters@dailytelegraph.com.au. Include a contact name and phone number. Emails should not include attachments.

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Letters should be no more than 250 words, clearly typed or neatly hand written. Name and address and phone number must be supplied for verification.

Letters may be edited.

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What turns young men into terrorists?: From al-Qaeda to the IRA to skinheads and street-gang members -- those who embrace terrorism and violence are overwhelmingly drawn from the ranks of men in their teens or 20s. But often it seems that radical ideology is not the end in itself, but an outlet for a violent predisposition that changes aimless, identity-less losers into 'agents of destiny,' Don Butler reports.

Ottawa Citizen

April 3, 2004 Saturday Final Edition

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Body

It may take months before the courts determine whether Mohammad Momin Khawaja, the Ottawa software developer charged this week with terrorist activity, has done anything wrong. But guilty or innocent, the 24-year-old fits the terrorist profile in one irreducible respect: he is a young male.

Whether they act in the name of al-Qaeda, the Irish Republican Army or Peru's Sendero Luminoso, those who embrace terrorism are overwhelmingly drawn from the ranks of men in their teens or 20s.

Some have only known poverty and strife, like the suicide bombers recruited from refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza by Hamas and the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, and thus may feel they have nothing to lose. But others are educated and live seemingly comfortable lives in Europe or North America, making their embrace of terrorism unfathomable to Western minds.

The Ottawa Citizen

Case in point: 22-year-old Mohammed Mansour Jabarah, who pleaded guilty in U.S. court earlier this year to conspiring to kill Americans and attack American property, grew up in St. Catharines, Ont.

Five of the so-called "Lackawanna Six," a group of young men of Yemeni descent who have pleaded guilty to supporting al-Qaeda, were born and raised in the United States.

The eight men arrested in Britain this week for plotting a huge bomb attack there were all British-born citizens of Pakistani descent. Most are between 17 and 22.

Obviously, there is more going on here than just the rage of the oppressed and dispossessed. What induces young males to pick up rocket-launchers and plant bombs in the name of a cause?

There are many answers to that question, ranging from demographics and the allure of tribalism to the influence of male authority figures and the often-turbulent psychology of males as they come of age.

What turns young men into terrorists?: From al-Qaeda to the IRA to skinheads and street-gang members -- those who embrace terrorism and violence are overwhelmin....

Certainly, part of the explanation lies in misplaced idealism -- the embrace of a cause that resonates with their still-developing sense of what is just and unjust.

But youthful idealism crosses gender lines -- young women feel just as passionately about perceived injustice. Why aren't they on the terror frontlines, shoulder-to-shoulder with their male comrades?

In fact, occasionally they are. Left-wing terror organizations in the 1970s -- such as the Baader-Meinhof group, the Red Brigades and Action Direct -- all had prominent female members. And women have become the delivery vehicles of choice for Tamil Tiger suicide bombs.

Mostly, though, terrorism is a man's game, with the prime demographic being males between 18 and 24, says terrorism expert Brian Jenkins, a senior advisor to the president of the Rand Corporation, a non-profit U.S. policy think-tank.

Older males are involved in planning or financing terror, notes University of Pennsylvania professor Stephen Gale, but they are no longer limber -- or perhaps reckless -- enough to undertake front-line operations. Those are assigned to young men eager to prove their commitment and dedication.

This should come as no great surprise, Mr. Jenkins says. "Young males are young males," he observes, his redundancy suggesting the point is self-evident. Or as Mr. Gale, who specializes in terrorism issues, puts it: "Your hormones are raging, your passions are crying out to be fulfilled."

"Young males are inherently warriors," argues Mr. Jenkins. "Not to make invidious comparisons, but whether we're talking about jihadists, the military or street gangs, it's all roughly the same age group."

Wesley Wark, a University of Toronto history professor and terrorism specialist, notes that most adolescent males go through a phase where rebellion and even fantasies of violence have appeal.

"It shouldn't surprise us that there might be a connection between the universal phenomenon of teenage rebelliousness and a sudden receptivity to the very violent and very simplified and conspiratorial message of jihad," he says.

Anthropologist Lionel Tiger, writing in The Guardian a month after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the U.S., said figuring out what to do with young males is one of the most difficult tasks for any social system.

"These are inevitably the most impressionable, energetic, socially exigent and politically inept members of any group. The terrorism of (Osama) bin Laden harnesses the chaos of young men, uniting the energies of political ardour and sex in a turbulent fuel."

Being accepted into a terrorist organization confers a type of prestige, in the same way that membership in a street gang does for some youths. And in the case of al-Qaeda, Mr. Tiger writes, "it confers unquestionable, if radical, Islamic credentials, and associates them with the tides of history sketched for them in their training."

Most terrorists are not lonely psychopaths, he says, "but demented special forces wearing anonymity like a uniform. For many, nothing in the rest of their often-sorry existences can compare with the authoritative drama of what they hope to do."

The danger of the enterprise actually enhances their excitement, Mr. Tiger says, and "feeds their sense of worthwhile enterprise. Their comrades provide them an emotional haven and a clear focus for the turbulent energies at the intersection of youth and despair."

John Thompson, of the Toronto-based MacKenzie Institute, says many young men are drawn to terrorism because they want to change their self-identity and self-image.

What turns young men into terrorists?: From al-Qaeda to the IRA to skinheads and street-gang members -- those who embrace terrorism and violence are overwhelmin....

"Often you want to rework yourself into something more exciting than you actually are. You want to be the big hero of history, the agent of destiny."

The allure of this sort of reinvention is powerful, he says, especially to a young man. And terrorism offers a sort of criminal shortcut to attaining it.

Young males are in the process of defining themselves, Mr. Jenkins notes. "They are often seeking affiliations that will provide them with status, self-esteem and the opportunity to participate in adventure."

"For many, belonging to the terrorist group may be the first time they truly belonged, the first time they felt truly significant, the first time they felt that what they did counted," Jerrold Post, an American professor of psychiatry, political psychology and international affairs, writes in the 1990 book *Origins of Terror*.

For some young men -- particularly those who feel inadequate or alienated -- membership in a terrorist group connects them with like-minded people who reassure them that others, not themselves, are to blame for their problems.

In *White Boys to Terrorist Men*, Randy Blazak of Portland State University found this dynamic operating within Nazi skinhead groups.

"Nazi skinheads can serve as 'big brothers' or 'friends in need' to frustrated boys whose fathers have been laid off or who have been harassed by minority peers," he writes.

"Like the members of cults, skinheads provide a sympathetic ear, a critical explanation of the problem, and an action program that appears to (somewhat) resolve the problem."

The violent solution these groups offer will appeal to anomic young men because of its simplistic reality, writes Mr. Blazak.

"Wars are won. Evil conspirators are banished. The mythical past of unchallenged, straight, white male hegemony is restored. For a generation weaned on video games and violent media, the world of Aryan terrorists can be intoxicating."

This is not so very different from the vision that Islamist terrorist groups conjure up for their young male adherents.

"One thing we don't understand about the jihadist message," says Mr. Wark, "is just how familiar, in a way, it is as a conspiracy theory -- and, therefore, how inevitably attractive it is to certain kinds of

people who are looking for very simplified messages of what's wrong with the world."

The need of insecure young men to prove their masculinity plays into this as well. Mohammed Atta, the leader of the Sept. 11 terrorists, grew up a shy and polite mama's boy. "He was so gentle," his father has been quoted as saying, "I used to tell him, 'Toughen up, boy!'"

Terrorist groups emphasize manly virtues, such as courage, prowess and sacrifice, that resonate with young men unsure of their own masculinity.

"It's the antidote to humiliation, to a lack of self-esteem," says Brian Jenkins. "That has great, great power."

What unites terrorists like Mohammed Atta, Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh and

fanatics like Adolf Hitler, says Michael Kimmel, a sociology professor at the State University of New York, is their sense of masculine entitlement and thwarted ambitions.

"They accepted cultural definitions of masculinity, and needed someone to blame when they felt that they failed to measure up," Mr. Kimmel argues in a 2002 article on gender, class and terrorism in *The Chronicle Review*.

What turns young men into terrorists?: From al-Qaeda to the IRA to skinheads and street-gang members -- those who embrace terrorism and violence are overwhelmin....

In the article, he looks at the characteristics of American white supremacists -- mostly young, lower-middle-class men educated through high school and often beyond. Buffeted by global political and economic forces, they face a spiral of downward mobility and economic uncertainty.

Their villains are women, immigrants, minorities, homosexuals -- and above all, the "international Jewish conspiracy," Mr. Kimmel writes.

"American white supremacists thus offer American men the restoration of their masculinity -- a manhood in which individual white men control the fruits of their own labour and are not subject to emasculation by Jewish-owned finance capital or a black and feminist-controlled welfare state."

If the state and the economy emasculate them, he adds, "then only 'real' men can rescue America from a feminized, multicultural and androgynous melting pot.

"Sound familiar?" Mr. Kimmel asks. "For the most part, the terrorists of Sept. 11 come from the same class, and recite the same complaints, as American white supremacists."

Psychological motives like these have more to do with why young men turn to terrorism than ideological beliefs, argues John Thompson.

"It's never the ideology," he says. "What you have is people often shopping for an ideology. It argues that there's already a predisposition to behave this way."

Some of these same factors are at play when young Muslim men in the West turn to terrorism. Thwarted in their career ambitions by

latent discrimination and sickened by the excesses of their adopted societies, they soak up the fundamentalist message preached by Islam's most militant adherents as an antidote to their frustration and disillusionment.

"As they tried to enter Western society," says Stephen Gale, "they found it was no better and in many ways much worse, because they were never truly accepted anyway. They were always carrying the baggage of culture.

"They said, 'Look, as long as I'm carrying the baggage, I might as well use its strength.' "

Some young Western Muslims, such as Mr. Jabarah and the Canadian sons of Ahmed Said Khadr, an al-Qaeda operative killed by Pakistani troops last year, fell under the influence of a patriarch with jihadist views.

"This would fit another pattern among more traditional Muslim families of very strong patriarchy," says Mr. Wark. "Perhaps there is something to the experience of an immigrant family with a very strong family figure, with very strong authority never being questioned, and that father figure dispensing a very activist political ideology."

In Britain, where a national debate is raging over why some young British Muslims are attracted to terrorism, that authority figure may be a radical cleric preaching jihad to receptive and impressionable young men.

Even Western popular culture, denounced by jihadists as fatally corrupt, is being used to win youthful adherents in Britain.

A rap video called Dirty Kuffar -- Arabic for non-believer -- has been posted on a British website run by Islamic extremist Mohammed al-Massari.

Full of violent images, its lyrics denounce Tony Blair and George W. Bush as "dirty Kuffars," praise Hamas and Hezbollah, and include this couplet: "OBL (bin Laden) pulled me like a shiny star/Like the way we destroyed them two towers ha-ha."

According to news reports, the video has been a hot seller to young men in British mosques and is in heavy demand overseas.

What turns young men into terrorists?: From al-Qaeda to the IRA to skinheads and street-gang members -- those who embrace terrorism and violence are overwhelmin....

This hints at another powerful force that attracts terrorist recruits -- tribalism. Terrorism, says Mr. Gale, "is always tribal in a very broad sense." For insecure young males, the allure of belonging to a tribe, particularly one with a warrior tradition, is overwhelming.

Patrick Dixon, one of Europe's leading futurists, describes tribalism as the most powerful force on Earth, one that feeds terrorism's voracious appetite for acolytes.

"Tribalism is intimately connected with terrorism," he writes on his website, Globalchange.com. "When one mass of people identify only with themselves and their values, and see others as lesser beings, then the ground is set for permanent conflict."

In the case of al-Qaeda, says Mr. Gale, Osama bin Laden's great achievement has been to convince regional jihadist groups to work together. "He was able to broaden the tribe to cover all of Islam."

This is a particularly ominous development, if you believe demographic research that sees a link between violence and societies with large populations of young males.

Christian Mesquida and Neil Wiener, two research psychologists at York University, have found that young males are more likely to engage in violent behaviour when the ratio of men between 15 and 29 rises to a high level -- between 70 and 80 young men for every 100 men older than 30.

At such levels, too many young men are seeking mates, jobs and recognition, creating unrest and instability, particularly in nations with weak or corrupt governments.

Based on changing male age demographics, the authors predicted in 1997 that Northern Ireland would become more peaceful -- a prediction that has since been borne out.

But applying the same analysis to Islamic nations provides no such comfort. According to an article by Donald Collins on the Pop!ulation Coalition website, in 2001 there were 110 young men for every 100 men over 30 in Iraq. In Syria, the ratio was 106, and it was 90 in Iran and Afghanistan.

(By contrast, in Canada there are only about 28 young men for every 100 over 30, perhaps accounting for our relative placidity.)

And the developing world's demographic profile won't improve any time soon, warns Paul Ehrlich, president of the Stanford Center for Conservation Biology.

"Huge numbers of boys now under 15, many in Muslim nations acquiring a hatred for the United States, will soon enter their high-crime years," he wrote in the Stanford Report in 2002.

All of which suggests that the world will have to deal with murderous young men bent on terror for the foreseeable future.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Lefteris Pitarakis, The Associated Press; Palestinian youth Hussam Abdo stares at journalists as Israeli soldiers present him to the media at a West Bank checkpoint in March. Israel says Hussam approached the crowded checkpoint wearing a bomb vest in an effort to kill soldiers.; Colour Photo: The hijackers from American Airlines Flight 11 on Sept. 11, 2001. Satam M. A. Al Suqami, above, Abdulaziz Alomari, Waleed M. Alshehri, Wail M. Alshehri and Mohamed Atta.; Colour Photo: The hijackers from American Airlines Flight 11 on Sept. 11, 2001. Satam M. A. Al Suqami, Abdulaziz Alomari, above, Waleed M. Alshehri, Wail M. Alshehri and Mohamed Atta.;

What turns young men into terrorists?: From al-Qaeda to the IRA to skinheads and street-gang members -- those who embrace terrorism and violence are overwhelmin....

Colour Photo: The hijackers from American Airlines Flight 11 on Sept. 11, 2001. Satam M. A. Al Suqami, Abdulaziz Alomari, Waleed M. Alshehri, above, Wail M. Alshehri and Mohamed Atta.; Photo: The hijackers from American Airlines Flight 11 on Sept. 11, 2001. Satam M. A. Al Suqami, Abdulaziz Alomari, Waleed M. Alshehri, Wail M. Alshehri, above, and Mohamed Atta.; Colour Photo: The hijackers from American Airlines Flight 11 on Sept. 11, 2001. Satam M. A. Al Suqami, Abdulaziz Alomari, Waleed M. Alshehri, Wail M. Alshehri and Mohamed Atta, above.; Photo: Jim Argo, The Daily Oklahoman; The Associated Press; The 1995 Oklahoma City bombing killed 168 people, including 19 children. Psychologists say it is not surprising young men are the most susceptible to extreme acts of violence.; Photo: Jim Bourg, Reuters; Experts suggest Oklahoma bomber Timothy McVeigh was motivated by feelings of not measuring up to society's standards of masculinity.; Photo: Mohammed al-Ghoul, a 22-year-old member of the Islamic militant group Hamas, was identified as the bomber in a 2002 attack on a Jerusalem city bus in which 19 passengers were killed and at least 55 wounded.

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End of Document

Extremists' hatred of U.S. has varied roots

USA TODAY

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Byline: Ellen Hale and Vivienne Walt

Body

On the West Bank last week, some Palestinians danced in the streets upon hearing that Islamic terrorists had attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and that thousands of Americans likely died.

In Pakistan this week, thousands have demonstrated. They've burned American flags, raised clenched fists and held aloft banners telling the world what they think of the USA. One, written in English, asked a stunning question:

"Americans, think! Why does the whole world hate you?"

As Americans brace for war and try to come to grips with terrorist attacks that not only may have claimed more than 5,000 lives but also a way of life, many are struggling to understand what could have provoked such anti-American virulence. Why, many Americans want to know, do "they" hate us?

"Americans take all this very personally, and they look upon this as an attack that had no foundation," says Richard Falk, professor of international law at Princeton University. "America is the most admired and most loved country in the world, but it is also the most hated."

The hatred isn't universal, of course, and most Muslims abhor violence and condemn the attacks. "Muslims follow a religion of peace, mercy and forgiveness that should not be associated with acts of violence against the innocent," the Council on American-Islamic Relations notes on its Web site (www.cair-net.org). The extremists who appear to be behind the attacks take a strict view of their religion that doesn't allow tolerance of Western values or other religions.

But beyond that, say scholars and other experts, the reason hatred, resentment or deep dislike exists in one degree or another among many Muslims in the Arab world, lies in a complicated web of U.S. policy, repressive foreign regimes, poverty, religious fundamentalism and, even, American naivete. There's resentment over U.S. economic, military and political power. There's disgust from many in the male-dominated Muslim world over the strong role women play in America and the "suggestive" way they dress. Then add on top of all that the way U.S. culture dominates the world, often steamrolling religious and cultural institutions that have existed for thousands of years, and there is fertile ground for anti-American fervor to take root.

"Part of the fury is that the United States is the sole remaining superpower, and we are the magnet for hatred," says Jessica Stern, a terrorism researcher at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, in Cambridge, Mass. "People feel deprived. They feel that their lives have not gone the way they should. We are a convenient symbol of the 'other.' "

Extremists' hatred of U.S. has varied roots

To be sure, Muslims in the Middle East aren't the only ones expressing hatred, outrage or concern over American values and policies. At recent summits of world leaders, there have been violent protests aimed at U.S. and Western policies on the environment, trade and foreign aid. Pope John Paul II has spoken out about the inequities of U.S.-style capitalism.

And it's also true that the leaders of most Muslim countries have condemned last week's attacks and that most of the 1 billion Muslims in the world today believe those responsible are zealots who have a misguided view of their religion's tenets that they use to justify terrorism.

The Koran, many Islamic scholars say, forbids needless violence. They point to this passage as allowing only self-defense: "Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah loves not transgressors."

"You fight back. You go as far as it takes to stop the aggression but you do not go beyond that," writes Imam Yahya Hendi, Muslim chaplain at Georgetown University, on the multid denominational Web site www.beliefnet.com.

Suspected mastermind Osama bin Laden and the terrorist network he allegedly bankrolls do not represent the majority of Muslims, experts say. Few Muslims agree with bin Laden that terrorism is an appropriate tool for battling Western culture and politics.

"The Koran does not in any fashion promote violence. Actually, in the Koran, you find the opposite. It is very clear. God made lives sacred, and no one has the right to take them," Imam Hendi says. "Muslims deplore this kind of violence, and we do not want this to happen again to America, our nation."

Pakistan symbolizes the complicated crosscurrents in the Muslim world. President Pervez Musharraf, a Western-educated general who wants foreign investment for his poor nation, has condemned the terrorist attacks and vowed to support the United States. But knowing such support could push his nation into war with the ruling Taliban in Afghanistan (which has given bin Laden safe haven) and knowing that many in his Muslim country harbor strong dislike for the USA, he has tried to steer a middle course.

Pakistani diplomats spent the past 2 days in Afghanistan trying to convince the Taliban to avoid war by giving up bin Laden.

But while there are Muslim leaders such as Musharraf or President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt who have offered assistance to the USA, there are clear issues, many related to U.S. foreign policies considered by Muslim countries to be insensitive, unfair and heavy-handed. These issues have fueled resentment of the United States and led to anger, rage and resentment in many Islamic countries.

Asks Sheik Abdullah Shami, leader of the militant Muslim group, Islamic Jihad, in Gaza: "Is America too stupid to understand that these attacks are coming upon it because we, as Muslims, resent the way it conducts business? I pity its naivete."

Among the issues that have stirred resentment among many in the Muslim world and hatred among some:

- * Israel and the Palestinians. Despite many attempts to be a mediator, the United States still is perceived by Muslims to have unfairly provided years of unstinting support for Israel, causing widespread grievances through the Muslim world, even in countries far from the Mideast. The collapse of peace talks last year and the election of conservative Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon earlier this year have fed the agitation.

"There is a real disaffection from the United States because of its policies in Israel," says Terence Taylor, Washington director of the London-based think tank International Institute of Strategic Studies. "This won't be put right in the next few weeks."

- * U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia. Placed there just before the Gulf War with Saudi Arabia's blessing to protect that nation and to serve as a staging point for taking back Kuwait, the troops have never left. The U.S. Air Force has about 5,000 personnel in the country. Their presence enrages some Muslims, who regard the country as holy

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ground because it is the birthplace of Islam, and has given bin Laden a crucial rallying cry. "For bin Laden, it has been the critical thing," Taylor says.

Bin Laden left Saudi Arabia in 1991, having assailed the country's rulers for the U.S. presence and for being insufficiently Islamic.

* U.S. economic sanctions against Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan and Iran. Such sanctions, aimed at states the United States says have sponsored or harbored terrorists, have centered almost entirely on Muslim countries. For Americans, there is a tendency to paint all Muslims with the same broad brush, experts say, but to Muslims, these countries are different -- and in some cases even enemies. "To the average Muslim in the street, it appears the U.S. is targeting them," says Said Aburish, author of several books on the Middle East. Aburish lives in Nice, France.

* U.S. support of repressive Middle East regimes and feudal monarchies. For fear of alienating strategic allies, the United States often ignores human rights abuses in countries such as Saudi Arabia, some say.

* U.S. military tactics. The long-distance missile strikes on Iraq, in particular, have caused resentment. "President Bush calls . . . attacks on the United States cowardly, but from the Mideast viewpoint surgical long distance bombing is cowardly," says Mary Kaldor of the London School of Economics. To many Iraqis, the death of civilians and the destruction of the country's infrastructure, from bombing during the 1991 Gulf War and attacks since then -- as well as from economic sanctions by Western countries -- constitute terrorism.

"It's not just that Muslims are offended. They are humiliated by American policy," Falk says.

Nourishing these grievances are extremist, fundamentalist groups such as bin Laden's. They play off the growing disparity between wealthy and poor nations. They preach messages of hell and damnation for the encroaching popular culture of the freewheeling West. To bin Laden and others like him, the teachings in Islam's holy Koran permit a holy war, or jihad, aimed at ridding the world of non-Islamic influences. Anti-Americanism becomes a tool for strengthening their power, experts say.

Bin Laden and leaders of such groups point to the way Americans live as reason enough for hating the USA. In Afghanistan, under a strict interpretation of the Koran, women must reveal nothing of their faces in public, not even their eyes. Drinking alcohol is forbidden. Girls aren't educated. It is a man's world. The USA, where sex is used to sell everything from shampoo to cigarettes, is portrayed as a land of evil.

"America is seen as this very glittery place, and it's easy to portray it as a kind of Sodom and Gomorrah," Falk says. "It's a very powerful mobilizing message."

And one that plays well to a generation of Muslims growing up with few civil rights or comforts and yet aware of the free sexuality and material wealth of the West. Frustrated by inept or repressive leadership in their own countries and facing a hopeless future, many buy into anti-American sentiment, and some buy into the extremist groups themselves.

"The level of wealth (elsewhere) is so much more visible in poor countries now, through television, movies," says Yahia Said, a lecturer on globalization at the London School of Economics. An Iraqi, he lost a friend in the bombing of the World Trade Center. "There is this profound sense of being left out. These are people who don't have a hope of ever getting out of this poverty, and so they are willing to do something desperate."

Says Falk: "What we're now witnessing is the terrible maturing, the terrible extremity of this resentment by these people who have been unable to realize their goals for decades, who feel entrapped and who are hunting for a way to inflict pain on their perceived enemies."

Ellen Hale reported from London, Vivienne Walt from Paris. Contributing: Jack Kelley in Islamabad, Pakistan; Tom Vanden Brook in Washington

Extremists' hatred of U.S. has varied roots

America's terrorist enemies have bases worldwide

The State Department, in its annual report on global terrorism released in April, identified several extremists groups that may have had reasons to stage attacks in the USA. Among them:

al-Qa'eda

Location: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bosnia, Canada, Chechnya, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Kosovo, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Mauritania, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Yemen.

Background: Led by Osama bin Laden. In February 1998, bin Laden said it was the duty of all Muslims to kill U.S. citizens and their allies. He was indicted in the bombings of U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in August 1998. He has ties to Sunni extremists and has an estimated \$ 300 million inheritance that he uses to finance terrorist activity.

Numbers: Several thousand.

Goal: Eject non-Muslims from Muslim countries and overthrow U.S.-allied regimes in the Arab world.

Abu Sayyaf group

Location: Philippines, Malaysia.

Background: Responsible for attacks in the southern Philippines. Some members fought and trained in Afghanistan. May receive support from Islamic groups in Middle East and South Asia.

Numbers: Estimated 200, but could be as many as 2,000.

Goal: Independent Islamic state in the southern Philippines.

Armed Islamic Group

Location: Algeria

Background: Began violent activities in 1992 after Algiers voided the electoral victory of the country's largest Islamic opposition party. The Algerian government has accused Iran and Sudan of supporting the group.

Numbers: Several hundred to several thousand.

Goal: Make Algeria an Islamic state.

Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya

Location: Egypt

Background: Leader Omar Abdel-Rahman is in jail in the USA for the 1993 bombing of New York's World Trade Center. The Egyptian government says Osama bin Laden, Afghan militants and Iran might be providing support.

Numbers: Believed have fallen from a peak of several thousand.

Goal: To overthrow the Egyptian government and create an Islamic state.

Hamas

Location: Israel and the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza.

Extremists' hatred of U.S. has varied roots

Background: Responsible for many suicide bombings in Israel. Receives financial support from Saudi Arabian sympathizers, Iran, moderate Arab countries and Palestinian expatriates.

Numbers: Unknown number of hard-core supporters. Tens of thousands of sympathizers.

Goal: Replace Israel with an Islamic Palestinian state.

Harakat ul-Mujahidin

Location: Pakistan, disputed region of Kashmir, Afghanistan.

Background: Former leader Fazlur Rehman Khalil signed Osama bin Laden's fatwa (religious decree) against the United States. Believed to be responsible for the hijacking of an Indian aircraft in December 2000. Operates training camps in eastern Afghanistan. Financial support unknown.

Numbers: Several thousand.

Goal: Ending India's control of disputed region of Kashmir.

Hezbollah (Islamic Jihad)

Location: Lebanon

Background: Suspected involvement in bombings of the U.S. Embassy and U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983. Close association with Iran. Has cells in North and South America, Asia, Africa and Europe.

Numbers: Several hundred.

Goal: Increase its political power in Lebanon and opposing the Middle East peace process.

Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan

Location: Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan.

Background: Coalition of Islamic militants from Central Asian states opposed to Uzbekistan's secular regime. Took four U.S. citizens who were mountain climbing hostage in August 2000. Support from Central Asian and South Asian Islamic extremist groups.

Numbers: In the thousands.

Goal: Establishment of an Islamic state in Uzbekistan.

Al-Jihad

Location: Egypt. Network in Afghanistan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Sudan, Yemen, United Kingdom.

Background: Established in the late 1970s. Responsible for the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1981. Close partner of bin Laden.

Numbers: Unknown.

Goal: Overthrow of the Egyptian government.

Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (National Liberation Army of Iran)

Location: Iraq

Background: Anti-Western dissidents who supported the takeover of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran in 1979.

Extremists' hatred of U.S. has varied roots

Numbers: Several thousand.

Goal: Overthrow of Iran's government.

Palestine Liberation Front

Location: Iraq.

Background: Responsible for the attack on the Achille Lauro cruise ship in 1985. Libya provided support in the past. Support now comes from Iraq.

Numbers: Unknown.

Goal: Independent Palestinian state.

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

Location: Syria, Lebanon, Israel and the occupied territories.

Background: Responsible for numerous international terrorist attacks in the 1970s and attacks against Israel and moderate Arab states since.

Numbers: About 800

Goal: Independent Palestinian state.

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine -- General Command

Location: Syria, Lebanon.

Background: Opposed to Yasser Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Organization. Close ties to Syria. Responsible for attacks on Israel.

Numbers: Several hundred.

Goal: Independent Palestinian state.

Sources: State Department's Patterns of Global Terrorism -- 2000; Research by Joan Murphy, USA TODAY

Graphic

PHOTO, Color, Zia Mazhar, AP; In Karachi, Pakistan: Students chant slogans during a rally in support of Osama bin Laden. One holds a poster of the fugitive financier, whom President Bush calls the prime suspect" in last week's attacks.

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Body

Israeli defense chief threatens to kill Islamic leaders JERUSALEM The leaders of violent Islamic groups are targets for assassination, Israels defense minister said Sunday, raising the possibility of a further escalation in the three years of Israeli-Palestinian bloodshed. Shaul Mofaz issued the threat in response to a declaration by the spiritual leader of Hamas, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, that the group plans an all-out effort to kidnap Israeli soldiers. The statements of Yassin just emphasize the need to strike the heads of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, Mofaz told the weekly meeting of the Israeli Cabinet, according to an Israeli official who attended the meeting. The statements by Mofaz and Yassin threaten to inflame an already violent confrontation that has led to the deaths of more than 3,500 people on both sides during three years of fighting. Last week, Israel killed eight Palestinians in a shootout in Gaza City, while a Palestinian suicide bomber killed 11 people in Jerusalem. Hamas took responsibility for the bombing, a day after a claim from the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, loosely linked to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafats Fatah movement. Sunday was a Muslim holiday, and Hamas officials were not available to react to Mofazs comments. During more than three years of violence, Israel has carried out many pinpoint attacks aimed at leaders of Hamas and Islamic Jihad often prompting a violent response. In September, Yassin narrowly escaped an Israeli airstrike in the Gaza Strip. But Israel has greatly reduced the number of targeted killings in recent months.

#ISRAELF2#Last month, Mofazs deputy, Zeev Boim, retracted comments calling for Yassins assassination.

Hamas, responsible for dozens of suicide bombings over the last three years, also appeared to have scaled back its activities until a Hamas **female** suicide bomber killed four Israelis at a Gaza-Israel checkpoint Jan. 14. Yassin encouraged kidnapping Israeli soldiers a day after Israel released 400 Palestinian prisoners as part of an exchange with the Lebanese militant group **Hezbollah** for a businessman and the bodies of three soldiers.

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The week

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

March 12, 2005 Saturday

First Edition

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Byline: Edited by Alan Kennedy

Body

EDITORIALS

THE DAILY STAR

The way forward

The *Hezbollah* secretary-general, Hassan Nasrallah, has urged all parties to discuss our differences so that we can decide together on the future of Lebanon. Ironically, despite our ideological differences, Mr Nasrallah, the opposition and the Americans are all saying the same thing at the same time: give Lebanon its freedom, sovereignty and independence. The Lebanese must be free to democratically govern themselves. Beirut, March 9

THE JAPAN TIMES

China's military show

So why Beijing's rush now to enact legislation on the exercise of military force? First, there are moves by the Taiwanese Government to enact a new constitution in 2008. By encoding the military threat, China can be seen as trying to make the first move in response to such a possibility. Second, China is displaying a "no compromise" stance to show both domestic and international audiences that there has been no change in its policy despite the [recent] change in leadership in Beijing. Tokyo, March 8

DAWN

Enough of short cuts

Good governance and a corruption-free society do not come into being through military takeovers and draconian laws; both require a system - a system based on the rule of law. Specifically, this means democracy. Whether it is war on corruption or creating a society wedded to honesty, answerability and responsible conduct, it is the people who can achieve these ends through an interplay of democratic forces. Pakistan has had enough of short cuts to democracy. Karachi, March 9

THE NEW YORK TIMES

Security v privacy

The week

Welcome to the new world of homeland security, where the national resolve to be alert is clearly butting into the citizenry's near-almighty right to bear arms. Warnings about terrorism suspects' easy access to combat rifles grew after September 11 when it was disclosed that John Ashcroft, a gun rights zealot who was attorney-general at the time, had blocked federal agents from checking gun-purchase records against the growing list of terrorism suspects. The privacy rights of innocent gun purchasers were deemed paramount. The policy was theoretically reversed, but agents complain that they are still stymied by laws and officials dedicated to the most extreme agenda of the gun lobby. New York, March 9

WHAT TO SAY ABOUT ... DELTA GOODREM

Here in her home country she is the squeaky clean darling, but lately an affair of the heart has put a few dents in the armour of the songstress Delta Goodrem.

The man in question is a wild Irishman called Brian McFadden, who has left his wife and two children and is squiring Goodrem around Australia.

But are they really happy?

Ireland Online said the relationship was rocky, claiming McFadden refused "to join her on the red carpet for a British TV program".

"Shocked witnesses told British magazine New! that Goodrem told him she's sick of being blamed for his split with estranged wife Kerry Katona, which led to her and McFadden being booed offstage as they performed their duet, Almost Here, at a benefit gig for Childline in Dublin."

But the Herald Sun's Cameron Adams found a different story when he reported that Goodrem and McFadden "flew into Melbourne keen to silence criticism of their relationship".

"I was a bit hesitant to come home because I was reading bad things on the internet; people were being so dramatic," Goodrem told Adams.

"I just thought: 'Surely Australia knows me?' But, thankfully, the public were so beautiful. I felt like a cousin who's been away for ages who's come home. I really want to reconnect with all the fans again."

Adams said Goodrem believed her fans approved of her new boyfriend and had ignored British press reports that painted her as a home wrecker.

The Daily Telegraph also found positive signs: "Delta Goodrem could not help but squeeze in a quick canoodle with her Irish beau at the premiere of Hating Alison Ashley in Melbourne.

"Wearing a mauve dress embellished with lace and beads, Goodrem, who plays Alison in the film, stepped on to the red carpet alongside lead actress Saskia Burmeister. With a bevy of admirers and photographers looking on, Goodrem rushed over to boyfriend Brian McFadden."

The Herald Sun also had Luke Dennehy on the case and he was able to announce that Goodrem was heading back to Ramsay Street for a part in the 20th-anniversary episode of the show.

"I couldn't be happier," she said. "It's kind of like, wow, I'm going back to Neighbours."

Goodrem was more worldly this time after the roller-coaster of the past two years. "I'm in a great head space."

While the Australian fans still love her and the Irish are not so sure, she may be about to make a far bigger enemy, if reports from Ireland Online prove true: "Delta Goodrem's record label, Sony Music, is planning to launch the Australian singer in America as a younger Jennifer Lopez.

"The company hopes to include a couple of new R&B and dance songs especially recorded for her first US album.

The week

"The 20-year-old singer-actress is also having intensive dancing training before her launch in America."

Having Ireland hate you is one thing; having an "old" Jennifer Lopez on your case may be a whole new kettle of fish.

Alan Kennedy

IRA: TIME TO DISBAND

John Murray Brown

Financial Times, March 10

The British and Irish prime ministers expressed shock and revulsion yesterday at the claim by the IRA that it was ready to shoot members of its organisation involved in the murder of Robert McCartney (right, with his son Coneald), the East Belfast Catholic knifed in a pub brawl.

Sean O'Neill

The Times, March 11

Further evidence of a nationalist backlash over the murder of Robert McCartney emerged yesterday when a poll claimed growing support among Sinn Fein voters for the disbanding of the IRA. Six out of 10 nationalists and almost half of Sinn Fein supporters want the paramilitary wing of the republican movement to be wound up, according to the poll by the BBC and The Belfast Telegraph.

Brian Lavery

International Herald Tribune,

March 10

In response to the IRA's offer to shoot the killers of a Belfast man, the US envoy to Northern Ireland on Wednesday called on the IRA to disband and urged its political wing, Sinn Fein, to distance itself from crimes like the murder and a massive bank robbery in December. "It's time for the IRA to go out of business," the diplomat, Mitchell Reiss, told BBC radio.

Boris Johnson

Daily Telegraph, London, March 10

Listening to Sinn Fein, as it struggles to put the best gloss on IRA actions, one is struck by the amazing irony of the Government's current "war on terror". Westminster has been convulsed in the past few days by a bill whose central provision is that the state should be able to detain, without trial, anyone whom the Home Secretary "has reasonable grounds for suspecting of being involved in a terrorism-related activity".

And if we study article eight of the bill, we find that a "terrorism-related activity" is very widely drawn. It can be nothing more than "conduct that gives support or assistance to individuals who are known or believed to be involved in terrorism-related activity". Now, we do not have to make any extreme claims for the activities of Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness to see how they are perfectly captured by this description.

SKILLS: NOT WORKING

Steven Wardill

The Courier-Mail, March 10

The week

Attacks on a \$3.8 million Federal Government grant to Hungry Jack's to train young people to flip burgers was condemned as "snobbery" yesterday.

The Federal Opposition denied the gibes after deputy leader Jenny Macklin questioned the Government for spending taxpayers' dollars to subsidise salaries at the fast-food giant. Ms Macklin said the money should be spent on more traditional trades, such as plumbing, carpentry and other occupations where Australia has a growing skills shortage.

Gregory Hywood

The Age, March 10

It was during this debate around the bottleneck in the labour market, fuelled by the release of the Government's Skills for Work report, that Howard seemed to lose his touch. The Government is not used to being under serious pressure, and the Prime Minister revealed he was not across this significant strategic issue.

For Howard, reform is about the tangible issues of financial markets, tariffs and industrial relations. It is not about the workforce issues that are defining the reform agenda of the 21st century.

These involve a complex mix of education, skill development and immigration policy making that the Government has clearly been unable to get on top of.

Michael Costello

The Australian, March 11

What is John Howard's position? He says too many people are staying at school to year 12 - that is, Howard's view is that what this country needs is more school drop-outs. This is primarily a classic, subliminal Howard "culture wars" line - an under-the-radar backhander to the "elites" who go to university. Clever politics, but profoundly hostile to the future of our nation. Howard has gotten away with his failure to build a strong and sophisticated economic future for Australia - at least so far. The chickens may be coming home to roost.

Ross Gittins

The Sydney Morning Herald, March 9

But now, having neglected to train sufficient tradespeople, business is demanding the usual quick fix: a recruiting drive to bring in 20,000 foreign tradespeople, plus a scheme to admit "guest workers" (unskilled workers from poor countries willing to do unpleasant jobs such as fruit-picking).

These days, however, attracting well-trained, English-speaking skilled workers isn't easy. So it's likely they would need to be offered higher wages or tax concessions. Leaving aside the way letting employers off the hook would further undermine their commitment to training their own, how would those working alongside the newly recruited migrants feel about the better deal they were getting?

· QUOTES

Each time a problem has come up throughout my career I've managed to find a solution. This time around I don't have any straightforward answers. I'm really disappointed.

Brett Lee on being 12th man ... again

They haven't got time to think about sex.

Dr Helen Kelleher, convener of the Australian Women's Health Network, on the average Australian woman

The week

We will start taking advice from the Leader of the Opposition on budget deficits when we start getting our marriage guidance counselling from Elizabeth Taylor.

The Treasurer, Peter Costello

He's a bit like the Wizard of Oz. He's now exposed as an economic midget with a very big microphone.

Labor's Wayne Swan, after Costello got some poor economic figures ... again

I thought, gee, this is pretty good, they usually feed us crap.

A Nerrena cricket player, Tim Clark, on claims players from a rival team fed them drug-laced cupcakes during a vital game in regional Victoria.

It wasn't all too bad. No Wizard of Oz- type stuff, nothing like that.

Peter Friel, manager of Lockhart River Airport, on the effects of Tropical Cyclone Ingrid in Far North Queensland

Everyone loves a fairytale, but our life is a reality and we're very happy - and if people want to refer to it as a fairytale then it's fine by us as well.

Crown Princess Mary on her life

Youse f---ing paparazzi are the reason why the Queen died. I'll see youse later, I'll get youse later.

Aaron Robertson, whose brother was killed in the Macquarie Fields car crash, attacks the media shortly after his arrest for allegedly spitting on a police officer

I'm flattered to be on a show with the Goodies. I might be a hit with the kids of Australia.

The Immigration Minister, Amanda Vanstone, confuses the 1970s British comedy trio with the children's group the Wiggles

· THE NATION

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Just briefly

The Australian Hotels Association has defended the use of skimpily dressed barmaids, which has been the target of criticism from a prominent human rights lawyer in the Kimberley. Krysti Guest used International Women's Day celebrations to call for an end to the practice in Broome, saying it perpetuated a culture that supports sexual assault.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Park plan

The South Australian Conservation Council says while plans to create the state's first marine park are better than nothing, more could be done. The park will be established 80 kilometres south of Adelaide, covering the coast and stretches of water between Kangaroo Island and Fleurieu Peninsula. TASMANIA

Research wanted

Anglicare Tasmania has called on the State Government to carry out more independent research into the effects of gambling. The chief executive, the Reverend Chris Jones, says the community support levy was set up to fund the research but he estimates that less than \$310,000 has been spent in the past 10 years.

The week

QUEENSLAND

Case continues

Gympie gun lobbyist Ron Owen's five-year battle with officialdom is set to resume after a judge overturned a magistrate's decision to dismiss firearms charges. The Courier-Mail reports that despite blasting the prosecution's handling of the case as "high-handed", Judge John Robertson ordered the charges revert to a magistrate's court for hearing. The offences arose from transactions associated with the government buyback scheme for weapons.

VICTORIA

Bye bye birdie

The State Government is putting its Commonwealth Games mascot at risk by sanctioning the clearing of habitat. There are only about 1000 south-eastern red-tailed black cockatoos, above, left and last year "Karak" was chosen as 2006 Games mascot. Most feed on rare 100-year-old buloke and stringy-bark trees in the West Wimmera region, where the Government has approved 94 per cent of farmers' applications to clear bulokes.

NSW

High times

People in Nimbin say police are getting the message that traditional ways of dealing with crime and social problems do not necessarily work there. Police, the public and the Premier's Department met this week to discuss the problems. One idea is to reintroduce the "jungle patrol" that used to mediate on the streets, pick up syringes and intervene in drug overdoses, until funding ran out last year.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

No runway success

Darwin Airport has been urged to spend more than \$1 million on upgrading runway lighting after a near disaster involving a passenger jet carrying 85 people. The Qantas flight from Adelaide ran off the right side of the runway on landing. No one was injured, but the Boeing 737-800 suffered damage to its left engine, tyres and wing flaps.

ACT

Bikers clash

Thousands of members of the Ulysses Club visiting Canberra for an annual motorcycle rally have been instructed by the club to remove identifying badges from their jackets after threats of violence against them from the Rebels Motorcycle Club, who are offended by the similarity of the badges to their own. About 5000 members of the Ulysses Club for veteran motorcyclists - who range in age from 40 to 92 - are visiting Canberra.

· THE FALLOUT

A real slapper: Police in India are hunting a beautiful woman who slaps her male victims hard before running off with their valuables. In Lucknow her tactics have earned her the nickname of "The girl who makes your ears ring", reports the Hindustan Times. Three men have reported being robbed by the woman - but others are said to be afraid to report her because of rumours that she's the daughter of a policeman.

Dumb and dumber: A Russian gun-shop owner who was feigning that he was going to shoot himself in the head ended up in hospital because he forgot the gun was loaded - albeit with rubber bullets. Interfax reported he escaped death but was seriously injured. Ring you later: Romanian doctors have removed a man's wedding ring from his penis. The father of two told them he had a one-night stand with a woman. He couldn't say how the ring got onto his penis but suspected the woman wanted to embarrass him because he fell asleep.

The week

Fingers of suspicion: Serbia's deputy culture minister has admitted that he was responsible for sending agents to steal a shaving from waxworks at Madame Tussaud's in London. Vladimir Tomcic wanted to ensure that his country's wax museum could be as good as the top London attraction. But he says the agents went too far and snapped off two whole fingers from a wax figure.

Graphic

PHOTO: Putting their backs into it ... skipper Nina Curtis and crew, representing Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club on Camp Eden, compete in the Harken **Women's** International Match Racing Regatta on Sydney Harbour. m Eight crews from Australia and New Zealand are taking part in the round-robin series, which started on Friday and ends on Sunday. Photo: Robert Pearce

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Body

MABELS EDDY

So a school district near Seattle has banned Halloween parties because, says the superintendent, kids might show up dressed as witches, and that would offend, well, witches. Or, more correctly, wiccans.

Its rule says: "Use of derogatory stereotypes is prohibited, such as the traditional image of a witch, which is offensive to members of the Wiccan religion." A wiccan priestess told ABC News she does "lots of things that are not revolving around wearing a black outfit and stirring a cauldron," and wiccans celebrate nature, not Satan.

We at Scorpio's Center for Clean Holiday Fun, located in this quiet (read "boring") river hamlet, propose communities go a step further and outlaw more potentially offensive Halloween costumes for trick-or-treaters:

- * Ghosts and zombies: Offensive to the dead and those who mourn them.
- * Goblins, elves, pixies and gremlins: Makes fun of the altitude-challenged.
- * Ghouls: Makes fun of the aesthetically challenged.
- * Fairy princesses: Wake up, America -- we are not a monarchy!
- * Pirates: Glorifies ruthless behavior, a misguided sense of romance and a certain foundering major league baseball team.
- * Arabs: Insensitive to our Middle Eastern citizens who have no ties to al-Qaida, Hezbollah or the Saudi royal family.
- * Guys in drag as buxom nurses: Offensive to women, nurses, the medical community and the growing transvestite community.
- * Mad scientists: Demeans the scientific establishment, even though the Bush administration considers as "mad" (read "liberal Democrat") university scientists working on stem-cell research, environmental pollution or global warming.
- * Frankenstein monsters: Insults the awkward, the poorly dressed and coiffed, and those assembled from random body parts.

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* Gypsies: Ridicules those Eastern Europeans who, having suffered under ruthless kings and communist hacks, must now live by guile and creative wit.

* Mummies: Cultural imperialism at its worst.

* Bloody "victims": Hurtful to anyone who has been injured, maimed or shot, as well as fight-happy Steelers fans.

(This is apart from some suburban residents who wanted to switch Halloween to tonight to avoid the drunks leaving Heinz Field tomorrow evening. Slanderous! Drunks at Steelers games??!!)

* Bums: Insensitive to the unfortunate with no job, family, home, hope or huge cuts in their capital-gains tax.

* Osama bin Laden: Glorifies terrorists while taunting President Bush.

* Saddam Hussein: Glorifies dictators while taunting Sen. Kerry.

Max the Fax Dog Sez: Can I go as a poodle?

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Holy avengers From American anti-abortion activists to Islamic suicide bombers certain traits are common among those who dedicate their lives to religious terrorism. While researching her book, a Harvard academic tries to find out why they believe they have a moral mandate to murder

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Body

Events in Iraq have shown that a war cannot be prosecuted against terrorists without giving some thought to what motivates new recruits to the terror cause. In interviews with religious terrorists over the past six years I have been trying to discover what makes someone join a holy-war organisation and what makes them stay. I started by talking to an American: a repentant leader of an Identity Christian cult in a trailer park in Texas. From there I went to Pakistan, India, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, and Indonesia. I talked to Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Sikh and Hindu radicals. I visited extremist seminaries in Indonesia and Pakistan that recruit the cannon fodder for global jihad. I toured refugee camps in Lebanon and Kashmir. A Pakistani charity arranged for me to see the new homes it provided to families of "martyrs," and to meet the martyrs' mothers, not all of whom were able to keep up a facade of pride. Since September 11, I do not feel safe interviewing terrorists in the field. Now I talk only to "retired" or jailed terrorists and arrange for local interviewers to administer detailed questionnaires, querying terrorists about their motivations.

Some of the operatives I spoke to have since been killed. I met two Hamas leaders in Gaza who were assassinated this year by the Israeli government- Ismail Abu Shanab and Abdel-Aziz al-Rantissi. And two operatives I met on death row in the US have since been executed. One of them - Mir Aimal Kansi - had murdered two employees of the CIA; the other - Paul Hill - had killed two abortion clinic staff. There were many differences among the various holy warriors. Some were intellectuals. Some appeared to be on a spiritual high; others seemed pumped up on adrenalin or the adventure of living at least partly on the run. A Sikh terrorist I met in Lahore said he never stayed two nights in the same place. Some clearly enjoyed their status and power. Sheikh Fadlallah, the spiritual leader of **Hezbollah** who was said to have survived an alleged CIA-led attempt on his life in 1985, exuded the air of a man who feels he has the best possible job in the world.

Some were obviously angry. I sensed in many that their commitment to the cause was a thin veneer covering some deeper, more personal need. For some, jihad had become a high-paying job; a few admitted they would like to quit but couldn't afford to. Some were unexpectedly rich, while others lived in slums.

A leader of Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, a group known for beheading foreigners and for its close alliance with Osama bin Laden, took me to meet his second wife, a startlingly beautiful young woman from Saudi Arabia, a country he

Holy avengers From American anti-abortion activists to Islamic suicide bombers certain traits are common among those who dedicate their lives to religious terror....

visited regularly on fund-raising missions. He had ensconced his new wife in an outsized white mansion, leaving the first one at his parents' farm.

Despite these differences, it is possible, after this long journey, to identify some common themes that might help to explain how violent Islamic nihilism continues to spread beyond the lawless pockets and failed states where terrorists tend to thrive, and into the cities of the west.

My interviews suggest that people join religious terrorist groups partly to transform themselves and to simplify life. They start out feeling humiliated, enraged that they are viewed by some "other" as second class. They take on new identities as martyrs on behalf of a purported spiritual cause. The spiritually perplexed learn to focus on action. The weak become strong. The selfish become altruists, ready to make the ultimate sacrifice of their lives in the belief that their death will serve a supposed public good. Rage turns to conviction. They seem to enter a kind of trance, where the world is divided neatly between good and evil, victim and oppressor. Uncertainty and ambivalence, always painful to experience, are banished. There is no room for the other side's point of view. Because they believe their cause is just and that God is on their side, they persuade themselves that any action - no matter how heinous - is justified. They know they are right, not just politically, but morally.

In their view, arrogant one-worlders, humanists and promoters of human rights have created an engine of modernity that is stealing their identity. The greatest rage - and the greatest danger - stems from those who feel they can't keep up, even as they claim to be superior to those who set the pace. Over time, in some cases, cynicism takes hold. Terrorism becomes a career as much as a passion. What starts out as moral fervour about humiliation and deprivation becomes a sophisticated organisation. Grievance can end up as greed - for status, attention, political power or money. The rest of the world needs to understand this dynamic, and exploit it in every possible way, by sowing discord, confusion, and rivalry among terrorists and between terrorists and their sponsors.

While the terrorists I met described a variety of grievances, almost every one talked about humiliation. The Identity Christian cultist told me he suffered from chronic bronchitis as a child and his mother discouraged him from exerting himself. He had been forced to attend the girls' physical education classes because he couldn't keep up with the boys. "I don't know if I ever got over the shame and humiliation of not being able to keep up with the other boys - or even with some of the girls," he said. The first time he felt strong was when he was living on an armed compound, surrounded by armed men.

A man involved in the violent wing of the anti-abortion movement told me he was "vaginally defeated", but now he is "free", by which he meant celibate and beyond the influence of women.

A Kashmiri militant founded his group because he wanted to recreate the golden period of Islam, "to recover what we lost... Muslims have been overpowered by the west. Our ego hurts... we are not able to live up to our own standards for ourselves."

The notion that perceived humiliation could be an important factor in explaining terrorism has struck some academics as far-fetched. But my argument is not that humiliation and relative deprivation alone are sufficient to create a terrorist. Terrorist leaders offer a "basket" of emotional, spiritual and financial rewards to potential recruits, designed to appeal to a variety of followers whose needs and desires are understood to change over time. The leader has to understand his followers' psychology, to have a feel for what they want, "what they are thinking, what is missing", the repentant Identity Christian cultist told me.

Leaders cynically take advantage of their zealous recruits, manipulating them with an enticing mission, ultimately using these true believers as their weapons.

For the broad-based dystopic movement inspired by al-Qaeda, the new world order - al-Qaeda's term for globalisation - is a perfect foil. It is better for the youth of Islam to carry arms and defend their religion with pride and dignity than to submit to the humiliation of globalisation, bin Laden's deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri wrote in his putative autobiography. He refers to global institutions such as the United Nations and international relief agencies as tools in the new crusaders' arsenal. "In the face of this alliance, a fundamentalist coalition is taking shape," Zawahiri

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writes, warning that its growth will continue to accelerate. "It is anxious to seek retribution for the blood of the martyrs, the grief of the mothers, the suffering of the detainees, and the sores of the tortured people throughout the land of Islam."

The purpose of fighting the new world order, in Zawahiri's view, is to restore the dignity of humiliated youth. Violence is a "cleansing force" that frees the oppressed youth from his inferiority complex, despair and inaction, making him fearless and restoring his self-respect.

It is in this context that the war in Iraq and, in particular, the heart-wounding images of American soldiers humiliating, torturing and killing Iraqi prisoners, becomes so important. If bin Laden were writing a script for George Bush and Tony Blair to follow, would he not command them to attack and occupy a Muslim country in defiance of the international community and in violation of international law? And would it not be his fondest wish to see "the new crusaders" humiliate those Muslims, and themselves, in the most graphic possible way? Having those soldiers then photograph their crimes might have seemed too much to hope for.

In assuming itself to be above the law in many instances, but especially in regard to detaining and interrogating supposed terrorists, the Bush Administration has made a serious moral error. It is the human condition to be imperfect; to seek to understand the mind of God, but also, tragically and frustratingly, to fail. Talking to religious terrorists has taught me this: when we become moral swaggarts, when we are so certain that God is on our side that we believe ourselves to be beyond the reach of normal moral inquiry or law, we make ourselves vulnerable to the basest aspects of our nature.

The first step in the direction of a perilous righteousness was when Bush announced on September 20, 2001: "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists." Jim Wallis, an evangelical Christian activist and editor of Sojourners Magazine, responds: "To say that they are evil and we are good, and that if you're not with us, you're with the terrorists - that's bad theology." He points to Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew: "Why do you see the speck in your neighbour's eye, your adversary's eye, your enemy's eye, and not see the log in your own eye? Why do you see the evil in them but not in yourself?"

A year after 9/11, Bush continued in a similar vein, referring to America as the hope of all mankind. He referred to a light shining in the darkness, which the darkness will not overcome. That line is from the Gospel of John, Wallis explains. "But it's about the light of Christ and the word of God. Now, all of a sudden, it's meant to be America as a beacon of light to the world. (Bush) changed the meaning of the text. It's no longer about the word of God, the light of Christ, it's about us."

Omar Bakri Muhammad, the leader of the London-based radical Islamist movement, al-Muhajiroun, asks potential followers: "When will people see this war in Iraq and Afghanistan for what it really is - a Christian Crusade, full of the indiscriminate murder, rape and carnage just like, if not worse, than the Christian Crusades of 'Richard the Lionheart' and his own band of thugs in the past. Surely this is a wake-up call for all Muslims around the world who have any dignity left. Anyone... where our land, war, peace and honour is one, must do all he or she can to protect the men, women and children being tortured and humiliated in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is too late to stop the atrocities which have already taken place but it is not too late to drive these nasty infidels out of Muslim land once and for all."

Even before the revelations about the torture of Iraqi prisoners, al-Qaeda used the war in Iraq as a recruitment tool for their global battle against the "crusader alliance". They have long been aware that tension within the alliance over the Iraq war is a vulnerability. A number of polls show that support for that war is diminishing and antipathy to America is increasing. In a wide-ranging poll conducted a year after the Iraq war, the Pew Foundation found that the majority of Americans still believe that Bush made the right decision in going to war in Iraq and that the US will ultimately achieve its mission there. But since the publication of photos of prisoners being tortured, a USA Today/Gallup poll showed 58 per cent of Americans disapprove of Bush's handling of the situation in Iraq, and 54 per cent said going to war "was not worth it".

Holy avengers From American anti-abortion activists to Islamic suicide bombers certain traits are common among those who dedicate their lives to religious terror....

Elsewhere around the world, a majority of those polled said that the war in Iraq has diminished their trust in the US. A growing percentage of Europeans would like to see Europe's foreign policy and security arrangements made independently of the US. British respondents - a majority of whom had supported the war in a poll taken a year earlier - are now significantly more critical, with only 43 per cent (down from 61 per cent) now saying it was right to go to war. The March 11 attacks in Madrid precipitated the surprise victory of Spain's new prime minister, Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, elected partly because he promised to remove Spanish troops from Iraq. Polish president Aleksander Kwasniewski has suggested that he was deceived when his country agreed to participate in the coalition. As the Iranian cleric Rafsanjani noted gleefully in a sermon on the first anniversary of the war, "They are drifting apart. A gap has appeared in this group which they call a coalition."

But while the war has increased tensions within the western alliance but it has united the terrorist groups. On a website described by the US government as "jihadist," Hani al-Sibai, the director of the London-based Al-Maqrizi Centre for Historical Studies, says: "Iraq is currently a battlefield and fertile soil for every Islamic movement that views jihad as a priority." He notes that "the continuation of the anti-occupation resistance will produce several groups that might later merge into one large group." Very few of the participants in the Iraqi "jihad" are members of al-Qaeda, he says. "Even if the US forces capture all leaders of al-Qaeda or kill them all, the idea of expelling the occupiers and non-believers from the Arabian Peninsula and all the countries of Islam will not die."

Outside Iraq, a surprising array of groups has joined al-Qaeda in targeting the new world order and its instruments. Albert Huber, a Swiss neo-Nazi who converted to Islam and who is popular with both Aryan youth and radical Muslims, is calling for neo-Nazis and Islamists to join forces. Huber was on the board of directors of the Al-Taqwa Foundation, which the US government says was a major donor to al-Qaeda. Matt Hale, leader of The World Church of the Creator, an American white supremacist organisation, is disseminating a book that exposes the "sinister machinations" that led to September 11, including the involvement of Jews and Israelis.

A totalitarian Islamic revivalism has become the dystopic ideology of the new world order. In an earlier era, its converts might have described their grievances through other ideological lenses, perhaps communism, perhaps Nazism. In Europe a radical transnational Islam, divorced from its countries of origin, is appealing to youth in depressed or high unemployment areas, says Olivier Roy, research director at the French National Centre for Scientific Research. Leaders of the radical groups are often from the middle classes, many of them trained in technical fields, while followers are more likely to be working-class dropouts, he says.

Members of the London-based al-Muhajiroun openly support al-Qaeda. Several men arrested on suspicion of organising a terrorist attack in London in March had been followers of this movement, according to Omar Bakri Muhammad, the group's leader. Al-Qaeda used to be a group but has become a phenomenon, Muhammad told the Lisbon Publico newspaper. "The September 11 attacks made Muslims realise they have power, that the rebirth of Islam is inevitable and we are entering a new chapter in history. That is why we started a new calendar then. We are now in year three of the age of al-Qaeda." It makes no difference whether bin Laden is dead or alive, he said, the movement has taken off.

We must not romanticise al-Qaeda and its networks of nihilist minions by assuming that they have clear objectives that they could ultimately achieve, or that we could, if we chose, appease them. The groups that subscribe to al-Qaeda's ideology have a grandiose vision but no set goals. The purpose of lethal attacks is to rally the followers at least as much as it is to horrify and frighten the victims. The goals continue to shift - from forcing US troops out of Saudi Arabia or coalition troops out of Iraq to sowing discord in the west to setting Iraq aflame with sectarian tensions. To achieve these shifting goals, the movement aims to create a clash not only among civilisations but also within civilisations. The ultimate objective is to "purify" the world - replacing the new world order with a caliphate of terror based on a fantasised simpler, purer, past.

In thinking about how to respond to terrorism, it is important to realise that we are unlikely to persuade terrorists to change their approach. Terrorists, I have found, become professionals and, after some time on the job, it can be hard for them to imagine another life. But terrorists and guerrillas rely on the broader population for support. Mao

Holy avengers From American anti-abortion activists to Islamic suicide bombers certain traits are common among those who dedicate their lives to religious terror....

Zedong described insurgents as fish swimming in a sea of ordinary people, whose occasional support they require. We are competing with the terrorists for the hearts and minds of the ordinary people who make up that sea.

Jessica Stern is lecturer in public policy at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government and author of "Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill" (HarperCollins 2003).

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A WORLD APART

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Body

Americans seeking to learn more about Iraq find an ancient region whose people are, in many ways, not so different from us.

TAMPA - For map salesman Mike Kline, impending war brings good business.

As tensions between the United States and Iraq have built in recent weeks, the stream of customers has grown at the store where he works, Mapsource on Waters Avenue.

Homemakers. Doctors. Lawyers. Retirees. Even officers from U.S. Central Command who are headed to their Middle Eastern headquarters in Qatar. They all want wall maps of the region.

Most Americans know very little about Iraq, Kline says. But with that country so much in the news these days, many people are plunking down \$40 to buy laminated, glossy, full-color wall maps.

"I have completely sold out of Iraq maps twice," Kline says. "I've sold 200 regional maps of the Middle East in the last two weeks."

NBC News in New York even placed a telephone order for laminated folding maps.

"When things get mentioned a lot in the news, it sparks a curiosity of where it is, what it is near," Kline says. "People want to know in relation to everything else where things are, and that brings them in the doors."

As much as a map can show about a country, it cannot reveal much about the people living within its borders.

Tarah Saadaldin, a 20-year-old University of South Florida student born in Iraq, says the biggest misconception Americans have of her birthplace is that it is a nation of terrorists.

A WORLD APART

"By hearing the word Iraq, many people think terrorist right away," she says. "It is true they have an unfortunate leader. But you don't judge a whole country by his actions. There are a lot of innocent people in Iraq who just want to go about their lives like normal people, like me and you."

Like Americans, Iraqis love listening to music, going out to cafes, eating ice cream and using the Internet (although not all search engines are open to them). They like watching and playing soccer, going shopping and being with their families.

Iraq is a blend of ancient and modern. It has thousands of archaeological sites, such as the colossal city of Ur, identified in the Bible as Abraham's birthplace. Iraq also has modern office buildings and homes, hotels and some fine restaurants.

But on a visit to her homeland last summer, Saadaldin noticed some changes since she moved to the United States with her family at age 9.

"You see kids as young as 6 pushing vegetable carts, selling stuff," says Saadaldin, who lives in Tampa with her mother and four siblings. "For any child to have to work and worry every day about earning money to stay alive, that is really sad."

Some teenagers and college students she talked to had a sense of hopelessness, she says. An education seems pointless because the schools are so poor. Teachers are paid low wages.

"There aren't many jobs when you graduate anyway.

"Here, people can say, 'I can open my own clinic,' or whatever. How many people over there have such dreams and can fulfill them? Not many. It is a slim chance. It is live by the day."

In America, if one door closes, another usually opens up, she says.

"But there, all doors are closed to them. Little children think, 'Oh, we are going to get hit by a bomb soon. We might live, but we might not make it.' What kind of chance is that for a life?"

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Population

24,001,816

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(Kurdish in Kurdish regions)

Government

Type: Republic

Leader: President Saddam Hussein (since July 16, 1979) Currency Iraqi dinar

Literacy 58 % of adult population is literate

Ethnic makeup

Arab 75%

Kurdish 20% Other 3%

Religion:

Muslim 97%

Other 3 %

Muslim:

Shi'a 62 %

Sunni 35 %

Cultural information

A WORLD APART

The average Iraqi makes \$2,700 a year.

Some women wear black veils over their heads and bodies in traditional Islamic fashion, while others wear blue jeans and other western clothing.

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Tribune graphic

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Other * 5.8 %

* includes American Indian and Alaska native 1.5 %

Native Hawaiian and other Pacific islander 0.3%

Note: Hispanic can be of any race

Religion

Protestant 56 %

Roman Catholic 28 %

None 10 %

Other 4 %

Jewish 2 %

Cultural information

Between 1945 and 1973, all sectors of the population got richer. Since 1973, only those who finished high school continued to see their standard of living increase.

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Population: 6,029,529

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Religion

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Women in Kuwait have many of the same rights as men and are guaranteed the right to work for equal pay. But they cannot vote.

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Zoroastrian, Jewish

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Cell phones in big cities are as popular as they are in the U.S. Many Iranians, especially young people, use the Internet.

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Families tend to be large and close. Religious customs are closely followed, but women on streets can walk in knee-length skirts or without head coverings without being verbally accosted.

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In addition to the modern shopping centers, Jeddah also has many traditional local markets, where such products as fruit and vegetables, gold, textiles and antiques are sold .

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Druse: A secretive religion practiced by some Arabs in Syria, Lebanon and Israel

Eid: Any Muslim festival

Emirate: Territory ruled by an emir

A WORLD APART

Effendi: It originally referred to a Turkish civil servant but is now generally used as a term of respect for an educated man or a woman who wears Western clothes

Emir: Arabic for "commander." Male members of the house of Saud are referred to as emir, meaning prince

Five Pillars of Islam: Five principles meant to guide each Muslim onto the path of right behavior; the pillars are a statement of faith, prayer, fasting, pilgrimage and alms giving

Foota: Head scarf tied around the chin, worn by traditional Muslim women

Hajj: Pilgrimage to Mecca

Hamas: An abbreviation for the Palestinian group known in English as the Islamic Resistance Movement

Haram: Sacred enclave; holy area

Hezbollah: Arabic for "the party of God." Shiite extremist group formed in Lebanon with the original aim of ending the Israeli occupation of Lebanon

Ikhwan: A brotherhood or organization of fellow Muslim believers, found especially in Saudi Arabia and Egypt

Imam: 1) Muslim religious or political leader; 2) one of the succession of leaders, beginning with Ali, viewed by the Shia as legitimate; 3) leader in prayer; 4) may also refer to the tomb or shrine of a religious leader

Insh'allah: "As God wills." Commonly used Arabic expression. Often used to disclaim responsibility for one's mistake

Intifada: Term used to describe the Arab insurrection in modern Israel

Islam: Religion begun by Muhammad in the 610s

Jihad: Literally means "struggle"; is applied equally to internal struggle for religious improvement and piety, as well as to a holy or religious war in the defense or spread of the Islamic faith

Kaffiyeh: Arab man's head scarf held in place by length of black rope

Khan: Turkish or Mongol chieftain, prince or ruler.

Kibbutz: Hebrew word for a collective settlement or village

Koran: Central religious text for Islam; variant spellings include Q'ran and Quran

Mecca: City where Muhammad first lived and where he first began to convert his family and friends to Islam

Medina: City, also known as Yathrib, to which Muhammad and his followers went in 622 A.D. and established both his political and religious leadership.

Mosque: Religious center and building for Muslims

Muezzin: The man who calls the Muslim faithful to prayer, generally standing in one of the mosque's minarets.

Muslim: A follower of Islam

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

OPEC: Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries

PLO: Palestine Liberation Organization

Palestine: Historical region comprising parts of modern Israel, Jordan and Egypt.

Ramadan: The ninth lunar month, during which fasting is observed.

Sabra: A native-born Israeli Jew

Salaam: Traditional Arabian greeting that means "Peace be upon you."

Shalom: Hebrew greeting of hello and goodbye

Shariah: The holy law of Islam; also the "right path"

Shiite: A member of one of the two major sects within Islam.

Sunni: A member of the other major sect within Islam

Souk or Souq: Arabic word for market

Strait of Hormuz: The narrows at the mouth of the Persian Gulf. Strategically important to naval warfare

Suez Canal: A canal extending from the southeastern corner of the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea. It enables large ships to avoid the long trip around Africa.

Talmud: Either of two collections of Jewish legal precedents

Ulema: Religious scholars. In modern Saudi Arabia, they meet weekly with the king and regulate religious life

Ummah: The community of Muslim believers.

Zakat: A tax imposed upon Muslims for the government in turn to give to charities; one of the Five Pillars of Islam

Zionism: Jewish nationalism that first developed in the late 19th century

A WORLD APART

Fisher and Ochsenswald, "Middle East: A History" (5th edition); e-history.com. For more on Middle Eastern countries, visit www.cia.factbooks.com
(Compiled by Jody Habayeb)

(CHART) (C) U.S. Bases

(Map of Middle East showing locations of U.S. military bases)

Army

Air Force

Navy

(CHART) (C) INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT IRAQ

IRAQ IS NEARLY THREE TIMES THE SIZE OF FLORIDA

Formerly part of the Ottoman Empire, Iraq became an independent kingdom in 1932. A republic was proclaimed in 1958, but military strongmen, including Saddam Hussein, have ruled the country since then.

Iraq 168,869 square miles

Florida 58,560 square miles

FIGHTING TERRAIN

Good: Flat to rolling plains

Good to poor: Flat to rolling plains, wet soils

Good to unsuited: Near lakes and depressions

Good to unsuited: Plains with hills and mountains

Unsuited: Severely dissected plains

Unsuited: Plains with canals, high water table

Unsuited: Mountainous terrain

(See microfilm for map details)

POPULATION

Based on 1987 census

People per square mile

0 to 65

66 to 129

130 to 194

195 to 453

13,566

(See microfilm for details)

ETHNIC RELIGIOUS

Sunni Kurd

Sunni Arab/Kurd

Sunni Arab

Shiite Arab

Shiite/Sunni Arab

(See microfilm for details)

(CHART) (C) THE CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION

Important ancient sites in Iraq.

Niveveh

Capital of Assyrian empire, 800-619 B.C.

Nimrud

Assyria's capital, 879 B.C.

Hatra -

Fortresslike ancient trading city.

Flourished 400 B.C. to 300 A.D.

Ctesiphon - Founded by the Parthians as winter residence around 100 B.C.; Babylon

Iraq's capital, 1700 B.C.

A WORLD APART

Known for Hanging Gardens, Tower of Babel.

Reached its peak during King Nebuchadnezzar's reign, 604-562 B.C.

Uruk

Founded about 3500 B.C.

Known as the world's first city.

First evidence of writing found nearby.

Now known as Warka.

Ur - Founded about 3000 B.C.

"Home of Abraham"

Important Sumerian city-state.

Means "a city".

Querna - "Adam's tree" is said to mark the Garden of Eden.

(See microfilm for map details)

(CHART) (C) When it's noon in Tampa, it's 8 p.m. in Iraq. (Map depicts different times in different cities).

Tampa noon EST

Washington D.C. noon

London 5 p.m.

Paris 6 p.m.

Moscow 8 p.m.

Bagdad 8 p.m.

Cairo 7 p.m.

Tehran 8:30 p.m.

Kuwait City 8 p.m.

Note: Iraq does not observe daylight-saving time.

Notes

A WORLD APART

Graphic

PHOTO (27C) CHART (15C)

(8C) (Flags of each county)

(8C) (photos of Kuwaiti dinar, Israeli shekel, Qatari rial, Syrian pound, Iranian rial, Jordanian dinar, Saudi riyal, Turkish lira.

(C) President George W. Bush

(C) President Saddam Hussein

(C) Prime Minister and Crown Prince Sheik Saad Al Sabah

(C) Prime Minister Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani (June 1995)

(C) Prime Minister Ariel Sharon

(C) President Bashar Al-Asad

(C) Ayatollah Ali Hoseini-Khamenei

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A WORLD APART

(C) Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit
The Associated Press

(C) Like many Iraqis, Maha Hamzi, left, her sister Mayada Hamzi, right, and their children enjoy outings such as a recent visit to a Baghdad pastry shop for cake.

Load-Date: March 12, 2003

End of Document

A WORLD APART

The Tampa Tribune (Florida)

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FINAL EDITION

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Section: BAYLIFE,

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Byline: KAREN HAYMON LONG , klong@tampatrib.com; Tribune graphic by MALANDA SAXTON;; Tribune research by JODY HABAYEB and KAREN HAYMON LONG;; Source: CIA World Factbook 2002 and World Reference Atlas 1998; Tribune Graphic by MALANDA SAXTON and VAUGHN HUGHES;; NOAA, Global Security, Knight Ridder/Tribune and The Associated Press.; Reporter Karen Haymon Long can be reached at (813) 259-7618.

Body

Americans seeking to learn more about Iraq find an ancient region whose people are, in many ways, not so different from us.

TAMPA - For map salesman Mike Kline, impending war brings good business.

As tensions between the United States and Iraq have built in recent weeks, the stream of customers has grown at the store where he works, Mapsource on Waters Avenue.

Homemakers. Doctors. Lawyers. Retirees. Even officers from U.S. Central Command who are headed to their Middle Eastern headquarters in Qatar. They all want wall maps of the region.

Most Americans know very little about Iraq, Kline says. But with that country so much in the news these days, many people are plunking down \$40 to buy laminated, glossy, full-color wall maps.

"I have completely sold out of Iraq maps twice," Kline says. "I've sold 200 regional maps of the Middle East in the last two weeks."

NBC News in New York even placed a telephone order for laminated folding maps.

"When things get mentioned a lot in the news, it sparks a curiosity of where it is, what it is near," Kline says. "People want to know in relation to everything else where things are, and that brings them in the doors."

As much as a map can show about a country, it cannot reveal much about the people living within its borders.

Tarah Saadaldin, a 20-year-old University of South Florida student born in Iraq, says the biggest misconception Americans have of her birthplace is that it is a nation of terrorists.

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"By hearing the word Iraq, many people think terrorist right away," she says. "It is true they have an unfortunate leader. But you don't judge a whole country by his actions. There are a lot of innocent people in Iraq who just want to go about their lives like normal people, like me and you."

Like Americans, Iraqis love listening to music, going out to cafes, eating ice cream and using the Internet (although not all search engines are open to them). They like watching and playing soccer, going shopping and being with their families.

Iraq is a blend of ancient and modern. It has thousands of archaeological sites, such as the colossal city of Ur, identified in the Bible as Abraham's birthplace. Iraq also has modern office buildings and homes, hotels and some fine restaurants.

But on a visit to her homeland last summer, Saadaldin noticed some changes since she moved to the United States with her family at age 9.

"You see kids as young as 6 pushing vegetable carts, selling stuff," says Saadaldin, who lives in Tampa with her mother and four siblings. "For any child to have to work and worry every day about earning money to stay alive, that is really sad."

Some teenagers and college students she talked to had a sense of hopelessness, she says. An education seems pointless because the schools are so poor. Teachers are paid low wages.

"There aren't many jobs when you graduate anyway.

"Here, people can say, 'I can open my own clinic,' or whatever. How many people over there have such dreams and can fulfill them? Not many. It is a slim chance. It is live by the day."

In America, if one door closes, another usually opens up, she says.

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A WORLD APART

Effendi: It originally referred to a Turkish civil servant but is now generally used as a term of respect for an educated man or a woman who wears Western clothes

Emir: Arabic for "commander." Male members of the house of Saud are referred to as emir, meaning prince

Five Pillars of Islam: Five principles meant to guide each Muslim onto the path of right behavior; the pillars are a statement of faith, prayer, fasting, pilgrimage and alms giving

Foota: Head scarf tied around the chin, worn by traditional Muslim women

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Haram: Sacred enclave; holy area

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Insh'allah: "As God wills." Commonly used Arabic expression. Often used to disclaim responsibility for one's mistake

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OPEC: Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries

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Palestine: Historical region comprising parts of modern Israel, Jordan and Egypt.

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Shalom: Hebrew greeting of hello and goodbye

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A WORLD APART

Fisher and Ochsenswald, "Middle East: A History" (5th edition); e-history.com. For more on Middle Eastern countries, visit www.cia.factbooks.com
(Compiled by Jody Habayeb)

(CHART) (C) U.S. Bases

(Map of Middle East showing locations of U.S. military bases)

Army

Air Force

Navy

(CHART) (C) INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT IRAQ

IRAQ IS NEARLY THREE TIMES THE SIZE OF FLORIDA

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Iraq 168,869 square miles

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Good to poor: Flat to rolling plains, wet soils

Good to unsuited: Near lakes and depressions

Good to unsuited: Plains with hills and mountains

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Unsuited: Plains with canals, high water table

Unsuited: Mountainous terrain

(See microfilm for map details)

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Based on 1987 census

People per square mile

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(See microfilm for details)

ETHNIC RELIGIOUS

Sunni Kurd

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Sunni Arab

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Shiite/Suni Arab

(See microfilm for details)

(CHART) (C) THE CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION

Important ancient sites in Iraq.

Niveveh

Capital of Assyrian empire, 800-619 B.C.

Nimrud

Assyria's capital, 879 B.C.

Hatra -

Fortresslike ancient trading city.

Flourished 400 B.C. to 300 A.D.

Ctesiphon - Founded by the Parthians as winter residence around 100 B.C.; Babylon

Iraq's capital, 1700 B.C.

A WORLD APART

Known for Hanging Gardens, Tower of Babel.

Reached its peak during King Nebuchadnezzar's reign, 604-562 B.C.

Uruk

Founded about 3500 B.C.

Known as the world's first city.

First evidence of writing found nearby.

Now known as Warka.

Ur - Founded about 3000 B.C.

"Home of Abraham"

Important Sumerian city-state.

Means "a city".

Querna - "Adam's tree" is said to mark the Garden of Eden.

(See microfilm for map details)

(CHART) (C) When it's noon in Tampa, it's 8 p.m. in Iraq. (Map depicts different times in different cities).

Tampa noon EST

Washington D.C. noon

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Paris 6 p.m.

Moscow 8 p.m.

Bagdad 8 p.m.

Cairo 7 p.m.

Tehran 8:30 p.m.

Kuwait City 8 p.m.

Note: Iraq does not observe daylight-saving time.

Notes

A WORLD APART

Graphic

PHOTO (27C) CHART (15C)

(8C) (Flags of each county)

(8C) (photos of Kuwaiti dinar, Israeli shekel, Qatari rial, Syrian pound, Iranian rial, Jordanian dinar, Saudi riyal, Turkish lira.

(C) President George W. Bush

(C) President Saddam Hussein

(C) Prime Minister and Crown Prince Sheik Saad Al Sabah

(C) Prime Minister Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani (June 1995)

(C) Prime Minister Ariel Sharon

(C) President Bashar Al-Asad

(C) Ayatollah Ali Hoseini-Khamenei

(C) King Abdallah II

(C) Leader of the Islamic King and Prime Minister Fahd bin Abd al-Aziz Al

A WORLD APART

(C) Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit
The Associated Press

(C) Like many Iraqis, Maha Hamzi, left, her sister Mayada Hamzi, right, and their children enjoy outings such as a recent visit to a Baghdad pastry shop for cake.

Load-Date: March 17, 2003

End of Document

A WORLD APART

The Tampa Tribune (Florida)

March 9, 2003, Sunday,

FINAL EDITION

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Body

Americans seeking to learn more about Iraq find an ancient region whose people are, in many ways, not so different from us.

TAMPA - For map salesman Mike Kline, impending war brings good business.

As tensions between the United States and Iraq have built in recent weeks, the stream of customers has grown at the store where he works, Mapsource on Waters Avenue.

Homemakers. Doctors. Lawyers. Retirees. Even officers from U.S. Central Command who are headed to their Middle Eastern headquarters in Qatar. They all want wall maps of the region.

Most Americans know very little about Iraq, Kline says. But with that country so much in the news these days, many people are plunking down \$40 to buy laminated, glossy, full-color wall maps.

"I have completely sold out of Iraq maps twice," Kline says. "I've sold 200 regional maps of the Middle East in the last two weeks."

NBC News in New York even placed a telephone order for laminated folding maps.

"When things get mentioned a lot in the news, it sparks a curiosity of where it is, what it is near," Kline says. "People want to know in relation to everything else where things are, and that brings them in the doors."

As much as a map can show about a country, it cannot reveal much about the people living within its borders.

Tarah Saadaldin, a 20-year-old University of South Florida student born in Iraq, says the biggest misconception Americans have of her birthplace is that it is a nation of terrorists.

A WORLD APART

"By hearing the word Iraq, many people think terrorist right away," she says. "It is true they have an unfortunate leader. But you don't judge a whole country by his actions. There are a lot of innocent people in Iraq who just want to go about their lives like normal people, like me and you."

Like Americans, Iraqis love listening to music, going out to cafes, eating ice cream and using the Internet (although not all search engines are open to them). They like watching and playing soccer, going shopping and being with their families.

Iraq is a blend of ancient and modern. It has thousands of archaeological sites, such as the colossal city of Ur, identified in the Bible as Abraham's birthplace. Iraq also has modern office buildings and homes, hotels and some fine restaurants.

But on a visit to her homeland last summer, Saadaldin noticed some changes since she moved to the United States with her family at age 9.

"You see kids as young as 6 pushing vegetable carts, selling stuff," says Saadaldin, who lives in Tampa with her mother and four siblings. "For any child to have to work and worry every day about earning money to stay alive, that is really sad."

Some teenagers and college students she talked to had a sense of hopelessness, she says. An education seems pointless because the schools are so poor. Teachers are paid low wages.

"There aren't many jobs when you graduate anyway.

"Here, people can say, 'I can open my own clinic,' or whatever. How many people over there have such dreams and can fulfill them? Not many. It is a slim chance. It is live by the day."

In America, if one door closes, another usually opens up, she says.

"But there, all doors are closed to them. Little children think, 'Oh, we are going to get hit by a bomb soon. We might live, but we might not make it.' What kind of chance is that for a life?"

(CHART) (C) IRAQ

Population: 24,001,816

Official language: Arabic (Kurdish in Kurdish regions)

Government Type: Republic

Leader: President Saddam Hussein (since July 16, 1979)

Currency: Iraqi dinar

Literacy: 58 % of adult population is literate

Ethnic makeup

Arab 75%

Kurdish 20% Other 5%

Religion:

Muslim 97%

Other 3 %

Muslim:

Shi'a 62 %

Sunni 35 %

Cultural information

A WORLD APART

The average Iraqi makes \$2,700 a year.

Some women wear black veils over their heads and bodies in traditional Islamic fashion, while others wear blue jeans and other western clothing.

In the afternoons, markets and shops close down from noon to 4 because of the heat and custom.

Tribune graphic

(CHART (C) UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Population: 280,562,489

Official language: English

Government Type: Federal Republic

Leader: President George W. Bush (since January 2001)

Currency: Dollar

Literacy: 97 % of adult population is literate

Ethnic makeup

White 77.1 %

Black 12.9 %

Asian 4.2 %

Other * 5.8 %

* includes American Indian and Alaska native 1.5 %

Native Hawaiian and other Pacific islander 0.3%

Note: Hispanic can be of any race

Religion

Protestant 56 %

Roman Catholic 28 %

None 10 %

Other 4 %

Jewish 2 %

Cultural information

Between 1945 and 1973, all sectors of the population got richer. Since 1973, only those who finished high school continued to see their standard of living increase.

Manufacturing employment has fallen dramatically in the past 20 years.

Americans put less money in savings than many competing nations. The U.S. is the world's largest debtor nation.

Tribune graphic

(CHART) (C) ISRAEL

Population: 6,029,529

Official Language: Hebrew

A WORLD APART

Currency: Israeli shekel

Literacy: 95 percent

Government Type: Parliamentary democracy

Leader: Prime Minister Ariel Sharon (Since 2001)

Ethnic Makeup:

Jewish 80 percent

non-Jewish 20 percent (mostly European/American)

Religion

Jewish 80 percent

Muslim 15 percent

Christian and other 5 %

Although it is only the size of New Jersey, Israel has more museums per capita than any other nation. Most middle-class students go to college.

Israelis have been issued kits filled with gas masks and agents to counter chemical weapons. Many newer buildings have safe rooms with no windows, stocked with radios, batteries, food and water.

In Tel Aviv, Israelis love to stroll along the Mediterranean Sea's beaches and eat in outdoor cafes.

(CHART) (C) KUWAIT

Population: 2,111,561

Official language: Arabic

Currency: Kuwaiti dinar

Literacy: 78.6 percent

Government Type: Nominal constitutional monarchy

Leader: Prime minister and Crown Prince Sheik Saad Al Sabah (December 1977) Ethnic Makeup:

Kuwaiti 45 percent

other Arab 35 percent

South Asian 9 percent

Other 11 percent

Religion:

Muslim 85 percent

Christian, Hindu, Parsi and other, 15 percent

Women in Kuwait have many of the same rights as men and are guaranteed the right to work for equal pay. But they cannot vote.

Kuwaiti families are usually large, and many families are interconnected and related to one another through ancestry and marriage.

Kuwait's terrain is almost entirely flat desert. Summer temperatures can climb to 120 degrees.

A WORLD APART

Freedom of religion is guaranteed by law.

(CHART) QATAR

Population: 793,341

Official language: Arabic

Currency: Qatari rial

Literacy: 79 percent

Government Type: Traditional monarchy

Leader : Prime Minister Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani (June 1995)

Ethnic Makeup:

Arab 40 percent

Pakistani 18 percent

Indian 18 percent

Iranian 10 percent

other 14 percent

Religion:

Muslim 95 percent

Other 5 percent

U.S. Central Command established its regional headquarters here in December for an attack on Iraq.

Most Qataris are Arabs; some have Iranian or African ancestry.

Public education, even at The University of Qatar, is free. Half the students in the country are female.

Political parties are banned

No open opposition against the government is tolerated.

(CHART) (C) SYRIA

Population: 17,155,814

Official language: Arabic

Currency: Syrian pound

Literacy: 71 percent

Government: Type: Republic under military regime (since March 1963)

Leader: President Bashar al-Asad (since July 2000)

Ethnic Makeup:

Arab 90 percent

Armenians and other 10 percent

Religion:

Sunni Muslim 74 percent

A WORLD APART

Muslim sects 16 percent

Christian 10 percent

Health care and education from kindergarten through college is free. Because of population increases, the state is strained and in the past two years universities have begun to charge tuition.

The state runs the media and bans access to pornographic Web sites. Some search engines, such as Yahoo, cannot be accessed.

Damascus, a modern city of 5 million, is the oldest inhabited city

(CHART) (C) IRAN

Population: 66,622,704

Official language: Farsi and Persian dialects

Currency: Iranian rial

Literacy: 72 percent

Government Type : Theocratic republic

Leader: Ayatollah Ali Hoseini-Khamenei (June 1989)

Ethnic Makeup:

Persian 51 percent

Azeri 24 percent

Gilaki and Mazandarani 8 percent

Kurd 7 percent

Other 10 percent

Religion

Shi'a Muslim 89 percent

Sunni Muslim 10 percent

Zoroastrian, Jewish Christian and Baha'i 1 percent

Tehran's population grew from 200,000 before World War II to 12 million today. As a result, it has severe air pollution problems.

Cellphones in big cities are as popular as they are in the U.S.

An apartment in Tehran costs more than one in New York City. Lower-income families tend to live in substandard housing or in extended families.

American videos, rap and pizza are very popular in Iran. Some pizzarias have 24-hour delivery.

(CHART) (C) JORDAN

Population: 5,307,470

Official language: Arabic

Currency: Jordanian dinar

Literacy: 87 percent

Government Type: Constitutional monarchy

Leader: King Abdallah II (February 1999)

A WORLD APART

Ethnic Makeup

Arab 98 percent

Circassian and Armenian 2 percent

Religion

Sunni Muslim 92 percent

Christian 6 percent

Other (Shi'a Muslim and Druzes) 2 percent

Families tend to be large and close. Religious customs are closely followed, but women can walk in knee-length skirts or without head coverings without being verbally accosted.

Life in Jordan is low-key. There are modern Internet cafes, but little nightlife.

In an attempt to straddle conservative traditions and modern progress, restaurants offer three seating options: one room only for single men, another for only single women and a third just for families.

(CHART) (C) TURKEY

Population: 67,308,928

Official language: Turkish

Currency: Turkish lira

Literacy: 85 percent

Government Type: Republican parliamentary democracy

Leader: Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit (January 1999)

Ethnic Makeup

Turkish 80 percent

Kurdish 20 percent

Religion:

Sunni Muslim 99.8 percent

Mostly Christian and Jewish .2 percent

Church and state are strictly divided. Traditional head scarves must be removed when entering government offices.

Customs include the sipping of a licorice-flavored vodka called raki, and playing backgammon in cafes.

Turkey is a popular spot for Europeans, who consider it similar to vacationing in Spain or Italy.

Cable TV is common, and European pop music is a favorite.

(CHART) (C) SAUDI ARABIA

Population: 23,513,330

Official language: Arabic

Currency: Saudi riyal

Literacy: 78 percent

Government: Type: Theocratic republic

Leader: Leader of the Islamic King and Prime Minister Fahd bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud (June 1982)

A WORLD APART

Ethnic Makeup

Arab 90 percent

Afro-Asian 10 percent

Religion

Muslim, 100 percent

Respect for Islamic customs and beliefs is extremely important. The practice of other religions is not allowed.

Music and drama groups are popular on university campuses, as are clubs for opera, cinema, square-dancing and bridge playing.

In addition to the modern shopping centers, Jeddah also has many traditional local markets, where such products as fruit and vegetables, gold, textiles and antiques are sold .

(CHART) A GLOSSARY OF TERMS RELATED TO MIDDLE EASTERN HISTORY AND CULTURE

Here is a glossary of important terms related to Middle East history and culture:

Aba: A long cloak worn traditionally by Arab men

Abayah: A long black cloak worn traditionally by Arab women

Agal: A dark cord that holds an Arab man's kaffiyeh head scarf in place

Allah: Arabic word for God

Amir: Prince or leader, especially used to designate a military commander

Anjuman: Persian word for a society composed of Muslims, especially used in Iran

Asha: A Muslim woman's head scarf

Ayatollah: High-ranking and well-respected religious scholar and legal expert

Bedouin: A pastoral nomad

Burqa: Long garment covering the entire body, worn by extremely religious Muslim women

Canaan: A historical and biblical term used to describe the strip of land that includes most of present-day Gaza Strip and Israel and the western part of Jordan. The term was found on Egyptian writings from the 15th century B.C.

Dishdasha: The basic long garment that is part of the street wear of both sexes in more traditional Muslim societies

Druse: A secretive religion practiced by some Arabs in Syria, Lebanon and Israel

Eid: Any Muslim festival

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(See microfilm for details.)

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Air Force

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Graphic

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(C) President Saddam Hussein

(C) Prime Minister and Crown Prince Sheik Saad Al Sabah

(C) Prime Minister Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani (June 1995)

(C) Prime Minister Ariel Sharon

(C) President Bashar Al-Asad

(C) Ayatollah Ali Hoseini-Khamenei

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(C) Leader of the Islamic King and Prime Minister Fahd bin Abd al-Aziz Al

(C) Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit

The Associated Press

(C) Like many Iraqis, Maha Hamzi, left, her sister Mayada Hamzi, right, and their children enjoy outings such as a recent visit to a Baghdad pastry shop for cake.

Load-Date: April 9, 2003

Just how dangerous is; CONFLICT

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

April 6, 2002 Saturday

Late Edition

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Section: GOOD WEEKEND; Pg. 33

Length: 3134 words

Byline: Andrew Marshall

Body

He wants a fundamentalist Islamic republic on Australia's doorstep, trains fanatical soldiers to terrorise Christians and questions whether Osama bin Laden is "truly anti-American". Andrew Marshall meets Indonesia's crusading zealot Jaffar Umar Thalib.

When religious violence first erupted in the Poso region of north-eastern Indonesia - when burning churches lit up the tropical night and corpses began to clog the Islamic school floors - the Reverend Marson L. Moganti made a solemn vow to himself.

"I hate conflict," he says. "I've seen too much of it. So I swore not to cut my hair until the violence in Poso stopped."

That was more than two years ago. Today, Moganti stands in the doorway of his burnt-out church, gazing out upon his village of Sanginora. It is a wasteland of charred wood and twisted metal. His dazed parishioners pick through what is left of their incinerated homes. Graffiti on the wall of one gutted house translates as "this is the fate of the Christians of Sanginora". Moganti sighs and unties his ponytail - his long black hair cascades around his shoulders.

Sanginora is - was - a sizeable village in the turbulent Poso region of Central Sulawesi. Since December 1998, pitched battles between Poso's Muslim and Christian communities have left hundreds dead and thousands homeless. But the Muslim force which, in

a matter of days, flattened Sanginora and four neighbouring Christian villages, brought a new kind of terror to Poso.

The attack began about noon on November 29, during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. The attackers arrived in their hundreds, dressed in black uniforms and ski-masks. With cries of "God is Great!" they ripped through the village, hurling grenades and petrol bombs, and spraying the houses with semi-automatic weapons.

"There were explosions and constant gunfire," says Moganti. "Soon I saw houses on fire and knew the church would be burned next."

Moganti and his flock escaped into the jungle with what possessions they could carry. One terrified women, who was eight months pregnant, paused to give birth beneath a banana tree. Back at the village, Sanginora's attackers began a five-hour orgy of destruction. By one report, petrol trucks were brought in to douse houses and crops, while bulldozers levelled what remained.

Just how dangerous is CONFLICT

Spotted amid the chaos were bearded men in long, Afghan-style shirts and white head-dresses, coolly dispatching orders to their black-clad gunmen. Instantly recognisable in their Arabic clothing, these were the field commanders of Laskar Jihad, a Muslim paramilitary group from Indonesia's main island of Java, renowned for its fanaticism and brutality. Rallying under a fearsome insignia of two medieval scimitars crossed over the Koran, its holy warriors are well-drilled, heavily armed and ferociously loyal to one man. He is a 40-year-old Indonesian cleric named Jaffar Umar Thalib - the most militant Muslim in the world's most populous Islamic nation.

Jaffar didn't really blip on American radar screens until after the September 11 terror attacks. Only then did global attention focus upon the potential threat posed by Muslim extremists in Indonesia and upon what role they might play in al-Qaeda's network in South-East Asia.

A plethora of radical Islamic groups have formed in Indonesia since the three-decade dictatorship of Soeharto collapsed in 1998, but Laskar Jihad - which boasts between 3,000 and 10,000 members - stands out for its track record in blood and mayhem. In Indonesia's Maluku islands, once famed for the spice trade, the arrival of 1,500 of Jaffar's holy warriors escalated a religious conflict which has now killed more than 5,000 people. Last July, Jaffar dispatched 750 troops to Poso and similar carnage ensued.

"They've got real organisation and they've got reasonably capable people," says Australian academic and Indonesian expert Dr Harold Crouch of the International Crisis Group (ICG) in Jakarta. ICG conducts field research to help the international community anticipate, understand and contain or prevent conflicts. "You might find an airline pilot or two in Laskar Jihad," explains Crouch, "but in the others, I doubt it very much."

According to international press reports, hundreds of non-Indonesian Muslims - including some al-Qaeda operatives - have trained at Laskar Jihad camps in the jungles of Sulawesi, and US officials are convinced that al-Qaeda "sleeper cells" still exist there.

Jaffar fought alongside the anti-Soviet mujahideen in Afghanistan, and met Osama bin Laden in Pakistan. While he now openly scorns bin Laden, experts say there is little difference between the two.

"He claims to be ideologically opposed to Osama, but his ideology is parallel," says Rohan Gunaratna, a researcher at the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence at the University of St Andrews, Scotland. "They both believe in using violence to achieve their political goals."

Jaffar has described the US as "the biggest enemy of the Islamic people," and in the wake of the September 11 attacks - which he publicly cheered - he threatened to declare war on all American facilities in Indonesia.

Jaffar oversees a network of pesantren, or Koranic boarding schools, that produce young militants educated in jihad. He preaches that democracy is "incompatible with Islam" and that Indonesia's 210 million people should be governed under strict Islamic law. And he practises what he preaches, too: last year, he presided over a makeshift Islamic court in Maluku that passed judgment on an alleged adulterer, who was then stoned to death by a mob. Jaffar was arrested but never prosecuted for the murder, and squads of his long-robed devotees still patrol Indonesian cities, raiding alcohol shops and suspected brothels.

"All of these factors have led US policy-makers to conclude that Jaffar is a radical demagogue infused with a worldwide Islamic credo," says Peter Chalk, an analyst with the Rand Corporation in Washington. Furthermore, he says, Laskar Jihad is seen as one group that might be prepared to aid "the logistical relocation of al-Qaeda forces, post-Taliban". Adds Larry Johnson, a former State Department counter-terrorism official, "It's about potential. If these groups are allowed to grow unchecked by local authorities, they could pose a threat."

Even its leader's name seems custom-made to jangle Western nerves: Jaffar, the evil sorcerer who deceived Aladdin; Thalib, as in "Taliban," from the Arabic for "religious student". With the Taliban routed and Osama on the run, the question is: Just how dangerous is Jaffar?

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Laskar Jihad's headquarters are located in a pesantren, a huddle of ramshackle buildings reached by a rutted back road and guarded by sentries in black commando outfits. I am met by Eri Ziyad Abu Zaki, the group's public relations officer, a shyly grinning young man in a knee-length tunic.

The holy warriors are part of the "human resources division," Eri Ziyad tells me, and all new recruits are expected to undergo military training at several "secret places" in Java.

He also shows me the group's twice-monthly tabloid, called Bulletin Laskar Jihad. It is

well-written, slickly produced and very anti-American. "America Starts Digging Its Own Grave," states one front-page headline, referring to the Afghan campaign. "You're Dead, America," says another.

Laskar Jihad also runs a Web site, in both Indonesian and English, that makes pleas for donations. The tabloid publishes no pictures of humans or animals. Like the Taliban, Laskar Jihad considers re-creating images of living beings a blasphemy against God. Flipping through back issues, the only "human" form I could find was a picture of the Statue of Liberty - decapitated.

About 400 men, women and children stay on the compound, where the usual vices - alcohol, gambling - are banned. So are television and music. "Music is a distraction from God," Eri Ziyad says. The group imposes Taliban-like restrictions on its women, who must cover their faces with veils and remain largely housebound. Jaffar himself has four wives, the maximum Islam allows, and 11 children.

Eri Ziyad leads the way to a modest house near the mosque and knocks on the door. We are ushered into a sparsely furnished anteroom by a beaming Jaffar.

He is tall and certainly plumper than his reputation as an ascetic would suggest. He wears a white skullcap, a crisp, checked sarong and a long, diaphanous cream shirt with embroidered pink trim. Beneath it is a white T-shirt bearing what appears to be Laskar Jihad's clashing scimitars logo. He is pale-skinned, with dark-brown eyes, and when he smiles (which is often), he is disarmingly handsome. His moustache is neatly trimmed, and he has a straggly, greying beard.

Jaffar's warm welcome is unexpected, since he claims the international media is "controlled by Jews and Christians" bent on discrediting Laskar Jihad. But he obviously enjoys the attention he has received since September 11.

"We heard that when Megawati visited the US, George Walker Bush warned her to be careful of Laskar Jihad," he says, referring to the Indonesian president, Megawati Sukarnoputri. "He called us 'jihad forces'. Also, Colin Powell called us an organ of the

al-Qaeda network. And then Robert Gelbard, the US ambassador in Indonesia, made a statement saying that Jaffar Umar Thalib was" - and here Jaffar speaks mockingly in English - " 'a quite dangerous man'."

Our meeting took place the day after Afghanistan's interim government was sworn in. Jaffar has a predictably low opinion of it. "It is a puppet government established to abolish so-called Islamic radicalism," he says. "It will only prolong the suffering of the Afghan people. I believe the war will continue. All the anti-American powers are still united, are still strong. They are rebuilding their power outside Afghanistan, particularly along the Pakistani border."

"So the Taliban aren't finished yet?"

"No, in my opinion they are still a big threat to the US," he replies. "George Walker Bush said it himself after September 11: this is a crusade. The US has since tried to withdraw this statement and express friendship to Muslim people. But it has not been forgotten by the mujahideen." He leans back and interlocks his fingers, then cracks them extravagantly. "I hope the Americans share the same fate as the Soviets."

Afghanistan is very close to Jaffar's heart. He earned his warrior credentials there along with hundreds of other Indonesian Muslims who fought with the mujahideen. For Jaffar, then in his mid-twenties, Afghanistan was a

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At age 19, in an apparent act of filial rebellion, he left his father's pesantren to study Arabic at a Jakarta institute, but failed to complete the course due to a disagreement

with a teacher. In 1987, for similar reasons, he dropped out of another Islamic college in Lahore, Pakistan. He spent the next two years with Afghan mujahideen and recalls the period with obvious affection.

"We were not there to learn," he says, "but to fight." But actually he did learn: he learned how nasty little wars are waged and he learned that superpowers could be super-vulnerable. "From my two-year experience in Afghanistan, I concluded that the whole concept of a superpower was only created by the mass media," he says. "It did not fit with reality at all."

Another Muslim who was reaching much the same conclusion was Osama bin Laden. Jaffar met him in 1987 in Peshawar, a Pakistani town near the Afghan border. His recollection of the encounter is prefaced by a deep, resonant belch. "At that time, he still shaved his beard," Jaffar says. "He was a spiritually empty man. He had no religious knowledge at all." He adds that bin Laden was an arrogant man who poured scorn on Saudi Arabia, which Jaffar regards as a model Islamic state. "Because of this, we distanced ourselves from him," Jaffar says. "We only knew of the al-Qaeda network after the September 11 attack."

Is this true? While it is hard to find concrete evidence of collaboration between Laskar Jihad and al-Qaeda, either before or after September 11, suspicions linger. Apparent confirmation of a link came in early December, when the head of Indonesia's National Intelligence Agency publicly acknowledged that al-Qaeda members had trained in Poso. But a few days later he retracted this statement. Then there is Laskar Jihad's Web site, which once featured links to Web sites of other radical organisations. These included Lashkar-e-Taiba, a Pakistan-based outfit accused by India of the assault on the New Delhi Parliament, as well as Hezbollah, Hamas and groups in Bosnia and Chechnya. These links no longer appear on the site.

Still, none of this adds up to an indictment, and Jaffar knows it. He happily admits that in the weeks preceding September 11, "someone close to Osama bin Laden" visited Laskar Jihad's offices in Maluku to offer financial help. Bin Laden's offer was not only rejected, Jaffar insists, but his emissary was threatened with death should he ever set foot on Maluku again.

Gunaratna, the terrorism researcher, believes Jaffar's open contempt for bin Laden is disingenuous. "Publicly, he's against Osama," Gunaratna says, "but privately he has told Muslim leaders that he's willing to send fighters to Afghanistan if Osama requested." Jaffar told me that a unit of 10 Laskar Jihad "observers" was currently stationed in Afghanistan, although he wouldn't elaborate on their activities there.

Even if Jaffar's contempt for al-Qaeda's mastermind is genuine, how reassuring is that? If the world's most wanted man is, as Jaffar suggests, a lightweight - at one point in our interview he even questions whether Osama bin Laden is "truly anti-American" - what does this say about the quality of Jaffar's radicalism? His views on the September 11 terror attacks provide a clue. While refusing to name suspects (he is clearly reluctant to feed the Osama legend), Jaffar praises the perpetrators.

"Of course, I feel sad that there were so many Muslim victims," he says. (An estimated 800 Muslims died in the World Trade Centre.) But he is heartened that the anti-Islamic stance of America got a "hard slap".

"When we see the global impact of the attack, of course we support it." Jaffar chuckles to himself. "In fact, we offer our applause."

A red curtain in the corner of the room parts slightly and a disembodied female hand extends a tray of glasses filled with a sweet cordial. Jaffar takes a glass and, with an expansive gesture, encourages his guests to do the same. I

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ask him if the killing of innocents is ever justified, and Jaffar responds with another question: were the victims of September 11 really innocent to begin with?

"The policy of any government," he explains, "especially a democratically elected government like the US, is also the responsibility of all the people who supported it. The people run the risk of the results of those policies."

Furthermore, he says, "economic facilities" like the World Trade Centre are legitimate targets according to the Koran and the Hadith, the sayings of the Prophet Mohammed. And if there are civilians in those facilities? "If there are civilians," Jaffar says, "even Muslim civilians ... well, that is the risk of war."

And yet for all his talk, Jaffar may not be the international threat that he's cracked up to be. ICG's Harold Crouch insists that the dangers posed by Laskar Jihad beyond Indonesia are overblown. "They've got no interest internationally," he says. "In fact, they're very nationalistic. They're certainly anti-American, but that's the rhetoric of all radical Muslim groups."

Jaffar's avowed goal is the establishment of an Islamic government in Indonesia, although many believe his true agenda is more personal. "Part of him wants fame, respect and influence," says Jacqui Baker of the Australian National University, who spent three months interviewing Jaffar and his followers. "Although Jaffar rejects overt politics, he still wants to be a prominent figure on the Indonesian political landscape."

Since December, Singapore and Malaysia have arrested dozens of Muslim radicals

with apparent links to al-Qaeda, while the Philippines has asked for US troops to help wipe out Abu Sayyaf, another militant outfit with possible al-Qaeda ties. So far, Indonesia has done nothing, apart from question another well-known Muslim cleric called Abu Bakar Baasyir, whom the Singaporean government claims is running an al-Qaeda-linked terror group. (Baasyir denies this.)

Meanwhile, Jaffar and his ultraviolent followers continue to operate with impunity. Jaffar, unlike Baasyir, "is not an international jihadist, but could graduate into one," Rohan Gunaratna says. "There is a pattern with these groups. They start nationally, go regional, then go international, which is precisely why they must be stopped while they're still small." Laskar Jihad has already rapidly grown into what Gunaratna believes is a military outfit with the capability to conduct terrorist activities. "If the Indonesians don't crack down, it will become a large group with real political force," he predicts.

Washington has warned that Indonesia could become a target in the war on terror, a prospect that "scares the shit out of the Indonesian government," as one Western diplomat inelegantly puts it. It also frightens the Howard government, whose support for the American campaign in Asia might well conflict with Australia's ongoing struggle to rebuild relations with Indonesia after three chilly years. Buoyed by a resurgence of popular fundamentalism and protected by sympathetic political and military figures, Jaffar has become a symbol of Indonesia's inability to confront the threat from home-grown militancy. No-one, apparently, has the power or inclination to rid Indonesia of its most turbulent priest.

Jaffar glances at his gold wristwatch and makes apologies. It is almost time for prayers at the compound's mosque, and Jaffar plans to deliver the sermon.

"I don't want to get carried away with this issue of anti-Americanism," he says, almost as an afterthought. "That would be wrong. We oppose the policies of the US government, not the people themselves." He thinks for a moment. "Because some Americans are Muslims, too."

Then he stands up and stretches, and for the first time the logo on his shirt is clearly visible. It is not, as I had thought, the clashing sabers of Laskar Jihad. It is a Playboy bunny.

Graphic

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FOUR ILLUS: "All the anti-American powers are still united, still strong": Jaffar Umar Thalib (above right), commander of Indonesia's militant Laskar Jihad; (above) armed Muslim gang members watch as Christian homes burn in Poso in Central Sulawesi. AP; REUTERS In the name of God: dressed in traditional prayer clothing, members of Laskar Jihad at a stadium in Jakarta pledge to wage a holy war in the Moluccas. GETTY IMAGES Witnesses to the persecution: two young Christian girls walk through the remains of burnt-out Muslim shops in Tentena, near Poso. FAIRFAX PHOTO LIBRARY

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The Threat of Jaffar - Correction Appended

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Byline: By Andrew Marshall; Andrew Marshall, who writes frequently about war and politics in Asia, is the author of "The Trouser People," a book about contemporary Myanmar, to be published this month by Counterpoint.

Body

Late last summer, Indonesia's newly elected vice president, Hamzah Haz, welcomed a string of guests into his official residence, only a short walk from the sprawling American Embassy compound in downtown Jakarta. Among the academics and politicians he greeted was a 40-year-old Muslim cleric named Jaffar Umar Thalib. A photograph in a local newspaper the next day showed him and the vice president locked in a warm embrace. Outside Indonesia, however, this visit by Jaffar -- who was, even then, arguably the most feared Islamic militant in the most populous Muslim nation on earth and who would soon be mentioned in the same breath as Osama bin Laden -- went largely unreported.

In fact, Jaffar Umar Thalib didn't really blip on Washington radar screens until after the terror attacks. Only then did global attention focus upon the potential threat posed by Muslim extremists in Indonesia -- a sprawling and practically lawless country with porous borders and a thriving black market in weapons and explosives - and upon what role they might play in Al Qaeda's network in Southeast Asia.

Jaffar is the commander of Laskar Jihad, a Muslim paramilitary group renowned for its fanaticism and brutality. His followers, who number between 3,000 and 10,000, are well drilled, heavily armed and ferociously loyal. Among the plethora of radical Islamic groups that have formed in Indonesia since the three-decade dictatorship of Suharto collapsed in 1998, Laskar Jihad stands out.

"They've got real organization and they've got reasonably capable people," says Harold Crouch, an Indonesia expert with the Australian National University. "You might find an airline pilot or two in Laskar Jihad, but in the others, I doubt it very much." According to persistent reports, hundreds of non-Indonesian Muslims -- including, it is believed, Al Qaeda operatives -- have trained at camps run by Laskar Jihad in the jungles of Sulawesi, and American officials are convinced that Al Qaeda "sleeping cells" still exist there.

Jaffar got his start in jihad fighting alongside the anti-Soviet mujahideen in Afghanistan in the late 1980's; around the same time, he met Osama bin Laden in Pakistan. While Jaffar now openly scorns bin Laden as a misguided lightweight, experts say there is little difference between the two. "He claims to be ideologically opposed to Osama, but his ideology is parallel," says Rohan Gunaratna, a researcher at the Center for the Study of Terrorism and

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Political Violence at the University of St Andrews, Scotland. "They both believe in using violence to achieve their political goals."

In late December, in an effort to gauge the threat posed by Jaffar, I traveled to Java and made the hour's drive north from Jogjakarta, Indonesia's cultural capital, to Laskar Jihad's headquarters. What I found was less than reassuring. Sounding very much like bin Laden, Jaffar -- who elsewhere has described the United States as "the biggest enemy of the Islamic people" -- said that he is convinced there is a global conspiracy of American-led Jews and Christians to destroy Islam and all Muslims. In the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks, which he publicly cheered, he had threatened to declare war on all American facilities in Indonesia.

Jaffar, who oversees a network of pesantren -- Koranic schools that, like the madrassas of Pakistan, produce countless young militants schooled in jihad -- preaches that democracy is "incompatible with Islam" and that Indonesia's 210 million people should be governed under strict Islamic law. He practices what he preaches too: last year, he presided over a makeshift Islamic court in Maluku that passed judgment on an adulterer. The 30-year-old man was buried up to his waist in the ground and stoned to death by a mob. Jaffar was arrested but never prosecuted for the murder.

"All of these factors have led U.S. policy makers to conclude that Jaffar is a radical demagogue infused with a worldwide Islamic credo," says Peter Chalk, an analyst with the RAND Corporation in Washington. Furthermore, he adds, Laskar Jihad is seen as one group that might be prepared to aid "the logistical relocation of Al Qaeda forces, post-Taliban." Even the name his father bestowed on him seems custom-made to jangle Western nerves: Jaffar, the evil sorcerer who deceived Aladdin; Thalib, as in "Taliban," from the Arabic for "religious student."

Jaffar is by no means the only worrisome figure in Indonesia. For example, the police there recently questioned Abu Bakar Baasyir, another well-known Muslim cleric. Baasyir, who has hailed Osama bin Laden as "a true Islamic warrior," is suspected of leading Jemaah Islamiyah, a Qaeda-linked terror group in Southeast Asia. (Baasyir denies any links to terrorism.) While his group is smaller and more secretive than Laskar Jihad, it apparently has stronger ties to the global jihad movement.

But Jaffar, whose violent activities have so far been confined to the domestic sphere, heads a much larger organization whose members operate openly and with virtual impunity. "It's about potential," says Larry Johnson, a former State Department counterterrorism official. "If these groups are allowed to grow, unchecked by local authorities, they could pose a threat."

Laskar Jihad's headquarters are located in a pesantren, a huddle of ramshackle buildings reached by a rutted back road and guarded by sentries in black commando outfits.

I am met there by Eri Ziyad Abu Zaki, the group's public-relations officer, a shyly grinning young man in a knee-length tunic. The holy warriors are part of the "human resources division," Eri Ziyad tells me, and all new recruits are expected to undergo military training at several "secret places" in Java. He also shows me the group's twice-monthly tabloid, called Bulletin Laskar Jihad. It is well written, slickly produced and venomously anti-American. "America Starts Digging Its Own Grave," screams one front-page headline (in Indonesian), referring to the Afghan campaign. "You're Dead, America," howls another.

Laskar Jihad also runs a Web site, in both Indonesian and English, that makes pleas for donations and describes its work in sometimes erratic English ("Jihad Troopers at Glance"). The tabloid publishes no pictures of humans or animals. Like the Taliban, Laskar Jihad considers recreating images of living beings a blasphemy against God. Flipping through back issues, the only human form I could find was a picture of the Statue of Liberty -- decapitated, naturally.

About 400 men, women and children stay on the compound, where the usual vices -- alcohol, gambling -- are banned. So are television and music. "Music is a distraction from God," Eri Ziyad says. The group imposes Taliban-like restrictions on its women, who must cover their faces with Saudi-style veils and remain largely housebound. Jaffar himself has four wives -- the maximum Islam allows -- and 11 children.

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Eri Ziyad leads the way to a modest house near the mosque and knocks on the door. We are ushered into a sparsely furnished anteroom by a beaming Jaffar Umar Thalib himself.

He is tall and certainly plumper than his reputation as an ascetic would suggest. He wears a white skullcap, a crisp, checked sarong and a long, diaphanous cream shirt with embroidered pink trim. Beneath it is a white T-shirt bearing what looks like Laskar Jihad's clashing scimitars logo. He is pale-skinned, with dark brown eyes, and when he smiles (which is often), he is disarmingly handsome. His mustache is neatly trimmed, and he has a straggly, graying beard, which he constantly combs between his thumb and forefinger, like a pantomime villain.

Jaffar is tired. He returned late the previous evening from the eastern Javanese city of Surabaya, where the police arrested 102 Laskar Jihad members for trashing gambling clubs in December. Squads of Jaffar's long-robed followers regularly patrol Indonesian cities, raiding liquor stores and suspected brothels. "The idea behind this action is to clear up all the vice, especially during Ramadan -- the gambling, the prostitution, the drinking," he says. "We are not the only group doing this. But when we do it, the authorities always overreact. It is one of the many attempts being made to discredit us."

Also out to discredit Laskar Jihad is the international media, which Jaffar says he believes is "controlled by Jews and Christians." But he obviously enjoys the attention he has received since Sept. 11. "We heard that when Megawati visited the U.S., George Walker Bush warned her to be careful of Laskar Jihad," he says, referring to the Indonesian president, Megawati Sukarnoputri. "He called us 'jihad forces.' Also, Colin Powell called us an organ of the Qaeda network. And then Robert Gelbard, the U.S. ambassador in Indonesia, made a statement saying that Jaffar Umar Thalib was" -- and here Jaffar speaks mockingly in English -- "a quite dangerous man." Eri Ziyad, who is sitting nearby taking notes, guffaws dutifully.

Our meeting took place the day after Afghanistan's interim government was sworn in. Jaffar has a predictably low opinion of it. "It is a puppet government established to abolish so-called Islamic radicalism," he says. "It will only prolong the suffering of the Afghan people. I believe the war will continue. All the anti-American powers are still united, are still strong. They are rebuilding their power outside Afghanistan, particularly along the Pakistani border."

"So the Taliban aren't finished yet?"

"No, in my opinion they are still a big threat to the U.S.," he replies. "George Walker Bush said it himself after Sept. 11: this is a crusade. The U.S. has since tried to withdraw this statement and express friendship to Muslim people. But it has not been forgotten by the mujahedeen."

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Afghanistan is very close to Jaffar's heart. He earned his warrior credentials there along with hundreds of other Indonesian Muslims who fought with the mujahedeen. According to Laskar Jihad lore, Jaffar once shot down five Soviet helicopters in the Lowgar valley south of Kabul with a single rocket-propelled grenade. "With the help of God, I got one of the helicopters from quite close range, and it exploded. At the same time, the other four tried to escape and in their panic crashed into each other." He throws up his hands in mock incredulity. "All of them -- destroyed!"

For Jaffar, then in his mid-20's, Afghanistan was a liberation. To that point, he had spent his entire life in the suffocating environs of various Islamic schools. He was born in 1961, the seventh of eight children, in east Java. His formidable father, Umar Thalib, was a veteran of Indonesia's independence war who later ran a pesantren with the same martial ferocity, beating a religious education into his son with a rattan stick. "Learning Arabic from my father was like learning boxing," Jaffar has said.

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"We were not there to learn," he says, "but to fight." But actually he did learn: he learned how nasty little wars are waged and he learned that superpowers could be vulnerable. "From my two-year experience in Afghanistan, I concluded that the whole concept of a superpower was only created by the mass media," he says. "It did not fit with reality at all."

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Is this true? While it is hard to find concrete proof of meaningful collaboration between Laskar Jihad and Al Qaeda, either before or after Sept. 11, strong suspicions linger. Apparent confirmation of a link came in mid-December, when the head of Indonesia's National Intelligence Agency publicly acknowledged that Al Qaeda members had probably trained in Poso, a district in central Sulawesi. But a few days later he retracted this statement, almost certainly under pressure from Indonesia's radical Muslim lobby. Then there is Laskar Jihad's Web site, which once featured links to Web sites of other radical organizations. These included Lashkar-e-Taiba, the Pakistan-based outfit accused by India of participating in the assault on the New Delhi Parliament, as well as Hezbollah, Hamas and groups in Bosnia and Chechnya. These links no longer appear on Laskar Jihad's Web site.

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And if there are civilians in those facilities? "If there are civilians," Jaffar says, "even Muslim civilians . . . well, that is the risk of war."

And yet for all his talk about America's "parasitic" Jewish lobby and Washington's support of "Zionist terrorism" and his labeling of Americans as "belligerent infidels" whose deaths are justified by divine imperative, Jaffar may not be quite the threat he cracks himself up to be. Harold Crouch insists that the dangers posed by Laskar Jihad beyond Indonesia's borders is overblown.

"They've got no interest internationally," he says. "They're certainly anti-American, but that's the rhetoric of all radical Muslim groups." Jaffar is a vocal opponent of his country's various armed separatist movements. Recent reports suggest that he is training about 100 fighters in Papua, an independence-minded province in easternmost Indonesia.

Jaffar's avowed goal is the establishment of an Islamic government in Indonesia, although many believe his true agenda is more personal. "Part of him wants fame, respect and influence," says Jacqui Baker of the Australian National University, who spent three months studying Jaffar and his followers. "Although Jaffar rejects overt politics, he still wants to be a prominent figure on the Indonesian political landscape."

Since December, Singapore and Malaysia have arrested dozens of Muslim radicals with apparent links to Al Qaeda, while the Philippines has invited American troops to come in and help wipe out Abu Sayyaf, another militant outfit with possible Al Qaeda ties. So far, Indonesia has done little, apart from question Abu Bakar Baasyir, the cleric suspected of running a Qaeda-linked terror group.

Meanwhile, Jaffar and his ultraviolent followers continue to operate with impunity. Jaffar, unlike Baasyir, "is not an international jihadist, but could graduate into one," Gunaratna says. "There is a pattern with these groups. They start nationally, go regional, then go international, which is precisely why they must be stopped while they're still small." Laskar Jihad has already rapidly grown into what Gunaratna believes is a military outfit with definite capability to conduct terrorist activities. "If the Indonesians don't crack down, it will become a large group with real political force," he predicts.

Washington has warned that Indonesia could become a target in the war on terror, a prospect that "scares the heck out of the Indonesian government," as a Western diplomat puts it. For now, however, it seems that Jaffar scares the Indonesian government more. Buoyed by a resurgence of popular fundamentalism and protected by sympathetic political and military figures, he has become a striking symbol of Indonesia's inability to confront the threat from home-grown militancy. No one, apparently, has the power or inclination to rid Indonesia of its most turbulent priest.

Jaffar glances at his gold wristwatch and makes apologies. It is almost time for prayers at the compound's mosque, and Jaffar plans to deliver the sermon. The amplified drone of a muezzin's call soon fills the room.

"I don't want to get carried away with this issue of anti-Americanism," he says, almost as an afterthought. "That would be wrong. We oppose the policies of the U.S. government, not the people themselves." He thinks for a moment. "Because some Americans are Muslims, too."

Then he stands up and stretches, and for the first time the logo on his undershirt is clearly visible. It is not, as I had initially thought, the clashing sabers of Laskar Jihad. It is a Playboy bunny.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Correction

The Threat of Jaffar

An article on March 10 about Jaffar Umar Thalib, a militant Muslim cleric in Indonesia, referred incorrectly to the number of Muslims killed in the attack on the World Trade Center. It was not 800. There has so far been no official count of Muslims who were among the 2,830 dead or missing confirmed as of March 21.

Correction-Date: March 31, 2002

Graphic

Photos: Jaffar's followers demonstrating outside Parliament in April 2000. (Kemal Jufri/Imaji Press)

Load-Date: March 10, 2002

End of Document

Artikel(en) zonder titel

Utrechts Nieuwsblad

June 26, 2003

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Section: BUI1 (buitenland)

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Daniel Patrick Moynihan Is Dead; Senator From Academia Was 76

The New York Times

March 27, 2003 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 5; Metropolitan Desk; Pg. 1

Length: 3306 words

Byline: By ADAM CLYMER

Body

Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the Harvard professor and four-term United States senator from New York who brought a scholar's eye for data to politics and a politician's sense of the real world to academia, died yesterday at Washington Hospital Center in Washington, D.C. He was 76.

The cause, a spokesman for the family said, was complications of a ruptured appendix, which was removed on March 11 at the hospital, where he remained.

Mr. Moynihan was always more a man of ideas than of legislation or partisan combat. Yet he was enough of a politician to win re-election easily -- and enough of a maverick with close Republican friends to be an occasional irritant to his Democratic party leaders. Before the Senate, his political home from 1977 to 2001, he served two Democratic presidents and two Republicans, finishing his career in the executive branch as President Richard M. Nixon's ambassador to India and President Gerald R. Ford's ambassador to the United Nations.

For more than 40 years, in and out of government, he became known for being among the first to identify new problems and propose novel, if not easy, solutions, most famously in auto safety and mass transportation; urban decay and the corrosive effects of racism; and the preservation and development of architecturally distinctive federal buildings.

He was a man known for the grand gesture as well as the bon mot, and his style sometimes got more attention than his prescience, displayed notably in 1980 when he labeled the Soviet Union "in decline." Among his last great causes were strengthening Social Security and attacking government secrecy.

In the halls of academe and the corridors of power, he was known for seizing ideas and connections before others noticed. In 1963, for example, he was the co-author of "Beyond the Melting Pot," which shattered the idea that ethnic identities inevitably wear off in the United States. Then, on the day that November when President Kennedy was shot in Dallas, he told every official he could find that the federal government must take custody of Lee Harvey Oswald to keep him alive to learn about the killing. No one listened.

Friends also observed the intense sense of history he connected to immediate events. Bob Packwood, the former Republican senator from Oregon, recalled his Democratic friend's response in 1993 when a reporter on the White House lawn asked what he thought of the signing of the Israeli-Palestinian agreement to share the West Bank. "Well, I think it's the end of World War I," he said, alluding to the mandates that proposed Middle Eastern boundaries in 1920.

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Erudite, opinionated and favoring, in season, tweed or seersucker, Mr. Moynihan conveyed an academic personality through a chirpy manner of speech, with occasional pauses between syllables. More than most senators, he could get colleagues to listen to his speeches, though not necessarily to follow his recommendations. He had a knack for the striking phrase, but unease at the controversy it often caused. When other senators used August recesses to travel or raise money for re-election, he spent most of them in an 1854 schoolhouse on his farm in Pindars Corners in Delaware County, about 65 miles west of Albany. He was writing books, 9 as a senator, 18 in all.

Mr. Moynihan was less an original researcher than a bold, often brilliant synthesizer whose works compelled furious debate and further research. In 1965, his foremost work, "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action," identified the breakup of black families as a major impediment to black advancement. Though savaged by many liberal academics at the time, it is now generally regarded as "an important and prophetic document," in the words of Prof. William Julius Wilson of Harvard.

Five years later, his memo to President Nixon on race relations caused another uproar. Citing the raw feelings provoked by the battles of the civil rights era, Mr. Moynihan suggested a period of rhetorical calm -- "benign neglect" he called it -- a proposal widely misinterpreted as a call to abandon federal programs to improve the lives of black families.

Nonetheless, he could also be an effective legislator. In his first term he teamed with Jacob K. Javits, his Republican colleague, to pass legislation guaranteeing \$2 billion worth of New York City obligations at a time when the city faced bankruptcy. In a brief turn leading the Environment and Public Works Committee in 1991 and 1992 he successfully pushed to shift highway financing toward mass transit -- and get New York \$5 billion in retroactive reimbursement for building the New York State Thruway before the federal government began the Interstate Highway System.

Although Mr. Moynihan's junior colleague for 18 years, Alfonse M. D'Amato, became known as Senator Pothole for his pork-barrel efforts for New York, Mr. Moynihan held his own in that department.

Monument of Bricks and Marble

Long before he came to the Senate, and until he left, he was building a monument of bricks and marble by making Washington's Pennsylvania Avenue, a dingy street where he came to work for President John F. Kennedy in 1961, into the grand avenue that George Washington foresaw for the boulevard that connects the Capitol and the White House. Nearly 40 years of his effort filled the avenue with new buildings on its north side, including the apartment houses where he lived, restored buildings on the south, and cafes and a sense of life all along.

Wherever he went, Mr. Moynihan explored interesting buildings and worked to preserve architectural distinction, from converting the main post office in Manhattan into the new Pennsylvania Station, to the Customs House at Battery Park and all around Washington. Last year, over lunch and a martini at Washington's Hotel Monaco, an 1842 Robert Mills building that was once the city's main post office, he recalled how he had helped rescue it from decline into a shooting gallery for drugs.

Daniel Patrick Moynihan was born in Tulsa, Okla., on March 16, 1927, the son of an itinerant, hard-drinking newspaperman who moved the family to New York later that year to take a job writing advertising copy. They lived comfortably in the city and suburbs until 1937 when his father, John Moynihan, left the family and left it in poverty.

Mr. Moynihan's childhood has been pseudo-glamorized by references to an upbringing in Hell's Kitchen, which in fact he encountered after his mother bought a bar there when he was 20. But there was enough hardship and instability in his early life so that when he later wrote of "social pathology," he knew what he was talking about.

Mr. Moynihan's mother, Margaret Moynihan, moved the family, including a brother, Michael, and a sister, Ellen, into a succession of Manhattan apartments, and Pat shined shoes in Times Square. In 1943 he graduated first in his class at Benjamin Franklin High School in East Harlem. He also graduated to work as a stevedore at Piers 48 and 49 on West 11th Street.

Daniel Patrick Moynihan Is Dead; Senator From Academia Was 76

He went to City College for a year, enlisted in the Navy, and was trained as an officer at Middlebury College and at Tufts University. Discharged the next spring, he went to work that summer tending bar for his mother, then got his B.A. at Tufts in 1948 and an M.A. at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts in 1949.

In 1950 he went to the London School of Economics on a Fulbright Scholarship, and he lived well on it, the G.I. bill and later a job at an Air Force base. He started wearing a bowler hat. He had a tailor and a bootmaker and traveled widely, including a visit to Moynihan cousins in County Kerry, Ireland.

Work on his dissertation did not consume him. In "Pat," his 1979 biography, Doug Schoen described a 1952 visit by two former Middlebury colleagues: "Impressed at first with his elaborate file cabinet full of index cards, they found that most of the cards were recipes for drinks rather than notes on the International Labor Organization."

Mr. Moynihan came home in 1953 and went to work in the mayoral campaign of Robert F. Wagner. He went on to write speeches for W. Averell Harriman's successful campaign for governor in 1954, joined his administration in Albany and rose to become his chief aide. It was there he learned about traffic safety, which he described in a 1959 article in *The Reporter* as a public health problem requiring federal action to make automobile design safer.

A Semi-Modest Proposal

Another former campaign worker who came to Albany was Elizabeth Brennan. Her desk and his were in the same room, and they grew friendly. Rather suddenly in early 1955, when they had never dated, Mr. Moynihan did not formally propose but simply told her he was going to marry her.

They married in May 1955, and she often said she married him because he was the funniest man she ever met.

His wife survives him, as do their three children: Timothy, Maura and John, and two grandchildren.

While he was an enthusiastic supporter of John F. Kennedy, work at Syracuse University on a book about the Harriman administration and his Ph.D. kept his role in the campaign sporadic. But Liz Brennan Moynihan organized the campaign efforts in the Syracuse area.

His Ph.D. in international relations finally complete, he left Syracuse in 1961 for Washington and the Labor Department, rising to assistant secretary. One early research assignment on office space for the scattered department gave him an opportunity to assert guiding architectural principles that have endured and produced striking courthouses: that federal buildings "must provide visual testimony to the dignity, enterprise, vigor and stability of the American government." That same report enabled him to raise the Pennsylvania Avenue issue, and he was at work on development plans on Nov. 22, 1963, when the word came that the president had been shot in Dallas.

Beyond his failed efforts to protect Mr. Oswald, Mr. Moynihan marked that grim assassination weekend with a widely remembered remark about the death of the president he barely knew but idolized and eagerly followed.

On Sunday Nov. 24, he said in a television interview: "I don't think there's any point in being Irish if you don't know that the world is going to break your heart eventually. I guess we thought we had a little more time." He added softly, "So did he."

His first book, written jointly with Nathan Glazer, had come out earlier that year. "Beyond the Melting Pot" looked at the different ethnic groups of New York City and scoffed at "the notion that the intense and unprecedented mixture of ethnic and religious groups in American life was soon to blend into a homogeneous end product." Ethnicity persisted, they argued.

That concept won praise from the era's leading historian of immigration, Harvard's Oscar Handlin, who called it a "point of departure" in studies of immigrants. But in a foretaste of academic criticism in years to come, he said their methodology was sometimes "flimsy."

Daniel Patrick Moynihan Is Dead; Senator From Academia Was 76

"The Negro Family: The Case for National Action," a paper he wrote at the Labor Department early in 1965, argued that despite the Johnson administration's success in passing civil rights laws, statutes could not ensure equality after three centuries of deprivation. He said the disintegration of black families had reached a point of "social pathology." He wrote: "The principal challenge of the next phase of the Negro revolution is to make certain that equality of results will now follow. If we do not, there will be no social peace in the United States for generations."

He cited black unemployment, welfare and illegitimacy rates. His emphasis on families headed by women led him to be accused of blaming the victims for their predicament, but in fact he wrote clearly, "It was by destroying the Negro family under slavery that white America broke the will of the Negro people." Now, he wrote, the federal government must adopt policies, especially in education and employment, "designed to have the effect, directly or indirectly, of enhancing the stability and resources of the Negro American family."

He left the administration in 1965 as liberals denounced his paper, and then ran for president of the New York City Council. He lost badly in the Democratic primary, but went on to Wesleyan University and, in 1966, to Harvard as director of the Joint Center for Urban Studies and a tenured professor in the Graduate School of Education.

He spoke out against disorder, in urban slums and on select campuses. Speaking to Americans for Democratic Action in 1967, he made it clear he thought liberal pieties would not solve black problems.

And in a passage that came to the eye of the Republican presidential candidate Richard M. Nixon, he said liberals must "see more clearly that their essential interest is in the stability of the social order" and "make alliances with conservatives who share that concern." When Nixon was elected, Mr. Moynihan made his alliance. He joined the White House staff as assistant to the president for urban affairs.

That startled his friends, and his wife refused to move to Washington. Mr. Moynihan, who never developed, even after Watergate, the searing contempt for Mr. Nixon that animated so many contemporary Democrats, explained that when the president of the United States asks, a good citizen agrees to help. Another biographer, Godfrey Hodgson, says that while Mr. Moynihan never stopped thinking of himself as a liberal Democrat, he shared the president's resentment of orthodox liberalism.

While his advice to the president to end the war in Vietnam stayed private, there were two ideas for which his time in the Nixon White House was known.

In 1970 he wrote to the president on race relations, arguing that the issue had been rubbed raw by "hysterics, paranoids and boodlers" on all sides. Now, he wrote, race relations could profit from a period of "benign neglect" in which rhetoric, at least, was toned down. In a rerun of the reaction to his paper on the Negro family, when this paper was leaked it was treated as if Mr. Moynihan wanted to neglect blacks.

He may have invited that interpretation by his quaintly glib language, but in fact Mr. Moynihan was pushing an idea that might have been of vast help to poor blacks, and whites. That other idea for which he was known, the Family Assistance Plan, sought to provide guaranteed income to the unemployed and supplements to the working poor, and together to stop fathers from leaving home so their families could qualify for welfare. The president made a speech for the program, sent it to Capitol Hill and let it die.

Afterward, though he remained on good terms with Mr. Nixon, Mr. Moynihan went back to Harvard in 1970. Resentment over his White House service chilled his welcome back in Cambridge. His interests shifted to foreign affairs -- perhaps because the charges of racism left him no audience for domestic policy, and made him welcome an appointment as ambassador to India, where he negotiated a deal to end India's huge food aid debt to the United States. He returned to Harvard to protect his tenure in 1975, but moved that year to the United Nations as United States ambassador.

There he answered the United States' third world critics bluntly, often contemptuously.

In his brief tenure he called Idi Amin, the president of Uganda, a "racist murderer," and denounced the General Assembly for passing a resolution equating Zionism with racism: "the abomination of anti-Semitism has been given

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the appearance of international sanction." After eight months of struggles with Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, who wanted a less confrontational approach, he resigned in February 1976.

That made him available for a run for the Democratic nomination for the Senate, and he edged out the very liberal Representative Bella Abzug in the primary before winning the general election easily over the incumbent, James L. Buckley, the Republican-Conservative candidate. With his wife in charge of each campaign, he won three landslide re-elections.

He set one high goal -- a seat on the Finance Committee as a freshman -- and reached it, along with a seat on the Intelligence Committee. Early in office he joined Gov. Hugh L. Carey, Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill Jr. and Senator Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts in a St. Patrick's Day appeal to Irish-Americans to stop sending money to arm the Irish Republican Army, whom he privately described as "a bunch of murderous thugs."

Every year he produced an analysis of federal taxes and federal aid, known as "the fisc," which showed that New York was getting regularly shortchanged by Washington. He worked to reduce that imbalance, both through Medicaid funding on the Finance Committee and public works on the Environment and Public Works Committee.

And his colleagues always knew he was around. Every day of the 2,454-day captivity of Terry Anderson, the Associated Press reporter captured by 1985 by the Hezbollah in Lebanon, he would go to the Senate floor to remind his colleagues, in a sentence, just how many days it had been.

Quarreled With White House

After loyally serving four presidents, he quarreled with those in the White House while he was in the Senate. When he arrived in 1977, he found President Carter too soft in dealing with the Soviet Union and indifferent to its evil nature.

But he quickly came to believe that the Soviet Union was crumbling. In Newsweek in 1979 he focused on its ethnic tensions. In January 1980, he told the Senate: "The Soviet Union is a seriously troubled, even sick society. The indices of economic stagnation and even decline are extraordinary. The indices of social disorder -- social pathology is not too strong a term -- are even more so." He added, "The defining event of the decade might well be the breakup of the Soviet empire."

It was against that changed perception that he was sharply critical of vast increases in military spending, which, combined with the Reagan tax cuts, produced deficits that he charged were intended to starve domestic spending. He called a 1983 Reagan proposal for cutting Social Security benefits a "breach of faith" with the elderly, and worked out a rescue package that kept the program solvent for at least a decade into the 21st century.

He also scorned the 1983 invasion of Grenada, the 1984 mining of harbors in Nicaragua and the 1989 invasion of Panama as violations of international law, and voted against authorizing President George H. W. Bush to make war against Iraq. It was not enough, he wrote in his book "On the Law of Nations" in 1990, for the United States to be strong enough to get away with such actions. The American legacy of international legal norms of state behavior, he wrote, is "a legacy not to be frittered away."

But probably his worst relations with a president came when Bill Clinton and Hillary Rodham Clinton sought passage of national health insurance.

Certainly, the failure of health care legislation was not primarily Mr. Moynihan's responsibility, but he had become chairman of the Finance Committee in 1993, and health care fell within its jurisdiction. He said the administration should take on welfare reform legislation first, and carped on television about their health plan, quickly fixing on the role of teaching hospitals as the biggest issue in health care. But otherwise he waited for Mr. Packwood and Senator Bob Dole of Kansas, the Republican leader, to propose a compromise. Mr. Dole had decided all-out opposition was the better course for his party, and they never did.

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Mr. Moynihan's career in the Senate was marked not by legislative milestones but by ideas. Even so, Senator Kennedy, the legislative lion, once described him in 1993 as an exemplar "of what the Founding Fathers thought the Senate would be about," because of the New Yorker's breadth of interests, "having read history, and thought about it, and being opinionated."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos: U.N. AMBASSADOR -- Raising the United States name plate after the Soviet ambassador demanded to know who had voted to veto admitting Vietnam to the General Assembly. (Associated Press, 1975); AMBASSADOR TO INDIA -- Moynihan reviewing an honor guard during a ceremony. (R.D. Sharma, 1974); DELIBERATIVE -- Moynihan at a hearing in 1963, with Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson. He was assistant secretary of labor in the Kennedy administration.; TRIUMPHANT -- Daniel Patrick Moynihan upon winning election as United States senator, defeating the incumbent, James L. Buckley. (Associated Press, 1976)(pg. D8); Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan in his office on Capitol Hill in 1995. (David Scull for The New York Times)(pg. A1)

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No Headline In Original

LANCASTER NEW ERA (LANCASTER, PA.)

January 29, 2004, Thursday

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Section: A,

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Body

Bomber kills 10 on Israeli bus JERUSALEM (AP) A Palestinian suicide bomber detonated a bag of explosives on a crowded Jerusalem bus outside Prime Minister Ariel Sharons residence today, killing 10 passengers and wounding 50 bystanders in the deadliest attack in four months. The blast sent body parts flying into nearby houses. Shaken survivors crawled out of broken bus windows. A chunk of the bus roof landed on top of a two-story building, and witnesses said there was an overpowering smell of blood and smoke. Sharon was not home at the time of the attack, claimed by the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, a militant group close to Yasser Arafats Fatah movement. The bomber, identified as Ali Jaara, 24, a Palestinian policeman from the West Bank town of Bethlehem, said in a note he left that he wanted to avenge eight Palestinians killed in fighting with Israeli troops in the Gaza Strip the day before. The bombing marked another setback for stalled peace efforts. It came at a time when senior State Department officials were in the region to try to revive the U.S.-led road map plan. Washington has criticized the Palestinian Authority for not doing enough to stop militants, and the bombers ties to the security forces was particularly embarrassing. Bethlehem is one of only a few Palestinian towns not under Israeli military control. The attack also coincided with a German-brokered prisoner swap between Israel and the Lebanese guerrilla group Hezbollah, which went ahead as planned.

#7BC-ISRAEL-PALESTINIANS_512.TXT#It was not clear whether the Al Aqsa militia had timed the bombing to go off during the exchange. Police spokesman Gil Kleiman said the bomber had boarded the bus carrying about 15 pounds of explosives in a bag. The assailant detonated the explosives on bus No. 19 just before 9 a.m. in the Rehavia district in downtown Jerusalem, just 15 yards from Sharons official residence. Passenger Svetlana Minchiker said she was talking on her cell phone as the blast went off a bang that left her so disoriented she thought at first the phone had exploded. At first I did not see anything except my hands, she said, holding up one hand still stained red. A trickle of dried blood marked her left cheek. As my feelings slowly returned to me, I managed to ... crawl through the window. The green bus was charred, with wires dangling everywhere. One side had been blown out and the back half of the roof was blown off. Eli Beer, a paramedic, said victims had been scattered over a wide area. There were a lot of heavy injuries, a lot of the people who were injured were in bad condition, a lot of people had missing limbs, he said. Bret Stephens, editor in chief of the Jerusalem Post, was near the scene at the time of the blast. There was glass everywhere, human remains everywhere, he said. People, dazed and crying, wandered around the area. Todays bombing was the deadliest since a female suicide bomber killed 21 people at a seaside restaurant in Haifa on Oct. 4. The last bombing was a suicide attack at a bus stop outside of Tel Aviv on Dec. 25 that killed four people. Israeli officials said the weeks of calm preceding the bombing were a result of Israeli security measures, not a reduction in violence on the Palestinian side. The blast came amid renewed efforts to bring about a cease-fire.

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Letters to the Editor

The Daily Telegraph (Sydney, Australia)

July 1, 2003 Tuesday

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Section: FEATURES-TYPE- LETTER-COLUMN- LETTERS; Pg. 16

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Body

Chiefs' approach to safety off the rails

Two modes of public transport, yet two vastly different standards of safety, regulation and concern for the welfare of the travelling public.

Imagine for a minute the outrage that ministers of the Carr Government would rain upon the aviation sector if the same sloppy standards that appear prevalent in the state rail industry were to be evident in our national airlines.

As a licensed pilot, I am only too aware of the myriad regulations, orders and other in-flight procedures that must be complied with on every flight to ensure the safety of all who use our skies.

As the rail network is integral to the working and social lives of so many people, why is it that the standards and regulations that apply to its operation appear to play fast and loose with their safety and well-being?

That The Daily Telegraph has been able to find a dozen drivers from one Sydney rail bridge not doing their jobs overly well suggests a systemic failure in the operations of the state's rail system.

MATP

What price must the travelling public pay before this government acts to clean up the mess? Does the Carr Government not care for their safety?

Doug Miell, Queanbeyan

I read your article on the lack of safety which is evident with some train drivers with great interest.

May I suggest that this is but one symptom of a general culture of lack of safety throughout State Rail? Such a culture does not come from the bottom upwards -- rather it can only come from the top downwards.

In other words the Government, the SRA board, managers, supervisors and the union have to be imbued with a sense that safety is the most important thing.

Please look at the entire problem. The drivers are just one symptom of a sick safety culture.

Brian Swan, Epping

I put train drivers up there with airline pilots and ship captains. They are conservative and cautious. We put our lives in their hands every day.

Letters to the Editor

A few photos of newspapers on train dashboards, and sun visors lowered to stop the sun shining into the drivers' eyes, are no grounds to condemn them.

Tony Horneman, Maroubra

Conquering Caesars

As pointed out by Professor Michael Chapman in the article "Caesar rise leaves health system holding the baby" (Daily Telegraph, June 30), elective caesareans include those where the woman had a previous difficult birth.

Many of these caesareans are probably unnecessary as the success rate of having vaginal birth after caesarean in cases where it is medically possible is about 70 per cent. The sad fact is, however, that many women, especially those choosing private obstetric care, are not encouraged and informed enough by their specialist to pursue this option.

If more women were encouraged and supported in a choice to try for a vaginal birth in these circumstances then the elective caesarean rate would drop.

In many European countries this is normal practice, whereas in Australia it is an uphill battle in many places to get the obstetric care to support that choice.

I underwent an emergency caesarean in a private hospital in Sydney that, after dissecting the facts, I do not think was necessary, I will be birthing my next child in a public hospital. I have full private health insurance. However, it covers very little of the cost of an independent midwife -- my first choice in care. If I chose an obstetrician, I would be most likely have the baby in a private hospital where statistics have proven that there is a higher intervention and caesarean rate.

H. Sibly, Miranda

Railroading good drivers

Coming from a family containing a number of NSW train drivers, I need to make a number of points after your article on train drivers and safety (Daily Telegraph, June 30).

The drivers pictured had papers and other items on their dashboards, which (especially on the Tangaras) are a full arms' length from their chest. From the very steep angle the photos were taken it would be impossible see if they were actually reading anything but their instruments.

One driver pictured may well have been glancing at a book. It is a ring-binder containing either a rail roster, or timetable. Perhaps he should

ignore it, guess his route and sail through the next station stop, leaving angry commuters in his wake? I think not.

In regard to sun visors, any fool would rather have his early morning or late afternoon driver use them to keep the sun out of his eyes, rather than be blinded by the glare. In any case, again from the angle of the published photos, it is impossible to see how far the shades are blocking the view, if at all.

Drivers, as noted by your correspondent, are paid reasonably well. However, most people rostered on 3am starts or 2am finishes and working a number of weekends each month, would also hope to be well paid.

Mark Southcott, Thirroul

As a former train driver, having been medically retired after 26 years service in 1988, a touch of reality is needed in regard to your article, Blind to the Danger (Daily Telegraph, June 30).

First, it is not uncommon to see car and truck drivers with newspapers on their dash boards, not just train drivers.

Letters to the Editor

There also is a reason for the blinds in the driver's cabin, and that is to cut out the sun. At most times of the day there is a need to have the blinds drawn to varying degrees, as at some part of the journey the sun will affect your vision. It is far better to have the blind down then be constantly standing up raising or lowering it.

Transport authorities argue motorists need to have breaks at least every two hours to maintain their vigilance. Suburban train drivers are expected to be in their cabins for up to three hours without a break, with only a change from one end to the other to sometimes give a themselves a break.

XPT and Explorer drivers are in the cabin by themselves for hours at a time. Each is expected to be vigilant at all times.

One other thing is the very simple fact that if the driver loses his concentration, and a collision occurs, he is more likely to suffer than anyone else on the train.

Colin Hussey, Shalvey

Origin of a cooling off over footy

Ten years ago, the days leading up to the State of Origin would see everyone in the office getting the paper and talking about the game.

The following day would be dominated by post-match talk about the fights, big hits and the spectacular feats of Meninga, Lewis, Stuart and Daley. How times have changed. I do not recall one person speaking about the game in the lead-up to the second Origin clash.

Where has the passion for State of Origin gone?

The State of Origin is beginning to look out-dated. In the AFL, the Victoria v South Australia clashes were major events -- but once the Adelaide teams entered the national competition, the state clashes lost their significance and disappeared.

With a state of origin battle occurring every time the Broncos run on to the field, one could begin to feel the NSW v Queensland games may follow the same downward path as the AFL.

Andrew Verdon, Chifley ACT

Bitter brew in World Cup

Soccer Australia is suffering delusions of grandeur if it believes that Oceania deserves direct qualification into the World Cup.

In soccer terms, we are a sporting backwater. We do not rate a blip on the radar in the global sport.

Australia will continue to languish in its current depths of obscurity until it gets its house in order and becomes a truly national game.

Only then will our national team begin to play at a world-class, competitive level and we will receive international recognition.

David de Vere, Parramatta

I am disgusted to hear the news that FIFA has reneged on its decision to grant Oceania a direct route into the World Cup.

This is basically a stab in the back for soccer in this region and once again, we become the nomads of the qualifying process. FIFA has acted in a very unprofessional manner.

Letters to the Editor

How are we expected to develop as a region in footballing terms if we are tossed around from continent to continent to qualify for this tournament?

John Gouskas, Haberfield

Blame greed, not stamps

Ridiculous housing prices are the result of greed and not stamp duty.

Instead of using low interest rates sensibly, we are being lemmings, rushing to our doom by paying the obscene asking prices and participating in the wild bidding levels at auctions.

Grow up, folks, and accept your fair share of responsibility for inflating the cost of housing. Add to that the rapacious greed of real-estate agents who are having a whine about increased stamp duty but are making absolutely no effort to reduce their own percentages. It is also the greedy real estate agents who encourage us to both ask for and even pay these stupid prices. Think about it.

Jackie Muir, Hamilton

The name is murder

Please stop referring to Palestinian "militant factions" and "extremist groups" and start calling Hamas, Hezbollah and fellow travellers what they plainly are: terrorists.

There is no justification for terrorism, whatever the grievance, and whitewashing it in this way serves only to legitimise murder as a political tactic.

Calling Amrozi a "militant" would be treason to 88 dead Australians. Shame on you for making exceptions when the victims are Israeli.

Rhys Weekley, Neutral Bay

To the point

Given that it is only a matter of time before Bob Carr introduces a tax on the air we breathe, I was wondering if anyone has any advance knowledge as to how the tax might be implemented. If I can find out whether the tax will be applied on (a) volume of air breathed or (b) on number of breaths taken then perhaps I can develop an appropriate method of breathing for tax minimisation purposes.

Barry Taylor, Putney

What does the future hold now for Australian soccer? The setback caused by FIFA withdrawing automatic World Cup qualification for Oceania is devastating.

Ben Turner, Springwood

Kind words

On arrival back at Sydney Airport on Monday, June 16, after a delayed (fog-affected) flight from Kalgoorlie, we found a trolley, collected our luggage and went to the airport railway station.

We bought tickets to Pennant Hills from friendly staff and a staff member opened the wide gate to let our trolley through. He then came down in the lift to the platform, helped us with the three cases and then took the trolley back upstairs for us.

People criticise CityRail and its employees but this man was really great.

M. and P. Cooper, Bigga

Letters to the Editor

On Sunday, June 15, at Narellan, I watched 26 strong and courageous rugby league players battle it out in a game of Group Six football.

Their strength and courage, however, paled in comparison with one young man, who watched the game from the sideline.

Lukie, you are a true inspiration. Your amazing strength and spirit is an example for us all. I wish you the best in your continued recovery.

Cheryl Rouse, Liverpool

In search

BATHURST PUBLIC SCHOOL

Bathurst Public School is 150 years old and to celebrate, we are holding a Heritage Ball on August 23. The ball will be held at the Memorial Entertainment Centre at 7pm. Tickets are \$55 and are available at the school or by calling 63313923. For more information, contact Dennielle on 63314783 (h).

BELFIELD BULLANTS

Looking for all Belfield Bullants for a reunion on the October long weekend. This reunion will coincide with Brian Duffy's 70th birthday bash at Narromine. It will be a great chance to catch up with Bullants we have not seen in many years. Please contact his daughter Gayle on 98352266 or e-mail gaylecherub@bigpond.com and let me know if you can come.

BERKELEY EAGLES

The Berkeley Eagles Baseball Club (Wollongong) is celebrating its 30th year with celebrations on Friday, July 11, and Saturday, July 12. Past and present members who would like to attend should contact Brett Shipp, 42286990, or Warren Fleming, 42844365. RSVP by this Saturday.

AFTER THE DELUGE

Does anybody have a tape of the second episode of After the Deluge? I have the first episode if anyone wants it. Contact Tony on 96292626, 0418249330 or tonyo52@bigpond.net.au

BELL/MELLON/BOWYER

Seeking information re Cora (Betty) Bell, last known address Annandale, also descendants of Ted and Mona Mellon, last at Ultimo, and Arthur Bowyer, stationed at Beresfield army camp early 1940s. Possibly has a son born at Crown St Women's Hospital 1943-44? Any leads to Y.Tolhurst, 50A Wallis St, Forster 2428, phone 65545779.

SYDNEY GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

Leavers 1953. Afternoon tea planned for November 1, 2003. Please help with names and addresses. Contact Jocelyn at jocneb@bigpond.net.au or Wendy on 96689772.

ANGEL DESPERATELY WANTED

Has anyone taped the episode of Angel that was aired on June 10 on Channel 7? I would be willing to pay any costs involved. Contact Trudy Lincoln, 98105463.

POEM

Letters to the Editor

Could anyone supply me with the words of a poem which was read to me as a child by my mother. The only words I remember are: "If you're waking call me early, Call me early Mother dear". Any information to Bill Stewart on 43907763.

ERSKINEVILLE O.C.

CLASS 1938-39

Holding its 65-year reunion at a date to be decided. Missing from previous reunions are the following pupils (now 75 years young): Bill Duncan, Jim Grahame, Bruce McPherson, Ray Moss, Don Sneddon and Don Watt. Would anyone having news of these ex-students please contact Ken Broughton, 95212601 (please leave a message if phone is unattended).

MARIO LANZA

Keenly searching for the following Mario Lanza movies: That Midnight Kiss; Because You're Mine; For the First Time. Also any Mario Lanza biographies. Will pay. Contact Jan Chandler, phone 49435171 or 0416235171.

SUE LARDEN

Seeking contact with Sue Larden. We knew each other in the Potts Point area in the mid-1970s and lost contact when she moved to the Coogee Beach area. Currently believed to be living near Telopea and possibly working in or near Liverpool. Any information, please contact Guye on 0403953935 or PO Box 3077R, Rosemeadow 2560.

MARJORIE BLOM nee ROBERTSON

I am searching for a friend. She has since married again and I don't know her present married name. She was my bridesmaid when I was married in 1948. Please contact Phyllis on 95209261.

SHIRLEY WILLIAMS nee WINDLEY

We grew up in Paddington in the 1940s. She had a son Colin born early 1950s. Her husband died a few months later and the last address I had was the Caravan Park at Narrabeen. Contact Joy Curtin nee King, 44432853.

ST MARY'S/ALL SAINTS' LIVERPOOL

Ex-students' annual reunion. Sunday, August 31. Mass 11am, All Saints' followed by lunch at Liverpool Catholic Club. Bookings essential. Ring 96028129.

If you have a reunion or are seeking information, send the details to In Search, Letters Editor, PO Box 2808, GPO Sydney, NSW 2001 or email us at letters@dailytelegraph.com.au. Include a contact name and phone number. Emails should not include attachments.

Exchange

QThere are two songs I have not heard since the 1920s. I wonder if anybody can tell me the words in full. One is a number sung to the tune of Danny Boy, of which I only remember odd phrases. It is called The Legend of ... and some of the words include "My heart as Thor towards the moonlit heaven" and "Where Earl Fitzgerald rides the rath around". The other is a carol as follows: "Cradled all lowly, behold a Saviour holy, a Saviour meek and mild". We sang both songs when I was at school in England in the 1920-30 decade.

Ian Harvey, Blacktown

I think the second is a Christmas carol titled Cradled All Lowly, also known as Bethlehem and The Shepherd's Nativity Hymn, and was written by Henry Brougham Farnie in 1865. The words are not quite as Mr Harvey remembers them, but quite close: "Cradled all lowly, behold the Saviour Child! A Being holy, in dwelling rude and wild; ne'er yet was regal state of monarch proud and great, who grasped a nation's fate, so glorious as the manger-

Letters to the Editor

bed of Bethlehem. No longer sorrow as without hope, O earth! A brighter morrow dawned with that Infant's birth. Our sins were great and sore, but these the Saviour bore, and God was wroth no more: His own Son was the Child that lay in Bethlehem. Babe weak and wailing, in lowly village stall, Thy glory veiling, Thou cam'st to die for all. The sacrifice is done, the world's atonement won, till time its course hath run, O Jesus, Saviour, Morning Star of Bethlehem." As for the first song, I have no idea.

Miles Fisher-Pollard, Hunters Hill

Q I wonder if anyone can settle my sleuth-like mind regarding Inspector Morse or John Thaw. My wife and I are avid Morse watchers and on quite a few occasions I have remarked that he has something wrong with his right leg, as he appears to flip his right foot as he walks. To me it indicated that he had suffered an injury to that leg or that he had a prosthesis of some kind.

J.Brown, Bexley

My search on the Internet revealed that when John Thaw was 15 he tripped over a kerb and broke his foot while rushing to school. This accident left him with a slight limp which, although it didn't hurt, tended to drag when he got tired.

Cheryl Lindeman, Parkes

Exchange also thanks Clare Lister of Mt Colah and Reg Squire of Avalon.

Q I understand that my Italian-born grandfather was interned for security reasons, along with other foreign nationals, during World War II at a camp in Waterfall, NSW. How widespread was this practice and when was it implemented? What became of the camps?

Mark Ippolito, Lismore

Italians and Germans living in Australia (some naturalised citizens) were arrested at the beginning of World War II. The German wool buyers were sent to Darlinghurst and Long Bay jails and eventually incarcerated for the duration of the war at a camp at Tatura, Victoria. There were three compounds: German men; Italian and German families; and Palestine Jews who were Nazi sympathisers. There is a museum in Tatura and some remnants of the camp outside Tatura.

J.M.Butler, Kenthurst

Question

Why did Sir Cliff Richard, Sir Elton John and Sir Michael Caine get knighthoods under those names when their real names are Harry Webb, Reginald Dwight and Maurice Micklewhite?

Philip Daley, Paddington

Word power

TIMELINE

B.Turnbull of Bathurst has language matters in mind. She writes: "As a regular Daily Telegraph reader, and having great admiration for the high standard of journalism evident in all publications, I would appreciate answers to two questions on 'the right word in the right place'. Every time the word 'timeline' is used and seems to fit in to make the point quite well, there is a discussion among certain people as to whether this is a true word in the English language or just a 'coined' word used instead of deadline. Quite a few people search dictionaries to clear this up. Also, when reciting The Ode of Remembrance, the deeply moving 'They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old' always prompts discussion on whether the correct grammar should be '... we who are left'. From schoolday memories, is it correct to put 'that' after 'we', which is personal, when 'that' goes after an impersonal word such as 'dog' or 'hat'?"

APOPHTHEGMS

In a piece on the journalist, author and broadcaster Malcolm Muggeridge published in The Spectator, Christopher Howse wrote: "On the surface he was a satirist and an entertainer, with that strange drawling voice and a jaw that contorted as he delivered caustic apophthegms". An apophthegm is a concise saying or maxim.

What's news

1 Father and son petrol distribution team Kelvin and Raymond Sidebottom have been fined how much for tax evasion?

2 Name the broadcaster who has been forced to apologise to an Aboriginal woman over comments on a native title claim on the North Coast.

3 Name the Cameroon soccer player who collapsed and died during a Confederations Cup match against Colombia.

4 Who wrote the play, Last of the Red Hot Lovers?

5 Which company produces an all-wheel drive vehicle called the Cruze?

ANSWERS

1:\$53 million. 2:Alan Jones. 3:Marc-Vivien Foe. 4:Neil Simon. 5:Holden.

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Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

September 5, 2004 Sunday

TWO STAR EDITION

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Section: WORLD,; WORLD BRIEFS

Length: 579 words

Body

PALESTINIANS BEGIN VOTER DRIVE

JERUSALEM -- Palestinians began a voter registration drive yesterday, a first step toward long overdue elections and a response to domestic and international pressure for more democracy, openness and accountability.

But the only scheduled voting is for 38 municipal councils, which will begin in December and extend in three stages for a year. The vote will be a test of strength between militant groups and the Palestinian Authority, led by Yasser Arafat, ahead of an Israeli pullout from the Gaza Strip next year.

Palestinian officials say that if Arafat's Fatah faction does poorly and the militant Hamas or Hezbollah do well, further elections are likely to be halted or postponed indefinitely, as they have been in Gaza.

The mandate of Arafat and the Palestinian Legislature ran out in 1999, and he has regularly refused calls for new elections.

Pope denounces gay unions

VATICAN CITY -- Pope John Paul II kept up his campaign against gay marriage yesterday, telling the ambassador from Canada -- where some provinces allow same-sex couples to wed -- that such unions create a "false understanding" of marriage.

In past months, the pope urged authorities to stop approving gay marriages, saying that they degrade the true sense of marriage.

The pope spoke Saturday to the new Canadian Ambassador to the Holy See, Donald Smith.

Three Canadian provinces, accounting for about 70 percent of the country's 31 million people, allow same-sex marriage: Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia. The ruling Liberal Party has promised legislation legalizing gay marriage.

India, Pakistan expand talks

NEW DELHI -- Nuclear rivals India and Pakistan agreed yesterday to widen their peace dialogue in talks that focused on eight festering issues, including the decades-old dispute over the Himalayan region of Kashmir.

No Headline In Original

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh reiterated India's commitment to peace with Pakistan. At his first news conference since his Congress party unexpectedly swept to power in May, he said the people of South Asia were "bound together by a shared destiny."

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Khursheed Kasuri said settling the five-decade-long conflict over Kashmir is the key to peace.

Protest over adultery law

ANKARA, Turkey -- A proposal by Turkey's ruling party to revive a law criminalizing adultery has provoked a storm of protest from women's groups and fueled accusations that the government is seeking to steer this officially secular but predominantly Muslim country toward Islamic rule.

The opposition Republican People's Party has said it will try to quash the measure but has little chance of doing so in Parliament, where Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Islam-rooted Justice and Development Party enjoys a firm majority.

Women's groups have vowed to stage a protest in front of Parliament when it convenes Sept. 14.

Feminists fear the proposal will encourage so-called honor killings in which women are killed for allegedly besmirching family reputations by associating with unrelated men.

Tips start to get hip in China

BEIJING -- Tipping, long frowned upon in this still officially communist country, may be going mainstream. This month, one of China's leading travel agencies will begin offering three VIP tour packages during which customers will be encouraged to tip the guides. The pilot program has touched a nerve among a gratuity-shy society even as it underscores China's continuing shift to a market-driven economy.

Load-Date: September 18, 2004

Letters to the Editor

The Daily Telegraph (Sydney, Australia)

October 29, 2002, Tuesday

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Section: FEATURES-TYPE- LETTER-COLUMN- LETTERSPHOTO; Pg. 18

Length: 3406 words

Body

Outdoor protest is outrageous

As a resident of the Macquarie St, Bennelong apartments near the Sydney Opera House, I have witnessed recent moves by the management of the building, as well as the apartment residents, to start a campaign to prevent outdoor entertainment on the steps of the Opera House.

I would like to state that not all residents of this building are opposed to this great initiative of providing this amazing city with quality musical entertainment at such a famous landmark.

As a resident of the apartments, I endorse this concept in its entirety and will support the concerts all the way.

We should be proud and feel so fortunate that our lifestyle here can allow such entertainment to be presented in such a breathtaking setting.

It angers me that so many residents in this apartment building either believe they are above everyone else in society and due to their self-righteous selfishness, feel they have a right to stop the opportunity to enjoy first-class outdoor entertainment.

MATP

Scott Thomas, City

Waugh dealt low blow

Congratulations to chairman of selectors Trevor Hohns who has successfully won the award for Most Hated Man in Australia for the second year running.

Thanks for taking away the chance for all Australians to farewell the Waugh's together at Sydney in the final Test.

Neil Ryan,

Wollongong

Mark Waugh has averaged 40.43 this millennium and he is dropped by selectors.

I believe newspapers such as The Daily Telegraph, which have been critical of Waugh, are to blame.

Letters to the Editor

How can selectors drop a player who has averaged more than 40 in the past three years and averages 50.90 against England?

How can he then be replaced with a player who averages 28.50 in Test cricket, who has not played a Test this millennium and who averages 12.25 against England?

Not just that, he scored 45 and seven on a flat Adelaide Oval last weekend after having been dropped no less than three times.

This is not a changing of the guard or an attempt to blood a younger player, it is total disrespect for an Australian icon. This is an example of our selectors' ineptness. They should watch more cricket and read less newspapers.

Steve Williams,

Thornleigh

It is always a sad day when a cricket legend hangs up his bat. For Mark Waugh, however, the honour of saluting the crowd, shaking hands with his fans, and the customary pat on the back for a job well done have been denied him.

His last Test match memories will be of a few hundred people in Sharjah against Pakistan, which is a long way from the MCG or the SCG.

Mark has been a doyen of the game since his debut century at the Adelaide Oval and to see a champion treated with such contempt is disgraceful.

Trevor Hohns and the other members of the ACB selection committee, should hang their heads in shame.

Eddie Fricska,

Arndell Park

One can only imagine the emptiness Mark Waugh must be feeling. Sport fans know this time is inevitable at some stage of their career, but this ranks as one of the most inglorious dumpings of a true champion.

Waugh is a far greater cricketer than any member of this current English touring party.

I am sure everyone must be happy for Darren Lehman, however, questions still need to be asked of the selectors.

Kevin Ryan,

Penshurst

Well, Mark Waugh is gone. I cannot believe the selectors have done this. I know his form has not been great over the past 18 months, but why change a winning team? This is the old enemy -- the Poms -- and Junior does his best work against England.

I thought he at least deserved a chance for a Test match or two, but the selectors obviously decided before the weekend as Darren Lehmann did nothing in the Pura Cup match against NSW.

I hope Waugh pummels the other state sides while batting for NSW and shows the selectors he still has what it takes at Test level.

Chad Smith,

Heathcote

Why has the ACB not replaced Trevor Hohns as chairman of selectors?

Letters to the Editor

It seems ridiculous that a man who played only a handful of Test matches is the head selector when we have Allan Border at our disposal.

Mitchell Beston,

Woy Woy

Opportunistic attack

Mike O'Shaughnessy's letter (Daily Telegraph, October 25) is offensive. To use the Bali catastrophe as a vehicle to air his republic mania is reprehensible and unforgivable.

Likewise his comments criticising the Prime Minister and "the failings of his government in their identification and protection of the bodies of their loved ones" are politically opportunistic.

As for Mr O'Shaughnessy's snide remarks directed at the Governor-General for arriving "late" in Bali, he deliberately made no mention of the fact that Peter Hollingworth was undertaking a most important task at El Alamein, which was to be a voice for the returned World War II veterans who were there with him.

As Churchill said: "Up until El Alamein, the Germans and the Italians had had no defeats; after El Alamein, they had no victories".

It was a turning point, and is a vital part of our history.

More than 1200 young Australians and 1100 New Zealanders lie buried in those desert sands far from home; they died in violence just as did the Australians at Bali.

That such a moving ceremony -- attended by New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark -- was made so little of in all media outlets is a matter of great shame.

F.M. Pearson,

Forestville

Students' folly

The National Union of Students' attempt to blame the tragic shooting at Monash University on the Howard Government's policies has left it looking foolish.

I am sure John Howard gets a great deal of satisfaction from infuriating society's self-proclaimed intellectuals who view his government as illegitimate because it does not enjoy their support.

Philip Niddrie,

New Lambton

Speedy cash cow

The NRMA recommended the Government forgo revenue from motorists exceeding the speed limit by less than 15km/h and use the points system instead.

The Government's refusal has revealed the NSW road safety policy as a revenue policy. NSW has a similar policy on public education. Closing and selling public schools on prime real estate is another grab for cash.

Allan Pryor, Figtree

Duffy all at sea

Letters to the Editor

Michael Duffy's comment (Daily Telegraph, October 26) that "many supporters of John Howard are indifferent to the affair because they do not care if kids were thrown over board or not" was way over the top. It was intemperate and grossly offensive.

When the asylum seeker vessel was subsequently scuttled, depositing all aboard in the water, it was spurious to beat up a storm about whether or not children had been thrown overboard. The issue had become irrelevant.

There are those among us who believe the subsequent witch-hunt was nothing but political expediency and opportunism at its worst.

Mr Duffy obviously does not think so. It is hard to believe he could be so gullible.

Ron Elphick, Buff Point

Blurred vision

Mark Day speaks of vision in his column (Daily Telegraph, October 23), comments of our Prime Minister's lack of same, and then suggests this is the remedy for the Labor to get back into power federally.

He then puts forward Bob Carr who has turned this state into one giant national park, no doubt he would do the same with the nation, and close down all commerce and industry.

Barry Gralton,

Mount St Thomas

Litigation just plain ludicrous

Like most Australians I am sick to death with what I call lunatic litigation. You may or may not be aware of the judgment against Port Stephens Council for failing to warn the developers of a so-called resort of aircraft noise.

To put it into perspective, it is as stupid as building a home under the flight path of Kingsford Smith and then taking the relevant council to court.

About 99.99 per cent of the population are aware of aircraft noise and we, the ratepayers and thus shareholders of Port Stephens, are united against them.

I live but a few kilometres from RAAF William Town and when I moved here just over three months ago I was fully aware of the very minor inconvenience of aircraft noise.

In fact, I welcome the noise, for these are the young warriors we rely on to protect us in this very unsettled world.

James Fordham, Medowie

Negotiation's not an option

It has become blatantly obvious that the reason mass terror attacks are increasing in frequency is that, quite simply, they work.

After every mass annihilation of innocent civilians in Israel by so-called Palestinian martyrs, the world reacts by trying to understand their reasons and demands that Israel not only not retaliate, but sit down and negotiate with the terrorists themselves.

In the current post-September 11 and October 12 climate, the civilised world turns on its own leaders as the catalysts for these atrocities, and looks to appeasement as the solution to this problem.

Negotiation is not an option. How many more will be murdered before we realise that the war we fear we may start, has already been declared on us by these extremists?

Letters to the Editor

Simon Benstock, Bondi

The dreadful carnage in Bali has shocked Australians into the realisation that no Westerner is safe from Muslim fundamentalism.

The payment by Saddam Hussein to the families of Palestinian suicide murderers, together with his use of chemical weapons on Kurdish villagers in the '80s, show that he and the terrorists are graduates of the same academy of torture.

What better pawn for Saddam to arm with a suitcase nuke or a flask of ebola than a zealot with a vision of 72 virgins awaiting him in paradise?

Meanwhile, we stand by while the only nation that can deal with this deadly threat wastes precious months crawling through the obstacle course erected by the United Nations -- an obstacle course almost guaranteed by the fact that one of the most repressive regimes in the world, China, has the power to veto any resolution.

Let us not be distracted a moment longer by the hollow idea of multi-lateralism, which is no more than a multi-lateral indifference to the safety of the citizens of civilised nations.

We must urge Prime Minister John Howard to prevail upon America to lead the campaign immediately to overthrow the terrorist-supporting regimes, starting with Iraq.

Nigel Richards, Hornsby

The cliched line we have been fed since September 11 that Islam is a peaceful and tolerant religion is just a straight-out lie.

The fact is Islam has committed more acts of terrorism on Western society than any other group and by more than one man (al Qaeda, Hezbollah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, PFLP, Jemaah Islamiyah).

Islam will never win a war (jihad) waged upon the West.

Terrorist acts like September 11, Palestinian suicide bombers, Bali bombings, Moscow siege, Washington sniper and attacks on US embassies in Africa only strengthens our resolve and shows up the barbarism of Islamic philosophy.

Lee Leverington, Canberra

John Howard has pledged \$10 million to Indonesia over the next four years for improving its counter-terrorism capabilities and bolstering its customs surveillance.

All very good, but who is going to administer this money? Will it go to where it is intended? Indonesia's customs officials are corrupt. When I went through their airport with a disabled person's scooter, the official told us we had to pay him \$1500 to get it through.

My husband told him I needed it to get around. The official took him to his office, and for 45 minutes, kept saying we could not get it through.

He brought the price down to \$400, but when my husband said he would get in touch with the Australian Embassy and started to walk out, the official decided to let us through. I can only hope Australian officials administer this \$10 million handout.

Judith Storm,

Lakehaven

Marry and multiply

Letters to the Editor

I could not agree more with Penny Gregory, "Pouring scorn on married bliss" (Letters, October 28).

I, too, am surprised at the negativity displayed by people when you mention you are getting married, or even contemplating it.

The union of marriage is a beautiful thing and should not be discouraged. I am soon to propose to my girlfriend of 18 months and despite what everyone else is telling me, I know we are doing the right thing.

We have been so very happy together since the day we met, so why shouldn't we get married? In a country of falling marriage and fertility rates, and an ever increasing divorce rate, surely the marriage of happy couples makes sense?

People are giving less and less thought towards family and more and more thought towards personal wealth.

This psyche must change if Australia wants to be able to support itself in the future.

As citizens of Australia, I believe we have a social responsibility to improve our ever increasing divorce rates and our falling birth rates.

Consider this. For the population to replace itself, couples on average need to have 2.1 children. The fertility rate, 3.6 in 1961, is now 1.7.

Marry and multiply indeed. Here, here, Malcolm Turnbull!

Glen Camenzuli,

Kingsgrove

Livid over fiasco

Having been to many a festival over the past decade, I must say Sydney Livid was the worst. After the recent tragic events in Bali I was looking forward to spending a great day out with my friends, instead I entered into a disorganised mess.

To say there were teething problems is an understatement. Hopefully it will be improved next year, but I won't be forking out \$100 to find out.

L. Clarke,

Cronulla

To the point

Maybe the day will come when a 71-year-old female newsreader makes her own decision to retire at that age, although I am not holding my breath. The glass ceiling is alive and well when it comes to women staying as news readers once youthful looks start to fade.

Joan Shaw, Croydon

The answer to the road toll is to re-introduce the T-model Ford and limit it to 60km/h maximum speed.

Andy Ferguson, Kurri Kurri

I think it may be Karl Killian who is lost ("Lost in Translation", Letters, October 25). He was right on one point: "The virgin birth of Jesus was as natural as any other birth of children." It was the conception that the Bible tells us was supernatural. And, yes, the Hebrew word "almah" does mean a young woman -- a young unmarried woman. In Hebrew culture that meant a virgin.

Letters to the Editor

Stephen Fry, Cootamundra

Kind words

On the last day of term 3, 2002, Berala Public School in the Granville district held a mufti day to raise funds for students at Tullibigeal Central School, who are affected by the drought in the west of NSW. This was the idea of the SRC and the project was co-ordinated by Mrs Johns.

The idea behind this wonderful gesture by the children in Sydney was to cheer up the country students who are experiencing drought. The total raised was \$360 -- and this will be spent on a barbecue or a disco for the students. The 93 students and 17 staff at Tullibigeal Central School are delighted to know that the 1000 students and 113 staff at Berala Public School care about the effect the drought is having on them.

Thank you to the Berala Public School community for thinking of our students. Thank you to Mr John Warren (principal), SRC members, Mrs Johns, students and staff from Tullibigeal Central School.

Angela Mackin, Executive Teacher,

Tullibigeal Central School

In search

CASULA HIGH SCHOOL

Class of 1982-84, Years 10 and 12, 20-year reunion. This is the final call for all former students and teachers of Casula High to attend a reunion to be held on November 2. If you would like to join us, e-mail marie@pubtrek.com, kerstin4reunion@yahoo.com, phone 0421442529 or visit www.schoolfriends.com.au.

JOHN McHALE

I am searching for a former workmate by the name of John McHale, formerly of Bankstown, who worked at J.T. Jay's foundry at Lidcombe in the late 1950s and early '60s. Please contact K. Jones on 66866923 evenings.

MAROUBRA HIGH SCHOOL

Maroubra High School closure gala evening and memorabilia exhibition, November 30. Tickets \$35 (over-18s only). Phone 93493719 or 93494325 or apply at school office.

TERRIGAL HIGH SCHOOL

Terrigal High School, Year 1982, 20-year reunion will be held on Friday, November 29 at Woodport Inn, Erina. Please contact Kim Humphries on 0415672671. PO Box 284, Terrigal.

RICHARD TURNER

I am seeking information on the family of Richard Turner b. 1883, m. Ethel Handley at Narrabri in 1902. Their children were Valerie (m. Harry Sessions); Elma (m. Allan Dunne); Vanessie (m. John Richardson); Percival (m. Rita Hancock); Ella (m. Keith Cleary). I would love to hear from any descendants. Please phone Lorraine on 65687266 or e-mail at lorrainesquire@bigpond.com.

GWYNETH TRENCHARD Would anyone knowing the whereabouts of Gwyneth Mildred Trenchard, born circa 1932, daughter of Reginald Gordon Trenchard, or descendants, contact Wendy on 0741230043. Half-brother and sister seeking contact.

KIM MARION QUINNI am seeking contact with my sister who was known in 1957 as Kim Marion Quinn. I am her brother who was known in 1957 as John Wright Braden Quinn. Our mother, Victoria Grace Quinn, died December 3, 1958, and we were separated. I believe Kim was adopted and I have not been able to access information on her

Letters to the Editor

adoptive parents or any information about Kim since 1958. My name is now Gregory Rex MacFadyen. I was a state ward, given to foster parents in 1959. My phone number is 95002560. I hope to contact Kim, if she desires.

CLIVE WOOD

I am wishing to contact Clive Wood of Sydney, or his relatives, re family history. Clive's father was Clive Stirling Wood, his mother was Mary E. Wood (Brooks). His aunt was Vera Casson West (Wood), who had three daughters: Alma, Iris and Joyce. Please contact Helen Knudsen on 44231169 or e-mail squib@shoal.net.au.

MAYFAIR THEATRE

Would former usherettes, working between 1955 and 1957, please contact Margaret Grumley on 63441973 or partice@optusnet.com.au.

ADELONG SHOW SOCIETY

The society turns 100 next year. We are trying to contact descendants of John Dowling Brown, manager of the Bank of NSW Adelong 1903-1916. He was transferred to Bank of NSW Richmond in 1916. Records show he died at Roseville on January 5, 1927 and was buried at Waverley. Mr Brown was president of the Adelong Show Society and we are hoping a descendant of Mr Brown's can be found to open our show. Please contact the secretary, Jenni Tiyce, on 69462627 or e-mail at cjtiyce@dragnet.com.au.

RUTH HUCKERIn relation to family history medical research, we are trying to contact a Ruth Hucker. She was nursing at the time of her marriage. We do not know her married name but her father was Percy Hucker, mother Doreen (nee Popperwell) from Kingsgrove in Sydney. Any information can be sent to irenebuckley@hotmail.com or by phoning 43651383.

7 ELIZABETH ST, SYDNEY

This block of bachelor apartments was built just before World War II. Seeking information on the building and its tenants, particularly during the war years. Contact Carolynne at 95505892 or cbruyn@ihug.com.au or PO Box 21, St Peters, NSW, 2044.

WILLIAM GAZZARDI am searching for descendants or relatives of William Gazzard, d. 1919, and Jessie Robertson Milne married 1889 Sydney. Their children were David William Gazzard (b. 1890 m. Clara Smith in Newtown in 1916) and Jessie A. Gazzard (b. 1892 m. George Baldick in Marrickville in 1917). This is for family history purposes and I would love to hear from anyone connected to this family. E-mail pjpurcell@iprimus.com.au or phone 47573814, 0418199952.

RALPH/HOLLIERJohn Ralph born 1835 England married Hannah Hollier (born 1837, England) in 1857 in Prospect, NSW. John died in 1916 and Hannah in 1910 at Parramatta. Children from the marriage: George (b. 1857, m. Fortune in 1881, Parramatta); Samuel (b. 1864, m. Hilda in 1883 at Penrith); Albert (b. 1866 in Parramatta, d. 1897, Parramatta); Walter (b. 1870, Parramatta, d. 1931); Rebecca (b. 1873); Susan (b. 1876, Parramatta). Seeking information and descendants for family tree. Rhonda Reese, 11 Spurway St, Ermington NSW, 2115, phone 96383766, rhondaree@bigpond.com.

If you have a reunion or are seeking information, send the details to In Search, Letters Editor, PO Box 2808, GPO Sydney, NSW 2001 or email us at letters@dailytelegraph.com.au. Include a contact name and phone number. Emails should not include attachments.

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Body

Bomber kills 10 on Israeli bus JERUSALEM (AP) A Palestinian suicide bomber detonated a bag of explosives on a crowded Jerusalem bus outside Prime Minister Ariel Sharons residence today, killing 10 passengers and wounding 50 bystanders in the deadliest attack in four months. The blast sent body parts flying into nearby houses. Shaken survivors crawled out of broken bus windows. A chunk of the bus roof landed on top of a two-story building, and witnesses said there was an overpowering smell of blood and smoke. Sharon was not home at the time of the attack, claimed by the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, a militant group close to Yasser Arafats Fatah movement. The bomber, identified as Ali Jaara, 24, a Palestinian policeman from the West Bank town of Bethlehem, said in a note he left that he wanted to avenge eight Palestinians killed in fighting with Israeli troops in the Gaza Strip the day before. The bombing marked another setback for stalled peace efforts. It came at a time when senior State Department officials were in the region to try to revive the U.S.-led road map plan. Washington has criticized the Palestinian Authority for not doing enough to stop militants, and the bombers ties to the security forces was particularly embarrassing. Bethlehem is one of only a few Palestinian towns not under Israeli military control. The attack also coincided with a German-brokered prisoner swap between Israel and the Lebanese guerrilla group Hezbollah, which went ahead as planned.

#7BC-ISRAEL-PALESTINIANS_512.TXT#It was not clear whether the Al Aqsa militia had timed the bombing to go off during the exchange. Police spokesman Gil Kleiman said the bomber had boarded the bus carrying about 15 pounds of explosives in a bag. The assailant detonated the explosives on bus No. 19 just before 9 a.m. in the Rehavia district in downtown Jerusalem, just 15 yards from Sharons official residence. Passenger Svetlana Minchiker said she was talking on her cell phone as the blast went off a bang that left her so disoriented she thought at first the phone had exploded. At first I did not see anything except my hands, she said, holding up one hand still stained red. A trickle of dried blood marked her left cheek. As my feelings slowly returned to me, I managed to ... crawl through the window. The green bus was charred, with wires dangling everywhere. One side had been blown out and the back half of the roof was blown off. Eli Beer, a paramedic, said victims had been scattered over a wide area. There were a lot of heavy injuries, a lot of the people who were injured were in bad condition, a lot of people had missing limbs, he said. Bret Stephens, editor in chief of the Jerusalem Post, was near the scene at the time of the blast. There was glass everywhere, human remains everywhere, he said. People, dazed and crying, wandered around the area. Todays bombing was the deadliest since a female suicide bomber killed 21 people at a seaside restaurant in Haifa on Oct. 4. The last bombing was a suicide attack at a bus stop outside of Tel Aviv on Dec. 25 that killed four people. Israeli officials said the weeks of calm preceding the bombing were a result of Israeli security measures, not a reduction in violence on the Palestinian side. The blast came amid renewed efforts to bring about a cease-fire.

Load-Date: January 30, 2004

No Headline In Original

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Artikel(en) zonder titel

De Stentor/Veluws Dagblad

June 26, 2003

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Section: BUI1 (buitenland)

Length: 571 words

Body

Agenten laten

peuter doodgaan

Peking - Vijf Chinese politieagenten zijn geschorst wegens de dood van een meisje van 3. De peuter had na de arrestatie van haar moeder twee weken alleen in huis opgesloten gezeten. Toen agenten Li Siyu's verslaafde moeder in de stad Chengdu hadden opgepakt voor diefstal, brachten ze haar naar een centrum voor gedwongen ontwenning. Een verzoek van de vrouw om haar nog even opvang voor haar dochtertje te laten regelen, werd afgewezen. De agenten beloofden daarvoor te zorgen, maar lieten het meisje aan haar lot over. Op 21 juni werd ze dood in huis aangetroffen.

Abortusboot

krijgt boete

Warschau - De Poolse havenautoriteiten hebben de abortusboot van de Nederlandse actiegroep Women on Waves gisteren een boete van bijna 2.700 euro opgelegd. Het schip zou zich niet hebben aangemeld toen het zondag de haven van Wladyslawowo binnenvoer. Eerder deze week verzegelde de Poolse douane aan boord van de boot een voorraad in Polen verboden abortuspillen.

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tweede termijn

Moskou/Edinburgh - De Russische president Poetin heeft er gisteren voor het eerst op gezinspeeld dat hij bij de presidentsverkiezingen volgend jaar maart een gooi naar een tweede ambtstermijn doet. Vorige week had hij vragen over zijn politieke plannen nog weggewuifd. Poetin, die op Brits staatsbezoek gisteren in Edinburgh werd rondgeleid door prins Andrew, zei de kieswet niet te willen aanpassen om een derde termijn mogelijk te maken.

Libanese ex-strijders

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Milaan - Het Constitutioneel Hof in Italië moet zich buigen over de wet die de premier van het land onschendbaar maakt gedurende zijn ambtstermijn. Dat meent het Openbaar Ministerie in Milaan, dat gisteren aankondigde in beroep te gaan tegen het besluit van het Italiaanse parlement.

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Doesjanbe - Tadzjikistan gaat mogelijk de doodstraf voor vrouwen afschaffen. President Rachmonov heeft dat gisteren aan het parlement voorgesteld. Ook wil Rachmonov het aantal vergrijpen verminderen waarvoor mannen de doodstraf kunnen krijgen. Volgens Amnesty International wordt de doodstraf in Tadzjikistan vaak opgelegd na een oneerlijk proces.

Australië schiet

15.000 kangoeroes af

Canberra - Het Australische leger heeft toestemming gekregen voor het doden van 15.000 kangoeroes die dreigen een militair oefenterrein kaal te vreten. Het bestuur van de zuidoostelijke staat Victoria staat het leger toe de kangoeroes af te maken. Voor het afschieten van een eerste aantal van 6.500 kangoeroes worden beroepsjagers ingezet.

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Load-Date: June 26, 2003

The roundup

Guardian Weekly

January 14, 2005 - January 20, 2005

Copyright 2005 Guardian Publication, Ltd.

Section: The Week; Vol. 172, No. 4; Pg. 2

Length: 951 words

Body

Americas

Pinochet fit to stand trial

The former Chilean dictator, General Augusto Pinochet, 89, was placed under house arrest after the country's top court ruled that he was fit enough to be charged with murder and kidnapping. A judge granted him freedom on bail of \$ 3,500, subject to the court of appeals.

Abu Ghraib trial opens

The alleged ringleader of the Abu Ghraib prison scandal went on trial with witnesses telling a US military court they watched him punch an Iraqi inmate in the face and saw him laugh while forcing prisoners to pose naked. Spc Charles Graner Jr is the first soldier accused in the scandal to go on trial.

Clinton nemesis is security chief

President Bush named a former assistant attorney general, who was one of Bill Clinton's principal inquisitors in the Whitewater affair, as his new homeland security secretary. The nomination of Michael Chertoff, 51, came as a surprise in Washington, where he was not seen as an influential political player.

Judge sues ageist colleagues

Marian Opala, 83, a supreme court judge in Oklahoma, is suing his colleagues for age discrimination, claiming that they passed him over for the state's top job of supreme court chief justice because he was too old.

Rosemary Kennedy dies at 86

Rosemary Kennedy, younger sister of President John F Kennedy and the inspiration for the Special Olympics, has died at the age of 86.

Gonzales defends his record

US attorney general nominee Alberto Gonzales defended his tenure as White House counsel before the Senate judiciary committee, including his conclusion that the protections of the Geneva conventions do not apply to alleged terrorists.

Tortoises get protection

The roundup

A judge has ordered a ban on off-road vehicles on 200,000 hectares of southern California to protect the endangered desert tortoise. Anyone caught driving there could face a \$ 1,000 fine or up to a year in prison.

Book-signing by machine

The award-winning Canadian novelist Margaret Atwood is developing a remote book-signing machine allowing authors to sign books without leaving home.

Europe

Yanukovich appeal rejected

Ukraine's supreme court rejected an appeal by Viktor Yanukovich against his defeat by Viktor Yushchenko in the rerun presidential election. It said the decision was final.

Italy institutes smoking ban

An official ban on smoking in all of Italy's enclosed public places -- including bars, restaurants and offices -- has come into force. Businesses face a fine of up to (euro) 2,000 if they fail to ensure that customers do not smoke.

Train crash kills 14 in Italy

A passenger train and a goods train crashed head-on in fog north of Bologna, killing at least 17 people and injuring more than 50.

Police question Deneuve

The French film actor Catherine Deneuve was questioned as police investigate allegations that celebrities had received payments from a disgraced tycoon, Rafik Khalifa. Police in Paris stressed that she was helping them only in her capacity as a witness in the case.

Bomb blunder recalled

Nijmegen, the oldest city in the Netherlands, is to ask the US for (euro) 200,000 to fund a study of the effects of a 1944 raid in which US bombers returning from an attack on Germany mistakenly dropped their last bombs on the town, killing over 800 people.

Africa

Mugabe purges Zanu-PF

In a purge of several high-flying Zanu-PF members, Robert Mugabe has jailed Philip Chiyangwa, one of Zimbabwe's wealthiest men. Mr Chiyangwa, who faces charges of espionage, apparently challenged Mr Mugabe's choice of vice-presidents.

Pretoria gun law angers owners

All privately held guns in South Africa have to be re-licensed under a new law, which has upset gun owners. Some 4.5m guns are held legally, more than by the army and police combined.

UN workers face sex claims

The roundup

An internal investigation has shown that UN peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of Congo traded eggs and milk for sex with women and girls as young as 13.

Mbeki attacks Churchill

President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa has called Winston Churchill and other historic figures racists who ravaged Africa. He told the Sudanese assembly that Churchill had justified British atrocities by depicting the Africans as inferior races who needed to be subdued.

Middle East

UN peacekeeper dies in shelling

A French officer serving with the UN peacekeeping forces in southern Lebanon was killed by Israeli shelling, following a Hizbullah bomb attack that killed an Israeli soldier.

US considers assassin squad

The US is considering setting up an elite squad of assassins to target leaders of the Iraqi insurgency. The ploy has been called the "Salvador option" after the strategy that was adopted by the Reagan administration in El Salvador in the early 1980s to kill guerrilla leaders.

31 media workers killed in Iraq

Iraq was the most dangerous country for journalists in 2004, with 19 reporters and 12 media assistants being killed there during the year. A report from Reporters Without Borders said 53 journalists throughout the world were killed while doing their job.

Iran opens up 'bomb' site

Iran agreed to allow UN inspections of a military site at Parchin, south of Tehran, where Washington believes that work linked to nuclear bomb-making is carried out. Tehran insists that its atomic programme is solely for producing electricity.

Asia

Riots follow cleric's death

A round-the-clock curfew was imposed in the Pakistani town of Gilgit, after the shooting of a Shia Muslim cleric led to sectarian rioting in which 14 people died.

EU could lift China arms embargo

European leaders are heading for a confrontation with human rights groups amid signs that an EU arms embargo on China, imposed after the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, will be lifted within months.

Graphic

The roundup

Picture, Venezuelan farmers gather at a British-owned cattle farm that was seized by the government for redistribution to the poor, Photo: Chico Sanchez/EPA

Load-Date: January 25, 2005

End of Document

No Headline In Original

LANCASTER NEW ERA (LANCASTER, PA.)

January 29, 2004, Thursday

Copyright 2004 Lancaster Newspapers, Inc.

Section: A,

Length: 554 words

Body

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No Headline In Original

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

June 20, 2002 Thursday

SOONER EDITION

Copyright 2002 P.G. Publishing Co.

Section: NATIONAL,; NATIONAL BRIEFS

Length: 578 words

Body

FOREST WORKER CHARGED IN FIRE

DENVER -- A federal grand jury charged a veteran U.S. Forest Service worker yesterday with intentionally setting the largest wildfire in Colorado history.

The charges came after prosecutors expressed doubt about Terry Barton's story that the fire southwest of Denver got out of hand when she tried to burn a letter from her estranged husband. Investigators now contend that the fire was staged to look like an escaped campfire.

Barton, 38, was charged with setting fire to timber in a national forest, damaging federal property, injuring a firefighter and using fire to commit a felony..

Since the fire began June 8, it has grown to 135,000 acres, destroyed 25 homes and forced the evacuation of 7,500 people.

Station dwellers back home

EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. -- The three men who spent a record 6 1/2 months on the international space station came home yesterday aboard space shuttle Endeavour, which set down in the Mojave Desert after three straight days of bad weather in Florida.

Because of the cross-country detour, the space station crew members' reunion with their loved ones had to be delayed: Their families were left waiting for them at Cape Canaveral, Fla., more than 2,200 miles away.

During their stay aboard the space station, NASA astronauts Daniel Bursch and Carl Walz and Russian cosmonaut Yuri Onufrienko traveled nearly 81 million miles and circled Earth 3,100 times. The three logged their 196th day in orbit yesterday. The Americans broke NASA's 188-day space endurance record last week.

Birth-control funds

WILDER, Ky. -- A Kentucky public health board last night narrowly voted to retain federal funding used to dispense birth-control pills, after board chairman Greg Kennedy broke a 13-13 tie.

Hard-line anti-abortion activists had wanted the Northern Kentucky Independent District Health Board to cut off Title X funding, claiming that the pill can cause the equivalent of an abortion.

No Headline In Original

Title X provided nearly \$170,000 this fiscal year to the health board, which serves four counties just south of Cincinnati. The money provided contraceptives and related reproductive health care services to thousands of poor women.

Senate acts on disabled vets

WASHINGTON -- The Senate yesterday defied a White House threat that President Bush will use his first veto against a \$393 billion defense bill if Congress extends full retirement pay to disabled veterans.

The voice vote on the defense spending bill amendment came hours after the Senate dodged another veto threat with a compromise on the Crusader artillery system that the administration wants to cancel. That deal, approved 96-3, gives the Army the \$475 million budgeted for the Crusader to use for future combat systems.

Marilyn Manson sex case

CLARKSTON, Mich. -- Shock rocker Marilyn Manson, charged with sexual misconduct for allegedly gyrating against a security guard at a concert last year, pleaded no contest yesterday to being a disorderly person and assault and battery. Clarkston District Judge Gerald McNally ordered Manson, whose real name is Brian Warner, to pay fines and costs totaling \$4,000.

Also in the nation . . .

Jurors in Charlotte, N.C., began deliberations yesterday in the trial of two brothers accused of running a support cell for the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah . . . Oil giant BP-Arco agreed yesterday to pay \$45.8 million to settle safety complaints involving underground gasoline tanks at 59 service stations in California.

Load-Date: July 10, 2002

No Headline In Original

Chicago Daily Herald
April 27, 2003, Sunday Cook

Copyright 2003 Paddock Publications, Inc.

Section: NEWS;; Fence Post;

Length: 2116 words

Body

Back a compromise on tax refunds

I read with interest your recent article concerning pending legislation that would eliminate the Property Tax Appeal Board as a venue for appealing property tax assessments for owners of commercial and industrial property in Cook County.

You correctly identified the major issues being bandied about: that PTAB refunds cost taxing districts millions; that the primary beneficiary of these refunds is big business; and that legislation is pending to remove PTAB for certain property owners to stop these refunds from occurring. Your article mentions that PTAB is a "poor man's court."

As an attorney who represents small businesses and small taxpayers in the tax appeal process, I agree.

I do not agree, however, that eliminating PTAB as proposed is the solution. Your article does not mention compromise legislation that is circulating.

These proposals would either eliminate PTAB for big business (and keep it for owners of small property) or keep PTAB for everyone and impose courtlike rules for big business (in an attempt to make it more difficult for them to obtain refunds).

These proposals also would allow taxing districts to recoup tax refunds through supplemental levies and eliminate the practice of applying median levels of assessment (which could prove costly to taxing districts in the future). The compromise legislation addresses the legitimate issues raised by the taxing districts, maintains PTAB for the small-property owner and has broad support from groups such as the Civic Federation, the Illinois State Bar Association, the Chicago Bar Association and the Illinois Real Estate Lawyers Association. The overwhelming majority of the tax refunds being complained about are going to big business.

Let's not throw out the baby with the bath water by penalizing small-property owners (whose collective tax refunds don't amount to much).

Let's keep the "poor man's court" for the little guy - the small-property owner.

I urge our legislators to oppose Senate Bill 620 and support the compromise legislation.

Michael J. Elliott

Arlington Heights

No Headline In Original

Once again, liberals are proved wrong

I wanted to take a moment to add to the congratulatory sentiments being expressed by the majority of Americans over President Bush ridding the world of a monster like Saddam Hussein.

It was especially satisfying to see left-wing liberal Democrats such as Tom Daschle and Dick Durbin made to keep quiet after they made fools of themselves pandering to the demonstrators and claiming we should continue to defer to the United Nations to deal with Hussein, after it had done nothing about him for 12 years. This is the same United Nations that now has Syria heading the committee on human rights, as ridiculous as that may seem.

I also am very pleased that the public has been able to see with their own eyes how disgusting the "America last" liberal demonstrators are, always demonstrating against anything our government does, with never a word spoken against the atrocities of Hussein.

They, and the spineless left-wing politicians in France, Germany and Canada are the modern equivalent of the appeasers of pre-World War II, who always argued against standing up to the monstrous deeds of Adolf Hitler.

To the liberal Democrat crowd, no lives outside of this country are ever worth worrying about. Some may forget that the majority of the morally bankrupt liberal Democrats in the U.S. Senate voted against intervening to save the women and children of helpless Kuwait from the rapes and murders being perpetrated on them by the Iraqi barbarians, and to stop the aggression of Iraq.

This fact is a major reason why Republicans across the country scored such big wins last election and will do so again in 2004. Few rational people would want the country to be led by the "politics first, America last" liberal Democrats they see in action, after Sept. 11, 2001.

Jim Snyder

Hoffman Estates

Bush's 'victory' is not a victory at all

There has been a great deal of speculation in your paper, among the general public, and indeed even by George Bush himself, as to when we will declare victory in the war on Iraq. Unfortunately, Bush sent our nation into a war that cannot be won through military force.

Ostensibly, this war was waged in an effort to help ensure national security. But in choosing the warpath, the Bush administration chose a course of action that strays far from the path toward security.

There is no way we can fathom the countless means by which al- Qaida, leaders like Saddam Hussein, or any other individual, group or country may try to harm our citizens or nation. There is no way we can protect ourselves from every possible threat. And so our greatest hope for security comes from making friends, not enemies - from striving for peace and mutual respect between nations, rather than war.

True security does not come from attacking another sovereign nation. It comes through diplomacy, through working together to find peaceful solutions to grave problems. Bush failed at diplomacy when he snubbed our allies in the United Nations, dismissed their assertions that his warmongering was shortsighted and chose to act alone. His plan to limit as much as possible the U.N.'s role in helping to rebuild Iraq suggests he intends to continue to alienate the few partners we may have remaining in this world.

As the most public symbol of America, Bush's actions tell the world that Americans are arrogant, disrespectful and do not want or deserve the support, aid and protection of other nations. He continues to make this world a lonelier, and much less safe, place for all of us. In the end, he guarantees a war that in terms of military dominance he might call a victory, but in terms of the good of the country and its citizens, is a monumental defeat.

Joan Marsan

No Headline In Original

Chicago

Syria differs from Iraq only in degree

Secretary of State Colin Powell's trip to Syria next month is a mistake, bestowing respect on an undeserving, thuggish regime differing only in degree, but not in kind, from Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

Syria is a clone of Iraq, occupying neighboring Lebanon, just as Iraq occupied Kuwait. Syria is a ruthless occupier of what used to be a model of freedom and democracy in the Middle East. Posing as liberator, Syria has defied U.N. Resolution 520 and refused to honor the Taif Accord obliging it to withdraw. It has entrenched itself, using military force and terror against the Lebanese, especially its Christian community.

Its jails and torture chambers rival those of Hussein, according to evidence presented by Free-Lebanon groups-in-exile around the world.

Syria suppresses dissent and oppresses its people as ruthlessly as Hussein. In 1982, Syrian troops laid siege to the city of Hama for 27 days, bombarding it with heavy artillery and tanks, then invading, slaughtering up to 40,000 men, women and children.

The 30,000 Syrian troops illegally in Lebanon openly supply and protect two fanatic terrorist groups, Hezbollah and Hamas, transshipping weapons from Iran for these two groups. Hezbollah was directly involved in the bombing that murdered 241 U.S. Marines in their barracks.

Damascus is a Club Med for terrorists, home to several of the world's most notorious terrorist organizations, including Hezbollah, Hamas, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command and Palestine Islamic Jihad.

Syria has a choice, as Iraq did. It can join the community of civilized nations, or it can continue to be a state sponsor of terror. It can turn over the Iraqi war criminals who sought safe harbor there or it can face the "serious consequences."

Daniel John Sobieski

Chicago

Why fight, if not for right to free speech?

In the last few weeks, a few individuals have come down pretty hard on "peacenik ladies in pink dresses."

I was under the impression that Operation Iraqi Freedom was to liberate the Iraqi people so they could have all the benefits of free speech and other ways of expressing themselves in a free society.

Well, I have a hot flash for these testosterone-poisoned characters. Free speech is what we are expressing. It's a shame that one can't shut up everyone who doesn't agree with them, but even with the Patriot Act hanging over our heads, most of us can speak our minds.

The fact that these anti-peace people can say what they are saying is what gives me the right to speak the way I do. I will stack up my Purple Heart and Bronze Star against these "patriots" any time of day.

We all don't have pink dresses. Some of us have combat infantry badges. Rant away, my fellow Americans.

Raleigh Sutton

Elgin

War is ending, but it was still unnecessary

No Headline In Original

With the war in Iraq seeming to be going our way, there has now been a rush to get on the side of our president and his Cabinet for the justification of this war. While I support our troops over there, I still am unable to see how this war will help the American people. As of yet, there has been no weapons of mass destruction found and surely no way for Saddam Hussein and his men to deliver them here where we live.

I still feel this war has been unnecessary. The president seems to be getting his due on this war with most people now firmly behind him. But how many of those polled have lost loved ones over there? If they had would they feel the same way?

Only time will tell if indeed this was the right thing to do, but we as a nation have never just out and attacked another country. This president has set a dangerous precedent.

Edward Tobolik

Roselle

Bravery, honor and brutality of war

As I opened my newspaper this morning and was looking out my window at my flag and yellow ribbons, it brought to mind our current war and past wars. Two uncles served in World War II. I lost two friends and a cousin in Vietnam. A young soldier from here in Wood Dale died in Desert Storm. My husband is a veteran. Two articles in my newspaper, side by side, caught my eye. One made me very proud and the other very sad.

The first concerned Jessica Lynch, who was held as a prisoner of war for two weeks and finally rescued. She fought and hit several Iraqi soldiers down to her last bullet, sustaining several injuries as a result. They say she wore military boots to her senior prom! To say I am proud of her would be an understatement. We have our independence and freedom due to soldiers of her caliber, and she deserves the highest of military honors.

The second article concerned a Shiite family of 17 that was fleeing Karbala. They had a leaflet that said, "To be safe, stay put." They misinterpreted it to say, "be safe." The leaflet was written in Arabic.

As they left Karbala in their Land Rover for a safer location, their grandfather wore his best suit to look American. They waved to our soldiers as they approached the American checkpoint 25 miles south of Karbala. Our soldiers, on orders not to let vehicles approach this checkpoint, fired upon them, killing 11 members of the family, including two little girls, ages 2 and 5. I instantly thought of my two tiny granddaughters, and the impact of this war really hit home!

Gwen McBeth

Wood Dale

Pre-emptive strike on Iraq was wrong

First, let me say I am a veteran of military service, and I completely support our armed forces in Iraq. Their job is to follow orders of their commanders, and that is what they are doing, and we all need to pray for them.

I am still wondering if I am missing something in our country's quest to squash Iraq. Did not the United States provide some of these chemical and biological weapons to Iraq to put Iran in its place, when we were at odds with Iran? And as of this writing, we have not found any so-called weapons of mass destruction, for which we did a pre-emptive strike on Iraq. What gives the United States the right for this pre-emptive strike?

Do we have to go after every despot in the world? And are we going to go after Syria without the backing of the United Nations? I believe the United Nations was organized to help keep peace in the world. These pre-emptive strikes have not been shown to be justified or that the war is morally justified. To try to change another person's cultural background is not our God-given right. There has been too much rhetoric and not a lot of sensible thought to settle this conflict without loss of life.

No Headline In Original

It is my belief that pre-emptive strikes will lead to more terrorist activities on several fronts both here and abroad, which we will not be able to control and will result in the unfortunate loss of life for civilians as well as the military.

Semper fi.

Deacon Steve Cenek

Wauconda

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2002: It was a turbulent year: World grapples with lingering effects of Sept.

11

The Star Phoenix (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)

December 28, 2002 Saturday Final Edition

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Section: Weekend Extra; Pg. E1; News

Length: 3622 words

Body

JANUARY

1 -- Twelve European countries drop their national currencies and adopt the euro.

7 -- Ottawa says Canadian troops will be heading into combat mission under U.S. control in southern Afghanistan. French designer Yves Saint Laurent closes his 40-year-old fashion house.

8 -- Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey announces his retirement. Alberta health care report by Don Mazankowski suggests more private involvement, delisting of services and patients paying some medical bills. Canadian Press

11 -- Ford Motor Co. announces closing of five assembly plants, including Ontario truck plant in Oakville, Ont., eliminating 12,000 jobs in Canada, U.S. and Mexico. First batch of al-Qaida and Taliban prisoners arrive at U.S. military base in Cuba.

12 -- Elvis Stojko regains men's title at Canadian figure skating championships.

14 -- Industry Minister Brian Tobin says he's leaving politics. After slaughtering more than four million animals, Britain says it's free of foot-and-mouth disease.

15 -- Prime Minister Chretien shuffles cabinet: John Manley leaves Foreign Affairs to become deputy prime minister, replacing Herb Gray who leaves Commons after nearly four decades in politics; Alfonso Gagliano, facing patronage allegations, is removed from Public Works.

17 -- B.C. Premier Gordon Campbell announces major cuts in public sector, eliminating as many as 11,700 jobs by 2005. Canadian dollar plunges below 62 cents US for first time ever.

18 -- In report on the Walkerton tainted water tragedy that caused seven deaths, Justice Dennis O'Connor puts the blame partly on Ontario government's cost cutting. Ten-year civil war in Sierra Leone that killed an estimated 50,000 people is declared over.

24 -- Broadcaster Peter Gzowski dies at age 67.

27 -- More than 600 people fleeing explosion at weapons depot in Nigeria drown in canal.

31 -- Defence Minister Art Eggleton admits he provided wrong information to House of Commons about when he knew Canadian troops had taken prisoners in Afghanistan.

2002: It was a turbulent year: World grapples with lingering effects of Sept. 11

FEBRUARY

- 3 -- New England Patriots defeat St. Louis Rams to win Super Bowl.
- 7 -- Atanarjuat, the first Inuit-made feature film, wins six Genie Awards. Cree sign deal with Quebec government giving them control over their own natural resources.
- 8 -- Winter Olympics begin in Salt Lake City.
- 9 -- Princess Margaret dies in London at age 71 following stroke.
- 11 -- Canadian figure skaters Jamie Sale and David Pelletier win pairs silver at Olympics; scandal over deal-making among judges erupts.
- 12 -- War crimes trial of former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic begins in The Hague. Iranian airliner crashes southwest of Tehran, killing 118 people.
- 15 -- IOC decides to award two sets of gold medals for pairs figure-skating: one for Sale and Pelletier and one for the original winners, Elena Berezhnaia and Anton Sikharulidze of Russia.
- 17 -- Maoist rebels in Nepal kill 137 police, soldiers and civilians.
- 18 -- Sears says its Eatons stores will be closed or converted to Sears outlets, ending 133-year-old Eatons brand.
- 20 -- Overcrowded passenger train catches fire south of Cairo, Egypt, killing at least 373 people.
- 21 -- Alberta government orders striking teachers back to work. Pakistani officials confirm that kidnapped U.S. reporter Daniel Pearl is dead. Canadian Olympic women's hockey team beats U.S. to win gold medal.
- 22 -- Hog farmer Robert Pickton charged with two counts of first-degree murder in connection with disappearance of 50 women from Vancouver.
- 24 -- Canadian men's hockey team defeats United States to win Olympic gold medal. Salt Lake City Olympics is best ever Winter Games for Canada with total of 17 medals.

MARCH

- 4 -- New federal guidelines allow stem cell research using human embryos. Hindu-Muslim violence in Indian state of Gujarat claims at least 570 lives in six days.
- 7 -- Environment Canada says much of Canada had warmest winter on record.
- 10 -- At least 11 Israelis are killed when Palestinian bomber blows himself up at Jerusalem cafe.
- 11 -- Six children die when their home burns down in Quatsino, B.C.; their father is charged with six counts of murder.
- 12 -- Andrea Yates is convicted of capital murder in the drowning deaths of her five children in Houston, Texas. Israeli troops launch major anti-terrorism assault in Gaza Strip and West Bank.
- 13 -- Forces officials say Canadian snipers have killed Taliban or al-Qaida members in Afghanistan.
- 19 -- Commonwealth suspends Zimbabwe for a year after concluding that its presidential election that returned Robert Mugabe to power was unfair and marred by violence. Andrei Knyazev, former Russian diplomat who ran over two Ottawa women in drunk-driving accident, is found guilty of involuntary manslaughter and sentenced in Moscow to four years in labour camp.
- 20 -- Stephen Harper is elected leader of Canadian Alliance party, defeating Stockwell Day.

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23 -- Ernie Eves, former Ontario finance minister, is elected to replace Premier Mike Harris at Ontario Tory leadership convention.

24 -- Halle Berry wins best actress Oscar; Denzel Washington wins best actor; A Beautiful Mind is named best picture.

25 -- Earthquakes kill at least 1,000 people in northern Afghanistan.

26 -- B.C. Supreme Court rules that John Robin Sharpe's child-sex stories have artistic merit and are not criminal.

27 -- At least 19 people are killed after Palestinian suicide bomber attacks Passover feast at hotel in Netanya, Israel. Gunman kills at least eight people at city hall meeting in Nanterre, near Paris.

30 -- Queen Mother dies at age of 101. Two Palestinian suicide bombings leave at least 15 Israelis dead.

APRIL

9 -- Thirteen Israel soldiers die in ambush in refugee camp in Jenin, West Bank, and dozens of Palestinians are reported killed.

10 -- Six former Canadian Alliance dissident MPs return to party, ending partnership with Conservatives. Palestinian suicide bomber blows up bus in Haifa, Israel, killing at least nine. After 20 years of war, Tamil rebel leader says he wants negotiated settlement of Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict.

11 -- UN establishes permanent International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity. Truck explodes near synagogue in Tunisia, killing 16 people.

12 -- Arthur Andersen Canada agrees to merge with Deloitte & Touche LLP, creating largest accounting firm in the country.

14 -- Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez, deposed three days earlier in military coup, returns to power in public uprising. Former guerrilla leader Xanana Gusmao wins East Timor's first presidential election. Tiger Woods wins his third Masters at Augusta National Golf Club. Nickelback, Diana Krall, Swollen Members win Juno awards.

15 -- Air China jet crashes near Pusan, South Korea, killing 119.

16 -- Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok and cabinet resign over report condemning actions during 1995 Bosnian War.

17 -- Four Canadian soldiers are killed when a U.S. fighter jet mistakenly bombs them during training exercise near Kandahar, Afghanistan.

18 -- Afghanistan's deposed monarch, Mohammed Zahir Shah, returns to his country after 29-year exile in Italy.

24 -- Vatican bishops and U.S. cardinals agree to make it easier to remove priests guilty of sexually abusing minors.

25 -- South African Mark Shuttleworth, who paid \$20 million to visit International Space Station, is blasted into space with Russian astronauts. Singer Lisa Lopes, 30, dies in car crash in Honduras.

26 -- Supreme Court of Canada rules that U.S.-based satellite TV services are illegal in Canada.

28 -- Israel and Palestinian Authority accept U.S. proposal to end month-long siege of Yasser Arafat's compound at Ramallah; six suspected Palestinian terrorists to be sent to prison supervised by British or U.S. guards.

MAY

1 -- Private companies begin selling electricity in Ontario, ending government monopoly. Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat is freed after over four months' confinement at his West Bank headquarters.

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- 4 -- Jetliner crashes in northern Nigeria, killing at least 148.
- 5 -- French President Jacques Chirac wins second five-year term in victory over Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of extreme-right party. Hell's Angels leader Maurice (Mom) Boucher is convicted in Montreal of two counts of first-degree murder for ordering murder of two prison guards.
- 6 -- Myanmar's pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi is freed after 19 months of house arrest. Pim Fortuyn, Dutch politician who wanted to stop all Muslim immigration to his country, is assassinated.
- 7 -- Chinese airliner crashes in northeastern China, killing 112. Suicide-bombing kills 16 young people at billiard club in Rishon Letzion, Israel.
- 8 -- Fourteen people are killed in suicide-bombing attack at hotel in Karachi.
- 9 -- Palestinians leave Church of Nativity in Bethlehem, ending five-week standoff with Israeli troops. Proposed federal legislation bans human cloning but allows research on embryos.
- 13 -- Federal Liberals win four of seven byelections.
- 14 -- Former U.S. president Jimmy Carter calls for political freedom in visit to Cuba.
- 15 -- Teleglobe long-distance phone company seeks bankruptcy protection.
- 19 -- East Timor becomes the world's newest independent country, UN's 190th member.
- 21 -- U.S. brokerage Merrill Lynch to pay \$100 million US in settlement of stock-picking scandal.
- 23 -- Report into Walkerton water tragedy urges Ontario to spend \$280 million to improve safety of drinking water.
- 24 -- U.S. and Russia sign treaty to reduce number of nuclear warheads by two-thirds.
- 26 -- Prime Minister Chretien drops Art Eggleton as defence minister, shuffles Don Boudria out of public works portfolio; both had faced conflict-of-interest allegations. Anti-guerrilla candidate Alvaro Uribe Velez wins Colombia's presidential election. Roman Polanski's *The Pianist* wins Palm d'or at Cannes Film Festival.

JUNE

- 1 -- Four days of concerts and parades begin in Britain to celebrate Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth.
- 2 -- Prime Minister Chretien fires Finance Minister Paul Martin, saying they no longer have a viable working relationship; replacing him is Deputy Prime Minister John Manley.
- 5 -- Alexa McDonough announces her resignation as leader of federal NDP. Car bomb kills 17 people in northern Israel.
- 10 -- India reopens airspace for Pakistani overflights, reducing tensions between the countries.
- 11 -- Afghanistan opens its loya jirga, council of 1,550 delegates, to choose a new government. Newfoundland government signs deal to develop nickel deposit at Voisey's Bay mine in Labrador that is expected to add \$11 billion to the provincial economy over next 30 years.
- 13 -- Hamid Karzai is elected head of state by Afghanistan's loya jirga. Detroit Red Wings win Stanley Cup, defeating Carolina Hurricanes in fifth game.
- 14 -- Police and protesters clash during demonstrations outside meeting of G-7 finance ministers in Halifax.
- 17 -- Action Democratique du Quebec wins three Quebec byelections.

2002: It was a turbulent year: World grapples with lingering effects of Sept. 11

- 21 -- Rowan Williams is chosen as next Archbishop of Canterbury, head of world's 70 million Anglicans.
- 24 -- Passenger train rolls into cargo train in central Tanzania, killing at least 281 people.
- 25 -- Israeli troops take over town of Hebron in major offensive.
- 26 -- G-8 leaders meeting at Kananaskis, Alta., agree to raise \$20 billion for Russia to decommission nuclear weapons.
- 28 -- Canadian inquiry blames U.S. fighter pilot for not following proper procedures when he dropped bomb on Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan, killing four.
- 30 -- Brazil defeats Germany to win World Cup.

JULY

- 2 -- American Steve Fossett becomes first person to circle the world solo in a balloon.
- 3 -- Federal government revamps scandal-plagued sponsorship program, eliminating commission agents to deliver the contracts. B.C. referendum on treaty negotiations with aboriginals passes with overwhelming support; it includes measures to restrict authority of aboriginal governments and end tax exemptions.
- 16 -- Irish Republican Army apologizes for the killing of "all non-combatants" during 30-year terror campaign. Census reports median age of Canadians was 37.6 in 2001, up 2.3 years from 1996, biggest jump in a century.
- 19 -- Judicial inquiry concludes that British doctor Harold Shipman murdered at least 215 patients.
- 21 -- Telecommunications giant WorldCom files for bankruptcy protection.
- 22 -- Leading Hamas militant Sheik Salah Shehada is killed when Israeli jet bombs his Gaza Strip home. Presiding judge at Hells Angels trial in Montreal withdraws after being reprimanded by judicial council.
- 23 -- Pope arrives in Toronto for World Youth Day festival.
- 25 -- Nortel Networks shares fall below \$1 US for first time in almost 20 years.
- 26 -- World Trade Organization rules against U.S. on key points of softwood lumber dispute with Canada.
- 26 -- More than 80 killed in crash of Russian-made fighter jet at air show in Ukraine.
- 28 -- First wave of Canadian troops return from Afghanistan to Edmonton. American cyclist Lance Armstrong wins fourth consecutive Tour de France.

AUGUST

- 1 -- Canadian telecommunications giant JDS Uniphase sells U.S. unit for less than two per cent of what it paid two years ago, losing almost three-quarters of a billion dollars.
- 6 -- Joe Clark announces decision to resign as Progressive Conservative leader.
- 8 -- Health officials say Saskatchewan man died of human form of mad-cow disease, the first confirmed case in North America.
- 12 -- Floods lead to evacuation of parts of Prague, cause landslides in Germany and Switzerland.
- 13 -- At least 422 people are killed after floods and landslides in Nepal.

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16 -- Palestinian terrorist Abu Nidal, believed responsible for killing about 900 people in attacks throughout Europe and Middle East, is found dead in Baghdad.

18 -- More than two million Poles gather in Krakow to attend an open-air mass given by Pope John Paul.

21 -- Jean Chretien announces he will step down as prime minister in February 2004.

26 -- At UN Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, world leaders demand action to protect nature while boosting living standards for world's poorest inhabitants.

27 -- Nortel Networks says it will slash 7,000 more jobs.

29 -- Former B.C. premier Glen Clark is acquitted of breach of trust and corruption charges.

SEPTEMBER

4 -- Senate committee recommends legalization of marijuana.

5 -- Afghan President Hamid Karzai survives assassination attempt when car bomb kills at least 15 in Kabul.

9 -- Pro-Palestinian protesters force shutdown of a speech by former Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu at Concordia University in Montreal.

11 -- Prime Minister Chretien says root causes of Sept. 11 terrorist attacks were global poverty and an overbearing American foreign policy.

13 -- U.S. air force recommends that criminal charges be laid against two fighter pilots involved in a bombing that killed four Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan.

17 -- Health officials say death of a 70-year-old man in Mississauga, Ont., was caused by West Nile virus, Canada's first fatal infection of the disease.

20 -- President Bush says U.S. is prepared to launch pre-emptive military strikes against security threats from foreign enemies.

23 -- Canadian stocks fall to their lowest level in almost four years.

26 -- Ferry bound for Senegal sinks in storm off West Africa, leaving about 1,000 people dead.

27 -- Bombardier says it will cut about 2,000 jobs.

30 -- CBC says Ron MacLean will not be returning as host of Hockey Night in Canada.

OCTOBER

2 -- B.C. pig farmer Robert Picton faces four more murder charges, bringing the number of women he is accused of killing to 15.

3 -- Following uprising by hockey viewers, CBC and sportscaster Ron MacLean agree to new contract.

4 -- Queen and Prince Philip arrive in Iqaluit at start of 12-day Canadian tour to mark Golden Jubilee.

6 -- Queen drops puck at NHL exhibition game in Vancouver.

10 -- Hungarian Imre Kertesz wins Nobel Prize for literature. U.S. House of Representatives votes to back war with Iraq unless Baghdad disarms.

11 -- Former U.S president Jimmy Carter is awarded Nobel Peace Prize.

2002: It was a turbulent year: World grapples with lingering effects of Sept. 11

12 -- Bombing of Bali nightclub kills at least 188 people.

15 -- Saddam Hussein is declared winner of 100 per cent of votes in national referendum.

16 -- United States says North Korea has admitted to attempting to build nuclear warheads.

21 -- Fourteen people are killed when a bus is attacked by car bomb near Hadera, Israel.

22 -- Former Livent founders Garth Drabinsky and Myron Gotlieb are charged with 19 counts of fraud. Canadian author Yann Martel wins Booker Prize. Lawrence MacAulay resigns as Canada's solicitor general after ethics counsellor concludes he broke conflict-of-interest rules.

23 -- Chechen militants seize Moscow theatre and hold nearly 700 people hostage.

24 -- Police arrest John Allen Muhammad and John Lee Malvo as suspects in sniper attacks that killed 10 people in Washington, D.C., area. Federal government releases draft plan to meet Kyoto protocol targets for cutting greenhouse-gas emissions.

26 -- Russian forces storm Moscow theatre, using knockout gas that kills at least 120 hostages and about 50 hostage-takers.

27 -- Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva wins Brazil's presidential election. Anaheim Angels win World Series, defeating San Francisco Giants in seventh game.

30 -- Calgary oil company Talisman Energy sells its stake in Sudanese oil project and pulls out of the country after pressure from human-rights groups.

31 -- School collapses during earthquake in Italian village of San Giuliano di Puglia, killing 26 children.

NOVEMBER

4 -- TV's Da Vinci's Inquest wins best drama Gemini for fourth year in a row.

5 -- Austin Clarke wins Giller Prize for his novel The Polished Hoe. In U.S. midterm elections, Republican party gains control of Senate and increases its majority in House of Representatives.

8 -- UN Security Council adopts U.S.-British sponsored resolution that demands inspectors have access to suspected weapons sites in Iraq.

11 -- West Coast poet George Bowering is named Parliament's first poet laureate. Barry Bonds of San Francisco Giants becomes baseball's first five-time most valuable player.

12 -- Audiotape attributed to Osama bin Laden warns of terrorist attacks on Canada and other western countries.

13 -- Iraq accepts UN resolution on weapons inspections.

15 -- Jiang Zemin is replaced by Hu Jintao as leader of China's Communist party. Palestinians attack Israeli settlers in West Bank town of Hebron, killing at least 12.

17 -- Former Italian prime minister Giulio Andreotti is found guilty of ordering murder of journalist.

18 -- Comcast Corp. becomes world's largest cable company after buying AT&T's cable systems for \$58.7 billion US.

19 -- Bahamas-flagged tanker Prestige, carrying more than 75 million litres of oil, sinks off northwest coast of Spain. Billionaire Ken Thomson makes \$370-million donation in cash and art to Art Gallery of Ontario. B.C.'s conflict commissioner concludes that former premier Glen Clark broke conflict of interest rules when he accepted free home renovation from neighbour seeking casino licence.

2002: It was a turbulent year: World grapples with lingering effects of Sept. 11

20 -- Following five-year investigation into tainted-blood scandal of the 1980s, RCMP announces criminal charges against four doctors, the Canadian Red Cross Society and an American drug company. Federal government and Anglican Church reach a deal that would see church pay up to \$25 million to those abused in native residential schools.

21 -- More than 200 people are killed in protests against Miss World beauty contest in Nigeria. NATO leaders invite seven former communist countries to join the alliance at Prague summit.

24 -- Montreal Alouettes beat Edmonton Eskimos 25-16 to win Grey Cup.

25 -- U.S. President Bush creates Department of Homeland Security, largest U.S. government overhaul since Second World War, aimed at preventing terrorist attacks.

26 -- Prime Minister Chretien's communication director Francoise Ducros resigns over her comment that U.S. President Bush is a "moron."

28 -- Roy Romanow commission recommends \$15-billion infusion into health care system. Suicide bombers kill 16 people at Israeli-owned Paradise Hotel in Kenya.

DECEMBER

2 -- Rowan Williams becomes Archbishop of Canterbury, leader of the world's 70 million Anglicans.

3 -- Auditor general's report criticizes government for huge cost overrun in firearms registry.

5 -- Sri Lanka government and Tamil Tiger rebels reach power-sharing deal to end 19-year war.

6 -- Ten Palestinians are killed in Israeli raid on refugee camp in Gaza Strip.

7 -- Iraqi President Saddam Hussein apologizes for invasion of Kuwait 12 years ago.

8 -- Iraq delivers 12,000-page weapons report to UN.

9 -- United Airlines files for bankruptcy protection.

11 -- Federal government bans pro-Palestinian group Hezbollah from operating in Canada.

12 -- Parliamentary committee recommends government decriminalize possession of small amounts of marijuana.

13 -- Bernard Cardinal Law resigns as Archbishop of Boston over mishandling of sexual abuse charges against priests.

14 -- Innu of Davis Inlet begin move to new community of Natuashish, Labrador. EU agrees to admit 10 mainly east European states in 2004.

16 -- Prime Minister Chretien signs document ratifying Kyoto accord on greenhouse gases.

19 -- U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell says Iraq is in "material breach" of UN resolution by lying about its weapons of mass destruction. Supreme Court of Canada ruling means common-law partners cannot claim equal division of property if relationship breaks down.

23 -- Ray Hnatyshyn, governor general from 1990 to 1995, is honoured in state funeral.

Graphic

2002: It was a turbulent year: World grapples with lingering effects of Sept. 11

Colour Photo: Associated Press, File; The Tribute of Light to the victims of the World Trade Center terrorist attacks lit up the sky above lower Manhattan on March 11.; Colour Photo: Associated Press; Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe (left) and South African President Thabo Mbeki. The Commonwealth suspended Zimbabwe for a year after concluding that its presidential election that returned Mugabe to power was unfair and marred by violence.; Colour Photo: Associated Press; An Israeli army tank takes position at Manger Square near the Church of the Nativity, seen behind barbed wire in May in the West Bank town of Bethlehem.; Colour Photo: Canadian Press, File; Four helmets are set on rifles at a memorial in Edmonton for four Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan by friendly fire.; Colour Photo: Sniper suspects John Lee Malvo (left) and John Allen Muhammad.; Colour Photo: Associated Press; The Prestige oil tanker sinks in the Atlantic Ocean Nov. 19 spilling oil and creating an environmental disaster off the northwest coast of Spain and Portugal.; Colour Photo: Canadian Press; Georgia Giddings, 10, of Baysville, Ont., is overcome by emotion on meeting Pope John Paul II on July 23 in Toronto.; Colour Photo: Associated Press; Tourists carry luggage past the site of a bomb blast that killed nearly 200 people at Kuta Beach on the Indonesian island of Bali Oct. 14.

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The age of anxiety

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Byline: Michael Burleigh

Body

We feel more vulnerable since September 11. Air travel is daunting, the economy is diving, and TV news looks surreal. Has the world changed for ever, asks historian Michael Burleigh

There are shortages of gas masks and a run on the prophetic writings of Nostradamus. In suburban Virginia, the soccer moms, that barometer of middle America's mood, are tooling up with handguns, while dads whack high-velocity rounds into the sinisterly simpering visage of the Saudi terrorist Osama Bin Laden, the pin-up of choice in their rifle ranges. Some of them would also like to turn desert sand into glass -regardless of the geopolitical consequences.

With a death toll from the World Trade Center and Washington outrages approaching 7,000 and the world economy teetering on the brink of recession, these people are very, very angry. As my friend the historian Jay Winik (whose book on the end of the civil war George WBush is very visibly reading) tells me, the events of September 11 represent the biggest loss of life on American soil in one day since the battle of Antietam in Washington County.

This mood of anxiety is shared across the civilised world and there is considerable apprehension as to how America will respond to what is obviously an act of war on the part of terrorists and those who harbour or sponsor them.

In fact, Bush leads a cabinet that is uniquely experienced to deal with this crisis and its long-term consequences. But we should surely not underrate the extent to which the White House (and Downing Street) are groping their way around this new historical turning point. This is going to be a learning curve citizens share with their rulers.

The world has been turned upside down. A decade of certainty in which America has enjoyed an unprecedented consumer boom, and during which the American defence budget was slashed from nearly 6% to about 3% of GNP, and the armed forces by one third, has abruptly given way to what future historians may call "an age of anxiety". World events cause children to have nightmares and the airports are almost deserted. This mood is palpable -and not just in America, for we are all terrorists' targets.

True, as older people will point out, there were times in the cold war when people panic-shopped or thought about moving from town to country, or from Britain to Ireland. They can remember the Cuban missile crisis, when the world seemed only hours away from nuclear war. My generation recalls that anxious moment one Christmas 22 years ago when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. The British have lived with the menace of terrorism for decades, almost resentfully getting used to it.

The age of anxiety

From the vantage point of 1990, the hysteria about nuclear war between the free world and the totalitarian powers seemed misplaced. Both sides conducted the cold war by ascertainable rules, even if things got messier in the world of their clients and surrogates. America's apparently effortless ability to arm itself to the teeth while continuing to prosper prevailed over the bankrupt Marxist gerontocracy that ran the Soviet Union, which could put stations into space but not hot water in hospitals or steak onto Moscow tables.

Some even saw this as "the end of history", in which even the most broken-down wagons would eventually limp into the liberal-democratic capitalist encampment. If that scenario has failed to happen, we have now surely reached a palpable turning point of enormous importance.

It consists not just of unusual alliances of convenience, say Russia and China, who for the moment are on the side of America against terrorism until they see some other advantage in revising their recent rhetorical commitments. It has also demonstrated the sudden vulnerability of the United States, best epitomised by the collapse of part of the Pentagon which has routinely been depicted in Hollywood films as the awesomely powerful guardian of freedom.

Americans are now only fully grasping that they themselves are not immune to plots concocted halfway around the world by people who hate what they and the rest of the democratic nations stand for.

One can cope with the anti-Americanism of a handful of resentful French, German or Greek "intellectuals" or an anarchist mob chucking rocks during a G8 summit, since they do not represent public opinion. But the attempted destruction of its economic, military and political nerve centres is something to which no country can afford not to respond.

The rest of us have suddenly become vulnerable, too, every time we board a plane or a train, or visit a city centre.

The recent events in New York and Washington are, on several levels, an important turning point because the decisions the one remaining superpower makes as it deals with this crisis affect the whole world. Entire regions could be destabilised if those choices are wrong.

Previous turning points in world history have been spread out over generations: 1789, 1815, 1848, 1914, 1945, 1989-90 being the usual sequence. Few contemporaries ever accurately saw the long-term implications.

Edmund Burke predicted not only the incessant thud of the guillotine, which the exponents of "freedom, equality, fraternity" visited upon each other, but also the rise of a military dictator such as Napoleon -an event which occurred two years after Burke's own death and nine years after the publication of his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.

In August 1914 Sir Edward Grey foresaw that a war which his contemporaries imagined would be over by Christmas would spell the end of empires and Edwardian (or belle epoque and Wilhelmine) civilisation.

By contrast, Francis Fukuyama will rue the day he ever wrote about the triumph of western liberalism, embodied in the phrase "the end of history". It snakes and turns and surprises, but it has no ultimate ascertainable meaning.

How people in the past imagined the future is one of the historian's great concerns, for as the British medievalist Frederic William Maitland once remarked, events that are now in the remote past were once long in the future. Will future historians look back at our time as an important turning point, or will they think we were seized by a sort of panic, akin to anxieties about the spread of foreign immigrants, the menace of the lumpenproletariat or the spread of syphilis?

From the disadvantaged viewpoint of the present, we are confronted by a turning point that almost nobody thought possible or predicted.

There we were, with the fall of the Berlin Wall still a vivid memory, discussing the relative merits of uni-polar or multi-polar worlds; nuclear non-proliferation; Third World debt; the resurgence of ethnic conflicts; global crime; international jurisdictions; migration, and the Clintonian reign of peace in the Levant or Northern Ireland.

The age of anxiety

No precautionary steps were being taken for the eventuality that transnational terrorism might strike at the nerve centres of our societies, sending shockwaves throughout our economies from the aircraft industry to tourism.

The present flurry of governmental activity around the world is indicative only of how little has been done to anticipate this problem, even though by the late 1990s half the terrorist organisations proscribed by the US State Department were identified as religious terrorist networks. A lot of sophisticated academic work on the mindset of religious terrorism does not seem to have filtered into policy-making or effective counter-terrorist structures.

During the Clinton era, Tomahawk missile strikes were used as the high profile, risk-free alternative to building up intelligence and counter-terrorist capabilities involving agents and pre-emptive assassinations, the only strategies which have ever registered much success in this sort of desperate conflict.

There is now an acute shortage of people even capable of understanding the intercepted communications of terrorist networks, let alone imagining how their minds work. Apparently it took the ultra-secret National Security Agency (NSA) two days even to transcribe, let alone comprehend, an intercept of a conversation connected to the recent hijacks. In New York terrorist suspects who had been caught photographing airports were released even before their films had been developed.

Future historians may come to see the Clinton years as a missed opportunity, a great puff of humanitarian rhetoric in which the advantage America achieved when the cold war ended and the Gulf war had been won was squandered.

America leant back and relaxed, instead of leaning forward to scan the horizon for even the most improbable challenges to its imperium. Instead of looking hard and long at this bigger global picture, the Clinton administration locked itself into trying to bring "peace" to fanatics in the refugee camps of the Levant and the terraces of Northern Ireland, pretending that thugs and gangsters were something other. Unbefitting an empire, it lost the eagle's-eye view, micro-managing conflicts amenable only of local resolution.

In reaction to that era of failure, Bush came to office representing a Republican party divided between conservatives and liberals, isolationists and interventionists, libertarians and the deeply religious. The American people were tired of fighting other people's wars while being belittled by their own carping allies. To them it was not self-evident why the sons of Georgia, Missouri or South Carolina should have to be shot to pieces in Lebanon, Kosovo or Somalia.

The new man in the White House did not rush to meet the rest of the world's leaders. Why hasten to become acquainted with Vladimir Putin of Russia, to all intents and purposes merely president of a Eurasian Zaire with nuclear weapons, when you can chat in Spanish about cattle with that fellow rancher, Vicente Fox of Mexico? Why rush to do anything about the Middle East, given that American Jews had voted for Al Gore in vast numbers last November, when the "F*** the Jews" obiter dictum of James Baker, US foreign affairs supremo during the Gulf war, had resonated in Democrat propaganda?

Much to the consternation of those Americans, Republican and Democrat alike, who have enormous knowledge of the outside world, America seemed to draw itself in, with the permanent drama of its continental weather system taking up more television prime time than Europe, Africa and Asia put together.

That has changed since September 11, with the onset of what may be an era of alternating hot and cold war against an enemy of utter implacability, whose goals and methods tax our very imaginations. These terrorists are not going to evolve into Nobel prize-winning "statesmen" with whom American leaders (or the European Union's Joschka Fischers and Chris Pattens) can cut a deal.

The people behind the atrocities in New York and Washington are culturally immune to logic or negotiation; exhilarated by ever more spectacular images of carnage and chaos and hell-bent on establishing an aggressive theocracy, not amid the ruins of a collapsed state such as Afghanistan but in, say, oil-rich Saudi Arabia. This would be catastrophic for the West's economies while tipping the delicate balance of power in the Middle East in favour of further globalised mayhem and terror.

The age of anxiety

This is why -however much some may be tempted to agree with the remarks of Silvio Berlusconi, the Italian prime minister, that it is not our way for people to be stoned to death in public or for women to be hidden beneath swathes of cloth -we must resist the temptation to see this as a clash of civilisations or religions.

A clash of civilisations -one liberal and secular, the other resistant to progress as we understand it -is precisely what the terrorists are seeking, with Bin Laden as the mysterious Mahdi figure returned from his Afghan fastnesses to lead the desert hordes against our decadent civilisations. Like Mahdi Mohammed Ahmed (1843-85), Bin Laden regards himself as "the divinely guided one", come to purge a corrupt and lax local regime -Saudi Arabia, rather than Egypt in his case -and to fight a jihad against the infidels.

The prognoses after this turning point in history seem ominous. There is a fine line between prompting Israel to the peace table and forcing it into suicidal forms of appeasement. Almost every regime in the Middle East, with the exception of Israel, is autocratic, corrupt and, latterly, ruled by inexperienced men. They perch precariously over populations who, given a choice, might elect the sort of fundamentalist throat-slitters whom only a military coup d'etat has kept out of power in Algeria.

Transplanting the often antagonistic and fissiparous exiled groups who sip mint tea on the Edgware Road in west London, with a view to installing them amid what will be chaos, is not a comforting future prospect. No sooner is Afghanistan's Northern Alliance identified as an alternative to the Taliban than it becomes clear that this might be like inviting the Masai to rule Kenya or the Zulus to govern South Africa.

Simply pouring in aid under some latterday Marshall Plan seems hopeless and not just because there is no civil society to ensure its just distribution. Terrorists who can purchase air tickets worth \$ 35,000 (Pounds 23,700) on one credit card are driven by more obscure ends than concern for the world's disadvantaged.

After all, American, British and EU aid has poured into Northern Ireland giving it, for example, the fanciest education system in Britain, without evidently reconciling communities which hate one another. That bleak truth squeezes on to the tail-end of our television news night after night.

So what may happen, not next week but in the long-term future? America and its friends will have to adjust to a war of attrition which will not be resolved by desert tank battles or the flashing salvos of cruise missiles. Journalists and other pundits will have to learn how to comment on a war which will be like a chess game played in the shadows.

The immediate American coalition strategy seems to be working, in so far as deft diplomacy and fear of Armageddon have triggered a mass exodus by the Afghan population, leaving the Taliban forces running around like headless chickens in their own hellish wasteland.

However, in the longer term, whatever the local fate of the Taliban men and their "guest" Bin Laden, this war will be one of communications, high finance, intelligence and what is uncharmingly called "wet work", punctuated with more conventional military operations -and, alas, retaliatory strikes of ever increasing mindlessness from the terrorist networks.

We will have to get used to things which liberals tell us we should not much care for: cutting corners when it comes to detention, extradition and surveillance; being intolerant of those who preach violence in our midst; and allowing governments to operate in grey areas that we will probably never know about.

There are no deals to be done and the terrorists will regard appeasers as an invitation for further acts of destruction.

Unless this is the way we proceed, the next terrorist atrocity will be some bacteriological, chemical or nuclear holocaust visited on a leading American or European city.

So far America's response has been measured and temperate, to the manifest disappointment of those who caricatured Bush as some sort of "little sheriff". But coalitions, to which Bush has reflexively resorted, have a habit of fraying or falling out with one another, especially when they consist of odd bedfellows.

The age of anxiety

In the interests of sustaining such a coalition, which may not survive the first western attack on terrorists lurking within an Islamic country, we will have to adjust to turning a blind eye to the Russian suppression of the Chechens, to Pakistani sponsorship of terrorists in Kashmir, or to the Chinese crushing of Islamic militancy in Xinjiang, a "province" which is double the size of Texas.

What will be the wider trade-offs? Selling Israel or Taiwan down the river? Ignoring Iranian sponsorship of Hezbollah? How long before America's domestic liberals start to peel off from the aims of the Bush administration? How long before the more flaky European powers, with Germany in the vanguard, start to equivocate about this or that military target, despite not actually participating in any military endeavours?

We can already see the sort of problems ahead, as some European powers seek to use the existence of the death penalty in America as an excuse for not speeding up the process of extradition. Do they seriously think America is going to settle for one to five years, a jailhouse sociology degree and parole in the case of Bin Laden and his confederates?

Perhaps, as we settle down for the long haul, we need to conceive of terrorism as an international scourge such as piracy or the slave trade. While piracy is still a going concern in the Caribbean and the China seas, and the slave trade still operates in Arabia and Africa, they have otherwise been marginalised -if not eliminated.

This is a minimum that most of the world can work with. It will involve ensuring that there are no hiding places, either in the Hindu Kush or Hamburg. If we can solidify agreement on the basic principle that terrorism is unacceptable and that any government which harbours the modern-day equivalent of the Barbary pirates will be isolated, destabilised and eliminated, then the war on terrorism may survive any evanescent coalition -as it must if the age of anxiety is to prove to be a temporary panic with the historic turning point deferred into the unknown future.

If this is a true turning point in history, what does the even longer-term future hold? Although practically nobody, let alone historians, can predict what might happen next week -let alone in a decade -can we imagine two historians, 50 years hence, with the worst and best outcomes of present events behind them?

In the worst scenario, America realised that it could do little or nothing to quash terrorist organisations such as Al-Qaeda. The Taliban regime remained impervious to attacks on its virtually non-existent command and control centres. Winter came, and the views of the Germans that there would be huge western casualties in the snows prevailed on the American government.

Domestic concerns in the United States meant that the war on terrorism quickly petered out. People hoped that Afghanistan and a few other pariah states could be isolated and ignored, like political black holes.

Puffed up with this success, however, Pakistani fundamentalist supporters of the Taliban deposed the military regime, which had compromised itself by assisting the Americans. The same process occurred a few years later in Saudi Arabia, where a loyal supporter of Bin Laden became ruler of an aggressive theocracy. The West lost control of vital oil reserves and faced at least one opponent with nuclear weapons.

Worse, the conflict itself, and the apparent ease with which low-tech fighters with no fear of dying could resist United States forces loath to see men return in body bags, meant that fundamentalist terrorist networks established in the West before the turn of the 21st century brought mayhem to America's population.

Federal and local bureaucracy was once chronically inefficient. Now it became unparalleled in the surveillance of all of its citizens, prompting a rise in the numbers of its own libertarian terrorists with more grievances than just gun control. Some of them decided to cut loose from the terror-afflicted cities by forming separate states of their own.

Since Russia had also disintegrated, a China which played its hand very close in the decades of chaos emerged as the dominant global power.

The age of anxiety

Failing to pay the costs of empire in the wake of events in 2001, as its will to fight gave out on its peripheries, America duly followed ancient Rome -that victim, according to Gibbon, of religious fanaticism within and without its frontiers.

If that is the pessimistic view, an altogether happier version of the years 2001-50 was noted by the second historian.

Yes, it seemed as if an "era of anxiety" had resulted from the events of September 11, 2001. But this turned out to be overdrawn. Contrary to all expectation, the coalition partners held firm. Although Bin Laden remained a fugitive and died, mysteriously, at a relatively young age -with blurred video images to prove it -the Taliban fell. The suffering population of Afghanistan was almost buried under an avalanche of western aid, and a reinvigorated and praised Pakistan went on to live at peace with its Indian neighbours.

Terrorist networks in the West and abroad were ripped up by a combination of American and Russian military power, ably abetted by the combined intelligence and logistical capabilities of many nations, some of which modestly preferred to remain anonymous. Those terrorists the West captured or arrested were brought before an international tribunal, where even the capable defence of Michael Mansfield QC secured few acquittals.

There had been a few insignificant restrictions on the civil liberties of people in the western world, but nothing that the prospect of once again being indiscriminately bombed or poisoned caused anyone to lose much sleep.

Far from there being a "clash of civilisations", moderate-minded Muslims (who, of course, were the majority) easily marginalised their more extreme co-religionists while at the same time taking part in the quotidian business of managing multi-faith-based health and welfare initiatives.

It had all worked out well in the end. Our second historian racked his brain for a title. Scanning his database of the sayings of past historians, he alighted upon a long-forgotten British figure called AJP Taylor. Yes, that was it: 2001 had been like 1848 and history had failed to turn.

Michael Burleigh's *The Third Reich: A New History* (Pan Macmillan) recently won the Samuel Johnson Prize for non-fiction. He is a visiting professor at Cardiff University

Graphic

Terror in America

Load-Date: October 1, 2001

THE MAKING OF A TERRORIST // HE SEEMED LIKE SUCH A NICE BOY

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Body

In mock battles at a gym near Fort Lauderdale, Ziad Jarrah practiced how to evade an attacker's punch. He learned to block a knife-wielding hand and to stun a wily enemy with a gun.

The most important conditioning was mental, however. Trainer Bert Rodriguez taught the slim, cleanshaven young man how to react to danger and control his fears.

"He was focused on his mission in life and he was happy," Rodriguez says.
JARRAH

Little did Rodriguez know that Jarrah would soon practice for real. The lessons in the gym last summer were the final steps in his evolution from a carefree boy into a human bomb.

On Sept. 11, Jarrah, 26, was apparently at the controls of United Airlines Flight 93 from Newark, N.J., to San Francisco when passengers overcame him and three fellow hijackers. The plane crashed in Pennsylvania.

From Lebanon to Germany to the United States - Jarrah's odyssey offers a window into the dark dynamics that produce suicide bombers.

To Americans, last month's attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center are so frightening because the 19 hijackers seemed like madmen who cared nothing for their lives.

The available evidence suggests, however, that many of the men - ages 20 to 33 - were relatively normal as youths, with typical adolescent angst.

They came to radical Islam from different backgrounds under different circumstances. Some were lured by spiritual hunger. Some were pushed by a relative or friend. Some were searching for a cause larger than themselves after experiencing a setback: bad grades, a troubled relationship, a sense of restlessness or alienation.

Most likely, psychologists say, the hijackers were fueled by a lethal mix: frustration, restlessness, religious devotion and male bonding.

Throughout their lengthy indoctrinations, small groups of men quietly worked, prayed and received intense lectures about Islam.

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As they learned to share a common religious goal, they forged a bond not unlike combat officers pulled together in commando training schools.

Yet none of them remains more of an enigma than Jarrah, the sweet-faced son of an affluent Lebanese family that favored Western clothes and paid little attention to religion and politics.

His family is still stunned, unable to accept that their affable only son was a religious fanatic bent on mass murder and suicide.

"I am his mother and the best person in the world to judge him," Nafissa Jarrah says, describing Ziad as a kind young man. "We know the person we have raised and I know he is not capable of such horror."

Experts aren't convinced. To understand people like Ziad Jarrah, they say, you have to look beyond their personality into their environment.

Born into war

Ziad Samir Jarrah was a child of war. In Lebanon, clashes between Christians, Muslims and Druse, dating back centuries, gave violence a new meaning. About a year after Ziad's birth in 1975, troops from Syria, 20 miles from his home in the Bekaa Valley, entered the volatile brew. A new civil war killed thousands, and much of Lebanon, once called the "Switzerland of the Middle East," was essentially reduced to rubble.

When Ziad was 3, Israel invaded Lebanon to stop attacks by Palestinians. Then came American troops to deal with the fallout of the Israeli invasion. French and Italians followed, all trying to stop a bloody orgy of assassinations, car bombings, kidnappings and massacres.

The Bekaa Valley gradually became known as a haven for terrorists.

Still, Ziad seemed to have the kind of bloodlines that promised success. In his village of al-Marj, where the two-story family home is surrounded by trees and plants, the Jarrahs had money and influence.

Ziad's father, Samir Jarrah, was a government social service inspector; his mother taught in an elementary school. The family had money from a 25-acre farm inherited from a grandfather.

"He had everything going for him," Jamal Jarrah, his uncle, told reporters in Lebanon. He is a banker and campaigner for Lebanon's wealthy prime minister, Rafik Hariri.

Ziad had two sisters, Dania, a year older, and Nisrine, a few years younger. Their parents pampered them all, but Ziad was raised with "special care because he was the only son," his uncle says.

The family did everything to protect the kids. Their mother even kept them out of school once during a thunderstorm, a childhood friend recalled.

Ziad's parents, both Sunni Muslims, sent him to Christian schools, including one in Beirut, where the family has an apartment.

When it was safe, the Jarrahs traveled outside Beirut so the children could release pent-up tensions caused by continuous bombings, according to Ziad's uncle.

Still, "when violence is part of a child's everyday existence, you tend to become hardened - desensitized to it," says Jason Spiegelman, a board member of the American Association of Suicidology.

In the short term, war can make children emotionally withdrawn, experts say. Others may suffer a loss of trust, aggressive behavior or a tendency toward revenge.

Complicating things, Lebanon developed a culture of "altruistic suicide," where suicide is sanctioned, even encouraged.

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The term "suicide bomber" was coined by an Associated Press reporter in Beirut in a story about a young man who drove a bomb-laden car into the Iraqi Embassy in 1981.

When Ziad was 8, a suicide bomber blew up the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, killing 241 servicemen. The violence inspired extremists who quickly saw the tactical pluses of suicide attacks: They left no suspects to squeal on collaborators.

Palestinian guerrillas recruited suicide bombers from refugee camps. Hezbollah, a radical Shiite Muslim group operating in the Bekaa Valley, made a promise to young Lebanese: If they killed the "infidels" (notably the Israelis occupying South Lebanon), they would get a place in paradise alongside 72 black-eyed virgins. The families they left behind would get other benefits, including health care and housing allowances from private support groups.

"There was no shortage of volunteers," says A. Nizar Hamzeh, an expert in Islamic issues at the American University of Beirut. "Suicide, on its own, is condemned, but if you take suicide for a higher purpose, a young man becomes a martyr . . . a hero."

Ziad's parents say that the family never discussed martyrdom attacks and that Ziad never was interested in joining any religious group or political party.

Nonetheless, psychologists say that in cultures where suicide is romanticized, there are more suicides. This is especially true for high school students, 80 percent of whom think of suicide anyway, says psychologist Lisa Firestone, who studies the relationship between violent thoughts and violent behavior.

Ziad was eager to prove himself. After attending the Christian Patriarchate college in Beirut, he asked if he could continue his studies in the United States. "But his parents wanted him to be closer to them and convinced him to go to Germany," Jarrah's uncle says.

When Ziad left in April 1996, his protective parents had no idea he could be an easy target for extremists.

Conversion

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, Germany saw an explosion of fringe groups - neo-Nazis, skinheads, new religions of all types.

Young people flocked to them, seeking replacements for mainstream institutions that had collapsed with communism. Across Germany, Arab students began to line up to hear fiery sermons by imams calling for holy war against the West.

Ziad Jarrah spent his first year at the University of Greifswald near the Baltic Sea. Outgoing and handsome in a clean-cut way, he seemed to make friends easily. He quickly learned German. He also found a pretty girl, a Turk with German citizenship named Aisle Senguen. After a short time, they exchanged silver engagement rings.

His family looked after the couple, sending \$ 1,500 a month for living expenses.

There were problems, however. Jarrah wanted to study medicine, but he was late in submitting the required documents from Lebanon, his uncle says. Ziad's fiancée got her paperwork in on time. When she moved to the town of Bochum to attend medical school, Jarrah transferred to the University of Applied Science in Hamburg to be closer to her.

There, he signed up for a different field of study: aircraft engineering. He told his parents he wanted to be a pilot.

Jarrah was 22, eager to live his life at full throttle and looking for a way to channel his energy.

"In the transition between adolescent and manhood, between daredevil and fearful," professor Hamzeh calls it. Without commenting specifically on Jarrah's case, Hamzeh says many Arab students who went to the West suffered from "culture shock."

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Disillusioned, they sometimes turned to mosques, prayer circles or fundamentalist groups.

By the time Jarrah got to Hamburg in the winter of 1997, he was already changing. He stopped drinking and became a devout Muslim who prayed five times a day. He never told his family about his conversion, and they say they never noticed any changes.

"He was still the same person," his uncle says.

People at his university agree. Jarrah's professors describe him as an average student, though he worked hard. His German classmates say nothing suggested he was a zealot.

During the week, German students occasionally visited him in a small apartment in a Hamburg suburb. After the attacks, classmate Michael Gotzmann told reporters how he studied, cooked and laughed with Jarrah, who never said a bad word about the United States.

"On the contrary, he loved that country," Gotzmann said. "He absolutely wanted to go there."

Almost every weekend, Jarrah drove to Bochum to see his fiancée, who wasn't religious. His name was next to hers on the mailbox of her tiny second-floor dorm room.

Sometime in 1998, authorities say, Jarrah met Mohamed Atta, an Egyptian studying urban planning at another university in Hamburg. Atta founded a fundamentalist group that authorities say was a terror cell. The group, they say, believed in global jihad to rid the world of "infidels." They suspect Atta recruited the fun-loving Lebanese man.

Atta's group and other underground cells in Europe were on a talent hunt for leaders to help in their holy war. They had been enraged by America's bombing of Iraq and Israel's continuing military actions against the Palestinians.

These cells, authorities say, secretly bought supplies for terrorist plots, such as cell phones, computers and chemicals. They raised money, arranged for visas and IDs, and they supplied volunteers to train in terrorist camps in Afghanistan run by Osama Bin Laden.

Europe's universities were a fertile recruiting ground, and antiterrorism police in Germany say Jarrah fit the profile.

He was educated, computer literate and multilingual. He was financially independent and comfortable in Western circles. He was an aspiring pilot. And psychologist Firestone says Jarrah's roots in a war-torn country that encouraged children to martyr themselves may have made him more receptive to a group that tried to give its members a sense of community and a feeling of power.

He also had an agreeable nature. Jarrah began attending Atta's prayer circle.

Indoctrination

In a brown wood house at the edge of the university, the men studied and discussed contemporary events. They meditated and collectively recited verses from the Koran.

Experts say the indoctrination methods were similar to "influence techniques" used by many fringe groups and cults.

Members were gradually clued in to radical doctrines. They were taught that only believers in Allah were saved; unbelievers, even less devout Muslims, were seen as infidels.

The men also were taught that orthodox Muslim men were expected to suppress sexual urges and restrict contact with women. They were allowed to kiss only their mothers, sisters, aunts and daughters - women they couldn't marry.

"The male relationships in these groups are critical," says Lionel Tiger, an anthropologist best known for developing the concept of male bonding. Because they had little to do with women, their reliance on other men grew.

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Just like young men going through a rigorous college hazing, men in extremist groups feel intense social pressure to conform, experts say. Members who don't show total loyalty are badmouthed as malcontents. Those who are more committed begin to experience a sense of power.

"The cause (jihad, or holy war) is the common ground, the bond of unity," Hamzeh says.

After the attacks, Jarrah's landlady told a German newspaper she had noticed Ziad "becoming a religious fanatic." Another German paper said he apparently fought with his fiancée over her Western lifestyle. He wanted her to wear a veil, and he didn't want her to smoke, listen to Western music or go dancing.

What happened next isn't clear. At some point, British prosecutors say, Jarrah may have traveled to Phoenix, Ariz., to get a taste of flying. He also may have visited London, where trips were often organized to terrorist training camps in Afghanistan.

Jarrah apparently traveled back and forth to Germany, where he visited his fiancée and took his last exam in July 1999.

He told classmates he was dropping out to study in the United States. He promised to stay in touch.

Then he disappeared.

His worried fiancée called his parents in Lebanon. She feared he had gone to Afghanistan.

There, in the mountains, holy warriors learned to make bombs and practice poison techniques by administering cyanide to dogs. It was in the camps, experts say, that men drawn together by holy war sealed their bond through common rituals, trials and dangerous missions.

Defectors have testified that they were clued in to "spectacular attacks" planned on Western targets. They learned how to "blow up the infrastructure of a country." One defector recalled how bin Laden, who had become a sort of cult hero, came to a camp and exhorted the men to "work hard at training to get the skills to fight the Americans."

Whereas many Islamists give up their pasts and their families, Jarrah talked to his relatives constantly. They deny reports that Ziad went to Afghanistan and say they continued to send him money for flight lessons in the states.

Act like the enemy

Bin Laden's soldiers had been taught to act like the enemy. A training manual instructed them to shave their beards, carry cologne in their luggage and act like they were interested in women.

When Jarrah got to Florida in the fall of 2000, he kept to the script.

He endeared himself to some acquaintances, who said he smiled constantly. They described him as the kind of agreeable guy you would want to take to a baseball game.

Other people saw a different side. Thorsten Biermann, a young German who took flying lessons with Jarrah in Venice, noticed on a training flight that he seemed to crave danger.

Last February, Jarrah returned to Lebanon for the last time. His father was having open-heart surgery. His mother says Ziad stayed with his dad in the hospital and was "the lovely Ziad he always was."

He didn't try to convert any of his relatives. He didn't criticize his older sister, a business school graduate who lived in France and loved to party. He didn't even fault his baby sister, Nisrine, a tall, slender young woman who liked to wear tight pants and tank tops.

Jarrah stayed in Lebanon for 10 days.

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Authorities say he also may have made a trip to Bochum to see his fiancée. They also suspect that he, Atta and a third hijacker cleared out their belongings in Hamburg.

When Jarrah returned to the states, investigators believe he flew briefly to Las Vegas to meet several hijackers and Lofti Raissi, an Algerian pilot. British prosecutors suspect Lofti was making sure the hijackers were capable of taking control of their planes.

At the US 1 Fitness Center in Dania, where he signed up for street-fighting instruction in May, employees got a glimpse of Jarrah's two sides.

Trainer Rodriguez saw the air of quiet maturity. He described Jarrah as a diligent, almost egoless student who seemed eager to please and succeed. But he also tended to stick to safe subjects when he talked, and his expression was sometimes tight.

"A frigid face," says gym employee Alex Castro. Very little emotion.

Near the gym, Jarrah rented a gray house in Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, where he was just another anonymous face amid Roller Bladers, beach bums and retirees. He toiled around in a red Mitsubishi with Ahmed Alhaznawi, a 20-year-old Saudi man who would join him on Flight 93.

In late August, investigators believe, Jarrah traveled north to a suburb of Washington, where he joined hijackers assigned to the flight that would crash into the Pentagon.

Jarrah called home and asked his younger sister Nisrine, 21, to convince their father to give him extra money. He said he needed it to "have some fun."

On Sept. 4, his parents sent \$ 2,000 via Western Union.

Two days before the attacks, Jarrah called home to thank them. He sounded upbeat, his family says. He planned to complete another semester in pilots' school, then return to Germany and Lebanon to marry his fiancée, have kids and find a job.

"How would he make all these plans if he was planning on bombing himself," says his sister, Nisrine.

Final hours

On his last night, Ziad Jarrah was instructed to make an oath to die. A step-by-step manual told the hijackers how to prepare for paradise - which assignments to perform, what clothes to wear, which prayers to say.

The Day of Judgment, the manual said, had arrived. It is the time the Muslim faithful are to be questioned by two angels. Only those who died as martyrs will be guaranteed a place in heaven; everyone else will go through a type of purgatory.

Psychologist Firestone says the elaborate rituals detailed in the manual suggest a "suicide pact." They helped the hijackers gain control over their own deaths, while making them more dependent on each other.

"If one person became ambivalent, another roped him back in," the psychologist says.

The night before the attacks, the manual said, the men were to fast, study the battle plan and read war chapters from the Koran. They were to shave their bodies, shower and tame and purify their souls so they could understand "100 percent obedience."

Recognizing the fear they were feeling, the manual offered this key to emotional survival: "Forget something called this world. . . . You should feel complete tranquility because the time between you and your marriage in heaven is very short."

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The next morning, Jarrah and the other hijackers were to pray alone and then together for their luggage, their clothes, their knives and their papers.

"Check your weapons before you leave," the manual instructed. "You must make your knife sharp and must not discomfort your animal during the slaughter."

They were instructed to say a prayer for traveling as they stepped onto the planes and a prayer for victory after the planes started to move. Then, as they stormed the cockpits, the men were to shout "Allahu Akbar," meaning "Allah is the greatest."

If they became distracted, the manual warned, it "would be treason." And in the moments before impact, they were to pray, "There is no God but God."

Investigators suspect Jarrah took the controls of Flight 93 somewhere above Ohio, then abruptly turned it around, apparently bound for a target in Washington.

Some of the passengers had learned of the attacks on the World Trade Center, however. They charged the hijackers.

The plane crashed in the countryside southeast of Pittsburgh.

After the attacks

Jarrah's worried fiancée reported him missing for the second time in two years.

When the German police arrived at her apartment, they found a suitcase with what they called "airplane-related documents." They took her into protective custody.

At the crash site, investigators found a copy of the hijackers' final instructions.

In Lebanon, the attacks left people embarrassed. Government officials said Jarrah was never involved in any radical groups and may have been an innocent passenger, not a hijacker.

On the wall outside the family's apartment in Beirut, someone scratched in pencil, "What people say makes no difference."

In the Bekaa Valley, where he was born and loved, his family refuses to wear black. A village sheik said no one should mourn until there is evidence of a body.

Huddled under vines in their courtyard, family and guests waited for a call that there had been some mistake. It never came.

- Correspondents Cilina Nasser and Samar Kanafani in Beirut, Times staff writer Nancy Paradis and Times researchers Kitty Bennett, John Martin, Barbara Oliver and Cathy Wo contributed to this report, which contains information from Der Spiegel, Das Bild and Times wires.

Odyssey of a terrorist

He was the son of a prosperous family that was not particularly religious or political. But over time, Ziad Jarrah became an Islamic radical eager to forfeit his own life in a holy war against America.

1975 - Born in the village of Marj in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley.

1981-95 - During at least part of his youth, attends Christian schools elsewhere in Lebanon.

1996 - Leaves Lebanon to attend college in Greifswald, Germany.

THE MAKING OF A TERRORIST // HE SEEMED LIKE SUCH A NICE BOY

1997 - Transfers to a university in Hamburg, Germany, where in 1998 he joins a radical Islamic group founded by Mohammed Atta.

Summer 1999-early 2000 - Apparently goes to Afghanistan for training under lieutenants of Osama bin Laden.

Early 2000 - Travels to Phoenix, Ariz., where he apparently takes flight lessons.

October 2000-August 2001 - Moves to Florida, where he lives in Venice, Hollywood and Lauderdale-by-the-Sea while attending flight school and self-defense training.

Late August 2001 - Checks into a hotel in Laurel, Md.

Sept. 11, 2001 - Helps hijack a Newark-to-San Francisco airliner that crashes near Pittsburgh, well short of its intended target, which was apparently in Washington.

Graphic

PHOTO, Agence France-Presse, (3); PHOTO, Associated Press; PHOTO, (3); CHART; Ziad Jarrah with his mother, Nafissa Jarrah.; Samir Jarrah, Ziad's father, shows a photo of his son at his home in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley village of al-Marj.; Ziad Jarrah is videotaped dancing at a wedding in Lebanon.; Investigators comb the crater left after United Airlines Flight 93 plunged into the ground in Shanksville, Pa.; Ziad Jarrah; Ahmed Alhaznawi; Ziad Jarrah; Chart profiling the life leading to terrorism of Ziad Jarrah, includes map locating the United States in relation to Germany and Afghanistan.

Load-Date: October 15, 2001

Letters to the Editor

The Daily Telegraph (Sydney, Australia)

November 24, 2001, Saturday

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Section: FEATURES-TYPE- LETTER-COLUMN- LETTERSPHOTO; Pg. 22

Length: 3712 words

Body

Fresh look at old conflict

I congratulate Piers Akerman on his assessment of the Middle East conflict ("Holy city's heart beats in conflict," Daily Telegraph, November 22). How refreshing to read an opinion piece that does not follow the standard propaganda line spun by the Palestinian PR machine for years.

Akerman tells it how it is: Hamas and Islamic Jihad are killers, nothing more, while Israel has bent over backwards to placate the Palestinians but has received nothing in return but terror and violence.

Ian Fraser, Rockdale

Thank you, Piers Akerman, for the most comprehensive and objective essay on the Middle East situation I have read to date. It is a conflict that can only be clearly understood when placed in its historical context, as Piers Akerman has done.

MATP

I am proud to read that Australia had a role in establishing the only democratic country in that part of the world.

I share Akerman's concern for the future of the Palestinian Arabs. How can they ever be led to nationhood by "the grandfather of terrorism" who knows only the language of conflict and confrontation, which he uses when directing his government, police and terrorist support groups?

Leone Hersh, North Bondi

Thanks to Piers Akerman for an excellent opinion piece. It gave a fair assessment of the historical complexities of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

If Arafat wants peace, let him first change the "violently anti-Jewish content of the Palestinian media". The media is the mouthpiece of the Palestinian Authority and has created an entire generation of Arab children who are brought up to hate Jews.

Debbie Freeman,

Bellevue Hill

I never expected Piers Akerman to mention Israel's crimes in his article on the conflict in the Middle East. You could hardly expect him to be critical when the Israeli Foreign Ministry is sponsoring his tour.

Letters to the Editor

Since the beginning of the Palestinian uprising a little over a year ago, more than 600 people have been killed in conflict -- three-quarters of them Palestinian.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon recently admitted that 79 Palestinians had been killed in a three-week period in October and November this year when Israeli forces occupied Palestinian towns. On October 24, the Israeli army surrounded the Palestinian village of Beit Rama. Troops entered the village and killed five people. On the same day, the US Senate approved \$US2.76 billion in aid to Israel, with \$US2.04 billion earmarked as special military aid.

There are 400,000 settlers living in Israeli settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip -- territories occupied illegally by Israel since 1967. The "generous offer" made to Yasser Arafat by former prime minister Ehud Barak would enshrine this illegal occupation and give the Palestinian Authority control of just 17 per cent of the West Bank and 60 per cent of Gaza. The 3.5 million Palestinians living outside of their homeland would be denied the right to return.

Unemployment in Gaza has increased from 15 per cent in 2000 to 60 per cent today as a result of Israel closing its borders to Palestine, and 80 per cent of the population lives in poverty.

Western leaders constantly talk about solving the Palestinian problem, but they have done nothing to curb the excesses of the Israeli military.

Jarvis Ryan, Annandale

How refreshing to hear the truth about Yasser Arafat.

Piers Akerman writes how Arafat, "as the grandfather of terrorism, has influence over the killers of Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah". Specific mention is also made of the anti-Jewish nature of the Palestinian media and how incitement creates entire generations of Arab children who were brought up to hate Jews.

A particularly poignant sentence is where Akerman writes that he was sitting not 200m away from where a bomb exploded on Tuesday. He also mentions the 40 Israeli teenagers killed in two of the more serious suicide bombings this year.

This is a remarkable piece of journalism from a true supporter of peace and justice. Arafat is turning a blind eye and supporting terrorist attacks while Israel has done all it can to address the Arab world's concerns, to no avail.

Akerman's writing is journalism at its best.

Michael Podgoetsky, Bondi

You must be congratulated on publishing such a refreshing and remarkable piece of journalism. Piers Akerman is specific and accurate, he is a true supporter of peace and justice.

Congratulations, and keep the truth coming.

Bethaney Franks,

Para Hills, SA

Pier Akerman gives us a one-sided view of the events happening in the Middle East. He describes Yasser Arafat as the so-called "grandfather of terrorism" and goes further to reveal that some Israelis had been killed in bomb blasts recently.

Letters to the Editor

Mr Akerman fails to mention that 771 Palestinian children, women, sons and husbands have been murdered, as compared with 189 Israelis. So who is the grandfather of terrorism? This week, five Palestinian children on their way to school were killed by

an unexploded shell left by Israel soldiers.

Palestine is not allowed to have an army, yet America provides Israel with the latest tanks, fighter planes and weapons. At its leisure, Israel regularly occupies Palestinian land, kidnapping the city's young men who it suspects of terrorism.

Why do we turn a blind eye to all this, when if it was any other nation we would be in uproar? At least 5000 people die a month in Iraq because of sanctions set upon it by the US. Why does mankind view these lives as a number, and a Western life as a tragedy? Why do we approve the killing of Palestinians, Iraqis and Afghanistan civilians, yet scream murder and horror when a western life is killed?

An innocent civilian is an innocent civilian regardless of country, colour, race or power.

M. Kattar, Chester Hill

Quentin might be the man

When the ABC board appoints a new general manager, the successful applicant must have media experience, but of equal importance he/she must have the confidence of the staff, otherwise we will have a repetition of the Jonathan Shier debacle.

Searching for a replacement, I hope consideration is given to filling the position from within the organisation. One person who appeals to me is the vastly experienced broadcaster and host of Stateline, Quentin Dempster.

Bill Alcock,

Port Macquarie

Right on, Barry Benson (Letters, November 20). The sooner John Howard institutes a broad-reaching public inquiry (royal commission) into the deeply entrenched, left-wing bias of "our" national broadcaster, the better. We all pay for this political prejudice.

We must demand a voice in bringing about the necessary balance.

G. Hall, Chatswood

After all, it's only a game

After seeing the poor reception that our Socceroos received upon arrival in Uruguay, why don't they turn around and come home? They won the first leg 1-0, so even if they forfeit the return match they should still qualify for the World Cup.

It is only a game, but these South Americans are carrying on like terrorists.

Michael Harradine, Harbord

Spitting in people's faces, screaming profanities at them -- expletives definitely not deleted -- and subjecting Australian soccer players to moronic physical violence; what is it with these types? Nothing to do with sport, that's blindingly clear.

We don't see this lunatic behaviour directed at visiting rugby players, which transparently demonstrates why the game is the one they play in heaven.

Letters to the Editor

Up the Wallabies.

George Williams, Waverley

Forced to conform

I take issue with Stephen Power of Jannali on compulsory voting ("Poll privilege," Letters, November 23). Australia is the only significant country in the world that has compulsory voting and if it had any benefits, why are we the only country with it?

Any benefits are purely illusory. The system treats us like naughty children and makes us turn up at the polling station and fines us when we don't. So fantastic is the system that at the federal election in 1998, 421,570 eligible voters failed to vote -- more than the total voters of Tasmania. Only 30 per cent paid the \$20 fine and almost all the rest, more than 250,000, made excuses which were mostly accepted.

The system denies me the right to express an opinion on the biggest issue of all: whether politicians in general are doing a good job. Without compulsion, politicians will know that if the turnout is reduced they are not doing a good job and that to survive they will have to reform their behaviour.

Democracy is not a privilege but a hard-earned right and nowhere in any constitution in the world does it say that it is a sin to abstain. For political parties, compulsion is a nice little earner -- they receive a few dollars for everybody who votes for them. It swells their coffers and saves politicians from having to persuade people to vote.

In the last election I received only one letterbox drop inviting me to a BBQ that was held four days before I received it. Compulsion sucks.

James Fordham, Gwandalan

Nursing a grievance

I wonder where the State Government's priorities lie when it decides to give social workers a 7.5 per cent pay rise (Daily Telegraph, November 22) while nurses in NSW who are working in major trauma hospitals with critical staff shortages get nothing, even after industrial action.

Guess who will vote for the Labor Party in the next state election? Not this little black duck, that is for certain.

Jamie Matthews,

Glenmore Park

Supply sighs

One does not have to be a rocket scientist to work out why electricity supply to customers in Sydney takes so long to be restored after storms -- the answer is plain and simple:

Shortage of experienced staff in the field;

Lack of communication with customers;

Doubling and tripling of jobs by staff to staff (going around in circles) by electricity authorities (Energy Australia and the like);

Electricity staff not using commonsense to get supply restored (sticklers for the rules);

Electricity authorities forgetting that customers pay their wages.

Being a former Energy Australia linesman, I can understand why customers get the run-around, and I feel that Energy Australia could call on former employees to assist in emergencies.

Letters to the Editor

George Campbell,

Chatswood

Nose for truth

Where does it all end? Are we now going to sue sniffer dogs for performing their duty? The dogs have been trained to find drugs and

we have been informed that drugs are detrimental to society. Where is the problem here?

I have seen sniffer dogs in action and I applaud their every move. Perhaps those who protest have something to hide.

Helen Coward,

Sawyer's Gully

Resist the invaders

I am a fifth-generation Australian whose extended family has married Italian, Chinese, Greek, Dominican, Aboriginal, Maltese and Mauritian people. All of these family members, like me, are concerned for our environment, have only two or three children and most are among those 20 per cent of free-thinking Australians who have no religion and yet cherish the historical and cultural background of their forebears.

I believe this is true multiculturalism and the future for a safe, homogenous Australia.

Western Europe, Australia and the US have developed social conditions that are open to abuse by some who have fouled their own nests by unlimited breeding. Such people are without concern for the fragile ecology of our country and are prepared to illegally invade our shores to steal our way of life.

I don't believe that Australia wants, or needs, people who are exclusive, whether by religion, race or politics.

If this makes me intolerant, then so be it.

Bill Barlow, Concord West

Viewers deprived by digital push

When will the powers that be stop periodically switching television broadcasting over to digital transmission?

I would be surprised if any more than

2 per cent of the viewing public have digital television receivers, so the vast majority must have half-screen viewing foisted on them for long periods.

In panel shows, for instance, often one can hear the voice -- but alas, no face. In sports where running scores are displayed in the corner of the screen, there is insufficient data visible to assist at all.

In ordinary soapies, the sides of the rooms look curved.

It is a real pain. and to what purpose?

To force people to buy digital receivers? Surely not.

Of course, the really big loser in all of this is the paying backbone of television -- the advertiser. If the company paying for an advertisement bothered to see how much of the ad was readable during these periods, they would

Letters to the Editor

only pay half price. Quite often, the name, telephone number, address or full details of the product cannot be properly read.

As nothing has been done to stop

this practice so far, we can only guess

what type of television set the Telecommunications Minister possesses. Happy viewing.

Bill Ryan, Ocean Shores

E-talk

Transport Minister Carl Scully must think train users are stupid if he expects them to believe that the increase in passenger numbers is an acceptable reason for slowing down the proposed new timetable. The use of motor cars has increased in Sydney too, with all the attendant negative impacts, but trip times have not got longer, they have got shorter. It's called "network capacity", Minister.

Nat Buckley, Strathfield

"Jane's story" (Daily Telegraph, November 20) reveals nothing more or less than terrorism in the suburbs. Simple as that. And a legacy of Paul Whelan and Peter Ryan assuring us over the years that crime figures were down and that everything was hunky dory. Not out here it ain't. Bring in the SAS.

T. Nicolaou, Bankstown

Well, you have sunk to a new low. We do not need to read in graphic detail about the atrocious acts committed against this victim, "Jane". Children can read and should not be subjected to these brutalities. You will argue you are the champions of free speech but I suggest you are simply profiteering from others' pain. Yes, the news needs to be printed and the community needs to be informed, but we do not need to know the sordid details. That is a matter for the police and the prosecution and a court of law.

J. Towner, Winmalee

Can we be spared the outpourings of those yesterday's men, the former Australian prime ministers? There seem to be ever-increasing appearances on television and in the press of Gough Whitlam, Malcolm Fraser, Bob Hawke and Paul Keating, all of whom (except Hawke) were seen to have outlived their usefulness. Suddenly, they all seem to know what is best for us all, even though they didn't have a clue during their tenure of office.

W.T. Wright, Nambucca Heads

Word power

PUPIL/STUDENT

The Concise Oxford Dictionary, Tenth Edition, draws a distinction between a pupil ("a person who is taught by another, especially a school child) and a student ("a person studying at a university or other place of higher education"). The Oxford concedes, however, that in North America, "student" can be used to describe a school child as well. The Macquarie Dictionary also draws the pupil/student distinction -- a pupil being defined by this source as "one who is under an instructor or teacher", with a student being one who "is engaged in a course of study and instruction at a college, university, or professional or technical school". It has been said that calling a pupil a student is like calling a conscript a volunteer; but generally in Australia, student is the universal term, whatever the student's age. At least one form of pupil, however, is unlikely to be of school age -- a pupil barrister.

PRINT-THROUGH

Letters to the Editor

The unwanted transfer of sound from one part of a recording tape to another when the tape is stored on reels and successive layers are in contact with each other. A familiar phenomenon to those whose listening habits involved cassette tapes and headphones, usually late at night; the opening chords of a tune announced themselves faintly just before arriving at full volume. For the CD generation, this is ancient history.

GRASS

Noun and verb, referring to one who "grasses" to the police, i.e. is a police informer, usually for a reward. It is believed to be a contraction of "grasshopper", rhyming slang for "copper" -- policeman. Grass is also a slang term for cannabis.

HUNKY DORY

To be OK -- everything is good. For example: "If you pay your bill on time, everything will be hunky dory." One theory about its origin is that Huncho-dori was a main street in Yokohama, Japan, that was frequented by American sailors on leave. To be in Huncho-dori was to be enjoying leisure activities and having a good time. David Bowie released an album called Hunky Dory in 1971; those who listened to it on tape had to endure unwelcome print-through (q.v.).

Q.V.

The abbreviation q.v. is used to direct a reader to another part of a text for further information. It is derived from the Latin quod vide -- "which see".

Schools say thank you

Schools have asked The Daily Telegraph for a forum to thank the thousands of people who have contributed tokens as part of our Free Books for Schools program. The following are today's messages of thanks.

The staff, parents and, most importantly, students at Casino Public School offer their endless thanks for the opportunity to participate in the Free Books for Schools program. It is not often we can "get something for nothing" in this day and age. If we had more projects like this to unite and bond us as one, then we would certainly have fewer wars (definitely fewer people who felt the need to be at war, anyway).

Janelle Jeffery, teacher/librarian,

Casino Public School

The children, parents and teachers of St Patrick's Kogarah would like to thank The Daily Telegraph for its Free Books for Schools promotion. As a result of this wonderful initiative, we have been able to purchase an extensive variety of books from kindergarten through to year 6 to add to both our library and classroom collection. We would also like to thank our St Patrick's parishioners who enthusiastically supported us in bringing their tokens along to Sunday Mass. Also a big thank you to Alison Mee and the St George Illawarra first-grade rugby league team who contributed their tokens to our collection.

Jenny Crippin (library technician),

Anne Verrender (assistant principal),

St Patrick's Primary School, Kogarah

Schools can email us at news@dailytelegraph.com.au or fax us on 9288-2535.

In search

HMAS VENGEANCE 'STEAMING PARTY'

Letters to the Editor

A reunion for crew members who sailed on "SS Austurias" to UK, October 1952, will be held at Redfern RSL on Friday, December 14, 2001, at 1100 hours. Please contact Erick Bouvier on 0293495158.

WARLAND, FITZGERALD, WYATT, STRINGER families

I am trying to contact any relatives of Ernest Robert S. Warland and wife Amelia (nee Stringer). They lived at "Mafeking", 70 Kensington St, Summer Hill. Ernest died in 1940, a retired stationmaster. They had three children -- Ivy Pearl M. Taylor, Oswald E. Warland and Ruby May Butler. Amelia had a twin sister, Catherine, who married a Thomas Havelock Fitzgerald in 1880 at Tamworth, NSW. Thomas was a butcher. They had two sons -- Thomas Havelock Fitzgerald, born 1881, Tamworth, and John Bertie Fitzgerald, born at Glencoe near Glen Innes, NSW, in 1882. This is the last town that I can find them in. I would be grateful to have contact with any members of these families, as Catherine and Amelia are the only children of Mary Jane (nee Wyatt) and John Stringer's family of 12 (Tamworth) whose descendants I have been unable to locate. Contact Mrs Lesley McNee, 10 Harran St, Southport, Qld 4215, phone 0755322729.

LYNETTE ROGERS and JOHN McGRATH

I am looking for cousins Lynette Rogers (nee McGrath) and her brother John McGrath. Their parents were Dorothy Sharp (McGrath) and Thomas McGrath, both deceased. Any information for putting together family history would be appreciated. Contact Margaret Jenkins, 102 Silverdale Rd, Silverdale, NSW 2752.

ALFRED SMITH

We are researching the family of Alfred Smith, who was married to Elizabeth Tucker, Sarah Anne Green and Charlotte Bowers. They lived in the Surry Hills, Redfern, Waterloo and other inner-city areas. He was a vanman. Children were (with Elizabeth Tucker): Elizabeth, married John Sinclair in 1885, Alfred, George (my partner's grandfather). With Sarah Green: son Sydney (born 1877). With Charlotte Bowers: Clara, married to Joseph A.A. Tall (address 26 High Holborn St, Surry Hills), Percy and Albert. We would like to hear from members of this extended family to try to fill in some family gaps. Please contact Lynne Randell or Ray Smith on 96259325 or e-mail randellm@aol.com.

SIDNEY AND DORIS SMITH

I seek contact with any descendants of Sidney Walter and Doris May Smith, married November 9, 1935, in Manly, last known address 1a Pittwater Rd, Manly. They had six children -- Valerie, Kay, Douglass (sic), Sandra, Beverley and Barry W. If you have any information about the Smith family, please contact Kirsten Hamilton via e-mail summer--wind2@hotmail.com or phone 0417685322.

RAY HINES

I am trying to find information on Ray Hines, who toured New Zealand with the Australian rugby league side of 1935. He played with Western Suburbs and South Sydney but I have no record of him after 1939. Contact David Middleton, PO Box 1452, Castle Hill, NSW 2154. Phone 0411180320.

NEV and MARY TREMBLE

I am looking for these old friends, last known in the Canterbury area. I am also looking for Brian and Val Hall, last known in the Camden area. Anyone knowing their whereabouts, contact Fritz Fraser on 0246271705.

NORTH STEYNE SURF CLUB and WILLOUGHBY JUNIOR RUGBY CLUB

Members of both clubs and friends from about 1960-61, please contact Bob Parsons, who wishes to organise a "40 years on" reunion early in 2002. Phone/fax 94166328 or mobile 0419290992.

Letters to the Editor

If you have a reunion or are seeking information, send the details to In Search, Letters Editor, PO Box 2808, GPO Sydney, NSW 2001 or email us at letters@dailytelegraph.com.au. Include a contact name and phone number. Emails should not include attachments.

Mail

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Letters should be no more than 250 words, clearly typed or neatly hand written. Name and address and phone number must be supplied for verification.

Letters may be edited.

Load-Date: November 23, 2001

From university of jihad, a teacher of terror; CALL TO ARMS

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

September 22, 2001 Saturday

Late Edition

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Section: SUPPLEMENT; Pg. 1

Length: 3486 words

Byline: Paul McGeough.

Body

The dispensers of Infinite Justice will have trouble finding Osama bin Laden. He has learnt his lessons well, writes Paul McGeough.

August nights are the hottest. There is some relief in a cooling evening wind that whips through the ragged folds of Afghanistan's eastern mountains, but as Osama bin Laden put down the phone, he knew that he had to get away. Fast.

As darkness took hold, his men had gathered for prayer in the Kili al-Badr training camp for terrorists.

Now, food was being prepared and they broke into small groups as the night embraced their rocky hideaway drinking green tea; talking about their wars; and tuning in to news bulletins from around the globe on crackling short-wave radios.

But others were listening too bin Laden knew that, even before he lifted the handset of the satellite phone. And when Washington did pick up the signal, it was relayed to Bill Clinton's holiday retreat at Martha's Vineyard.

It was 3am on August 20, 1998. The president uttered just one word: "Go".

Soon and sudden, dozens of titanium-covered warheads thundered in from the Arabian Sea, hammering into the treeless Afghan mountains. Furquan Bhatti was on guard duty at bin Laden's camp: "There was light and explosions all over. There was chaos and fire everywhere."

The telephone intercept allowed the United States to pinpoint bin Laden's precise whereabouts to within 10 metres. But it seems the superpower didn't bank on the terrorist moving in the hours between his phone call and the Tomahawk missile attack.

The next time the satellite phone dialled out from the mountains, the voice was deliberately different. The caller was Dr Haq, one of bin Laden's cadres, and he tapped in a number for the editor of Al-Qods, an Arabic newspaper in London.

He had a message for its readers that he knew would get to the White House: "Bin Laden wants the Muslim world to know that he is alive and safe. The battle has not yet begun we plan to answer with actions, not words." IF what

From university of jihad, a teacher of terror CALL TO ARMS

investigative authorities say is right, there was a point not long before that US strike on bin Laden in 1998 when the macabre threads of this man's mind must have been

coming together in a tapestry of apocalyptic proportions.

Pick any day in the northern spring of 1998, bin Laden was purposefully putting men and money in place for an overlapping campaign of death and destruction that would unfold over three years.

In the coming August, his attacks on the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam would cause 257 deaths and injure thousands. And his attacks last week on New York and Washington would account for more than 6,000 deaths; they would destroy one of the most potent symbols of US power the World Trade Centre; and they would badly disfigure another the Pentagon.

Between the execution of those two plans, two others that were equally grotesque were foiled.

Bin Laden had decided to mark the millennium celebrations at the start of last year by wreathing the world in death and destruction Los Angeles airport, one of the busiest in the world, was to be bombed; the Radisson hotel in Amman, Jordan, would be

bombed when it was booked out with Christian pilgrims; border crossings between Jordan and Israel and Christian holy sites packed with pilgrims also would be bombed.

That is why the Pentagon has branded bin Laden as the most dangerous man in the world. It's why the US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, has dubbed him "the CEO of Terrorism Inc" and it is why, when George Bush said this week he wanted bin Laden "dead or alive", it was not a rhetorical flourish by the President.

Bin Laden's phone call on the night of the US missile attack in 1998 was intentionally provocative.

He knew the Americans were desperate to catch him over his choreography of the huge car and truck bomb attacks on the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam two weeks earlier eight years to the day after the arrival of US troops into Saudi Arabia

in the wake of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

More specifically, he would have known that a powerful attack on himself and his camps was imminent he has cronies at all levels of the Pakistani secret service and they would have informed him that three days before the US assault on his mountain redoubt, all US citizens had been told to leave Pakistan, and a Boeing 737 had been chartered to evacuate embassy staff from Islamabad.

Once again, the US is after bin Laden and this time usually squeamish Americans are telling the President through opinion polls that they are ready for the loss of soldiers' lives and that they don't care about the possible loss of civilian lives in Afghanistan.

But the damp-squib outcome of the 1998 missile attack on bin Laden's camps, and his accomplishments since then, confirm that putting bin Laden out of business is no easy task.

If the US troops and jets go in, they'll find little more than a dusty post-box operation, a virtual bunker from which the wraith-like Saudi millionaire has globalised and privatised a practice that used to be local and state-sponsored.

Bin Laden has created terrorists without borders. His followers are strewn in a crescent across the globe, from the Philippines to the Maghreb, prompting this assessment by Bruce Hoffman, of the Rand Corporation think tank: "This is the first truly 'terrorist internationale'. Others have had pretensions, but [bin Laden] is the first to be able to do it. It's money, charisma, being in the right place at the right time they all play a role. But fundamentally, it's vision."

From university of jihad, a teacher of terror CALL TO ARMS

The bin Laden training camps are clearing houses that hone the skills of militiamen for terror groups around the world. Bin Laden has worked persistently to bring dozens of cells, involving as many as 5,000 militants in 50 to 60 countries, under his messianic pan-Islamic umbrella.

His battlefield is wherever the US or the perceived enemies of Islam are. In the words of Michael Sheehan, a former co-ordinator of the State Department's counter-terrorism office: "The role of Afghanistan is now absolutely clear every Islamic militant we've looked at goes scurrying back there for sanctuary."

Some of the 12 training camps bin Laden operates near the Pakistani border are sophisticated structures, built with the assistance of the CIA in the '80s when Washington poured billions into the Afghan war in an attempt to block Soviet expansionism.

But most of the camps are simple mud-brick structures that can be replaced in days or weeks. They are sure to be empty now bin Laden and his men will have scattered in those desolate mountains.

The turn-off on the road for those going to the camps was a guesthouse bin Laden operated in the Pakistani border town of Peshawar.

US investigators believe that it was from there that one of bin Laden's key lieutenants directed the millennium plots in Jordan and on the US west coast.

That man is Abu Zubaydah, a Palestinian from the Gaza Strip.

He also was the "post box" through which terrorist cells around the world communicated with bin Laden and the man who screened all candidates for training before they went to the camps and to fight for the extremist Taliban.

They are expected to swear an oath of allegiance. Raed Hijazi, a 32-year-old Palestinian who abandoned his job as a Boston taxi driver to undergo advanced training in explosives in one of the Afghan camps, said he was made to read from a slip of paper: "In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate, I promise to ally myself to Osama bin Laden for the sake of God."

Those who come are called the Afghan Arabs but there's hardly an Afghan among them. Instead, they are Sudanese and Saudi, Pakistani and Palestinian, Chechin and Chinese. There are Algerians, Lebanese, Egyptians, Syrians, Yemenis, Iraqis and they all believe in the bin Laden crusade.

They know what their leader requires of them, so when they return to their home bases in the US, in Europe and in the Middle East they gather about themselves in tight-knit cells.

They disappear into local Arab communities, often laying the groundwork for a "sleeper" who is unknown to them and whose task has not been revealed.

Strict security ensures that only those at the top bin Laden and his key lieutenants are aware of all the elements of any plot. AL-QAEDA is an international terrorist resource centre. When assistance, guidance or funds are needed, the would-be terrorists are drawn back to Afghanistan, back to the mountains and to bin Laden.

And this is the critical point at which the grand master gets to pick and choose which of the cell activities he will become directly involved in: If the time is right and if the plot is sufficiently grotesque or opportune, he and his lieutenants insist on having the power to direct or finesse an undertaking in return for their make-or-break contribution to it.

In bustling Brooklyn, New York City, the Alkifah Refugee Centre, a gathering point for refugees and migrants from the Middle East and North Africa, became a de-facto recruitment centre.

Mahmud Abouhalima, an Egyptian who arrived in New York in 1985 and who was convicted for his role in the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Centre, signed up at the centre to fight for Islam in Afghanistan.

From university of jihad, a teacher of terror CALL TO ARMS

He told investigators that he spent more than two months in a training camp, learning how to use an AK-47 assault rifle and rocket-propelled grenade launchers before fighting the Soviets with a mujahideen unit, which he was told was being funded by the US.

A Palestinian with whom he travelled to Pakistan and then to Afghanistan Mohammed Saddiq Odeh was this year convicted for his involvement in the bombing of the US embassy in Nairobi in 1998.

There have been failures.

A cell in Jordan had a millennium project on the drawing boards for four years. It was to be a spectacle in horror investigators say that on January 1, 2000, they intended to destroy the 400-room Radisson Hotel in Amman with all its Christian pilgrim guests along with two Christian holy sites and two Israeli border crossings.

Al-Qaeda wanted this exercise to be the next big bang after the 1998 attacks on the African embassies.

But there was a leak and with just four weeks to go before the new year, the cell was torn apart by the Jordanian police.

Another plot was foiled in the US, where the Algerian Ahmed Ressay was arrested driving a car laden with explosives and detonators from Canada into the US.

But bin Laden is not in a hurry.

At times he lives with his family in a cave with few creature comforts. More often he is constantly on the move.

When he needs to send secure messages to operatives abroad, he is more likely to send it down endless mountain passes by a man on a donkey than to send it encrypted, through the ether.

But despite the surroundings, the camps are the most advanced educational institutions in the country.

One US investigator describe them as "universities for jihad". Another said bin Laden was the Ford Foundation of terrorists.

Classes are up to date students learn about cell phone and satellite communication, their notes on how to make bombs with everyday materials are circulated on CD-ROMs and they learn how to encrypt mail.

There is inordinate attention to detail before the 1998 embassy bombings a wooden, scale model of the Nairobi building was constructed in one of the camps.

Ahmed Ressay, the man whose Los Angeles plot was foiled, told a US court how the 50 to 100 people he trained with were exhorted to kill Americans and were lectured on targeting enemy installations big companies, power stations, airports and railways.

Also, he had been instructed on poisoning people by putting toxins on doorknobs and had taken part in experiments in which dogs had been injected with cyanide.

Outside experts including at least one former US serviceman were brought in to lecture on the finer points of weapons, urban fighting, counter-intelligence and cell dynamics. And experts from Hezbollah, the Iranian-backed Lebanese militia, lectured on the art of making of car bombs.

Mohammed Khaled Mihraban, a camp graduate tracked down by The New York Times while fighting in the Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan, said: "We learnt how to plant mines, how to make bombs using dynamite and how to kill someone quietly." If asked, would he go to London, Paris or New York to blow up women and children for Islam? "Yes, I would do it," he said.

US authorities claim the participants in nearly every terrorist act against the US in the past decade honed their skills in the camps and trenches of Afghanistan.

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The CIA reckons up to 70,000 activists from more than 50 countries have fought in Afghanistan in recent years. And that more than 5,000 of them went through the bin Laden camps before spreading out across the globe with increased confidence, experience and ability.

They learnt from their mistakes.

When a local group in Yemen tried to attack the USS Sullivans in January last year, they overloaded their attack boat with explosives it sank long before it got near the target.

So in October last year, a consultant from al-Qaeda, who the CIA has identified as Mohammed Omar al-Harazi, went in to help on a second attempt successfully ramming an explosives-laden skiff into the USS Cole, which was refuelling in Aden killing 17 US seamen and blowing a 15 metre-diameter hole in the side of the ship.

The FBI says bin Laden helped fund and had a guiding hand in the first attempt to blow up the World Trade Centre in 1993. Six died, 1,000 were injured and the damage cost hundreds of millions of dollars to repair. But the conspirators complained that they had ran out of money and that their plan to have one of the WTC towers topple into its twin had failed because those charged with placing the bomb had put it next to the wrong support structure in the WTC basement.

The man on the ground in charge of the project was the British-educated extremist Ramzi Yousef. Later he botched an incredible plan to explode 12 airliners over the Pacific when he caused a house fire while practising with home-made bomb in a Manila apartment. He fled but was arrested.

Yousef is now in jail. But last week his two crazed schemes became one in the attack that shook America and the world.

US and other intelligence services have had great difficulty infiltrating the bin Laden organisation.

They do know that his core group includes Ayman al-Zawahiri, head of the Egyptian fundamentalist group Islamic Jihad, which was responsible for the 1981 assassination of Egyptian president Anwar Sadat.

Others include Mohammed Atef, head of bin Laden's military operations, who US authorities accuse of a direct involvement in last week's attacks, the attack on the Cole and the embassy attacks in Africa.

A 238-page indictment of bin Laden for the 1998 embassy bombings named Atef as a member of the al-Qaeda committee that approved all terrorist actions and as a vital player in a 1993 attack on US soldiers serving with the United Nations in Somalia.

Eighteen soldiers died and there were appalling TV images of the body of one being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu, the Somali capital. Incredibly, it took the US five years to identify bin Laden as the instigator of the violence.

A third core group member is Rifai Taha, another Egyptian accused of trying to assassinate the current Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak, and the slaughter of 58 foreign tourists at Luxor in 1997. THE thousands of US investigators working on the bin Laden case in the wake of last week's attacks are confident he is the right and only suspect.

They claim to have gathered detailed evidence from intercepts on telephone lines and sufficient detail on the background of the 19 terrorists who died in the attacks and their associates to lock in the al-Qaeda organisation and its bearded leader as the guilty parties.

The White House has dropped virtually its entire agenda to focus on the war which Bush says will be fought on four fronts military, diplomacy, intelligence and finance.

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The military front is the one that causes the most anxiety, principally because there has never been a war like this and because the Administration's rhetoric has raised great expectations of what Americans call a "kick butt" confrontation.

After the Deputy Secretary for Defence, Paul Wolfowitz, uttered these words: "It's not simply a matter of capturing people and holding them accountable, but removing the sanctuaries ending states who sponsor terrorism," more than 60 per cent of respondents to a television opinion poll thought it would be acceptable to lose 1,000 US lives in such an operation.

And Vice-President Dick Cheney derided the Clinton missile attacks on bin Laden in 1998, when he said of the coming military campaign: "This will not be just a few Cruise missiles flying around for the TV cameras."

A veil of secrecy now surrounds the detail of any military campaign, but on Thursday 100 fighter aircraft were sent to the Middle East and Central Asia to join about 200 already in those regions and yesterday thousands of Marines began mobilising for

what an army insider said would be "sustained ground combat".

The difficulty with this war is that there is no formal enemy, no territory to be fought over in the usual sense of a war.

Sending an army to capture one man on his home ground is tough. The US failed when it went after the Somali warlord Mohammed Farah Aidid; and Saddam Hussein was bloodied, but he has seen off all the leaders of the world coalition that took him on in Desert Storm.

The US did capture the Panamanian strongman Manuel Noriega but it was able to operate from its own military bases in Panama.

And in the words of the military planners who, in the Gulf crisis gave the world the term "collateral damage" as a device to avoid discussing civilian losses, Afghanistan is "target impoverished" that means that after 20 years of war there is nothing left for the Americans to hit.

A search of the Afghan mountains for bin Laden might simply prove to be a hard search for US special forces, but if they have to fight the Taliban to get to bin Laden the search could become an ugly, protracted affair.

The US troops would have to carry with them all they needed there would be no supply lines across the endless mountain ranges and they would not be able to have heavy armoured vehicles to cover them on what are donkey trails and precipices.

And 20 years of war have left the country carpeted with land mines.

The US Air Force is preparing B-2 and B-52 bombers with new high-tech precision heavy bombs at bases in the US and in the Indian Ocean. Elite special forces units at Fort Bragg, in North Carolina, and Fort Campbell, in Kentucky, are on standby.

The Taliban has a motley fleet of Soviet-made MiG-21 and SU-22 jets and some Mi-24 and Mi-8 helicopters. It also has Soviet T-59 and T-55 tanks, artillery guns, rocket-propelled grenades, anti-aircraft and anti-tank missiles. The Taliban also has Russian-made Scud missiles, CIA-donated Stinger missiles and a handful of aged Soviet fighter jets.

But to mount a "surgical" operation to extract bin Laden needs excellent intelligence the troops need to know precisely where he is and how to get to him.

The US is likely to be offered Russian intelligence most of it 10 years old and probably of little value except for geography. And Washington has demanded access to Pakistani intelligence but that is quite capable of being booby-trapped with errors of fact or omission by elements of the Pakistani secret service which are in cahoots with the Taliban and bin Laden.

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In 1979, the Soviet Union sent its best men and machines to Afghanistan for a campaign the government believed would last for only months. They were there for a decade, and as they limped away in defeat in 1989 some called the whole adventure Moscow's Vietnam.

Leo Korolkov was a senior Soviet officer who was there for the whole decade in which 15,000 Soviet soldiers died.

His memories are a bleak warning to the Americans as they head for Afghanistan: "Modern weapons, rockets, laser-guided missiles, they are useless against those mountains.

"I feel sorry for the people who are going to be thrown into those deserted regions, where the Afghans know every rock and every cave. No map, no computer training can prepare you for it."

Paulmcgeough@aol.com

THE SECRET ARMIES

Nov 13, 1995

Bin Laden assumed responsible for car-bomb attack killing 5

Americans and 2 Indians

Oct 12, 2000

A small boat exploded while refuelling beside the destroyer USS Cole killing 17 sailors.

Oct 3, 1999

Bin Laden suggests responsibility for death of 18 Army Rangers during US operations in Somali

Aug 7, 1998

Bin Laden indicted for car-bomb attacks on US embassies in two African capitals killing 244 people

SUSPECTED BIN LADEN TRAINING CAMP

Supported by the Taliban since 1996, Bin Laden has many training camps for terrorists. The camps also provide around 1,000 Arab fighters for use by the Taliban in the civil war.

Bin Laden moves daily to avoid detection, his family are believed to be in Kandahar.

Graphic

TWO ILLUS: Elusive ... Osama bin Laden at one of his hideaways in 1998. Photo: AP World's most wanted ... Osama bin Laden TWO MAPS: THE SECRET ARMIES; SUSPECTED BIN LADEN TRAINING CAMPS DIAG: The chain of command

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Anti-Semitic lies and hate threaten us all

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Body

Rampant anti-Semitism in the Muslim world, from schools to press, TV and internet, not only makes Middle East peace impossible, says Harold Evans -but makes us all targets now

Just before he was given the boot by President Bush, Yassir Arafat made an extraordinary offer -extraordinary because it was not one of the specific demands Bush was about to make, extraordinary because Arafat acknowledged a hidden horror: the indoctrination of the delusional young people who carry out suicide bombings. In a six-page private memorandum he sent to President Bush and Arab capitals outlining his 100-day plan for reform, Arafat said he would "renounce fanaticism in the educational curricula and spread the spirit of democracy and enlightenment and openness".

There is a lot under the stone Arafat has lifted. Fanaticism has been bred into the suicide murderers and millions of young people throughout the Arab nations with scant attention by media, governments, academia and churches in the civilised world. The Palestinian schools, financed by Europe, are open sewers in terms of the hatred they seed - hatred not just of Israel, but of all Jews and all their friends. Dr Ahmad Abu Halabiya, former acting rector of the Islamic University in Gaza, speaks the message: "Wherever you are, kill the Jews, the Americans who are like them and those who stand by them."

Arab leaders come to Washington and London and Geneva with formulas for peace, while at home they feed their populations with similar incitements. It means that even if by some miracle there is agreement on the shape of a Palestinian state, there will be no peace in the Middle East for a generation. The Israelis may forget or forgive the suicide assassins; the Palestinians may put behind them the humiliations of occupation. But the political conflict over Palestine is only one aspect of the fanaticism that has been fomented. It adds up to the dehumanisation of all Jews and it has been manufactured and propagated throughout the Middle East and south Asia on a scale and intensity that is utterly unprecedented. This is something relatively new in the Islamic world. There was more tolerance for Jews in the Islamic empire than ever there was in Christian Europe.

I was aware, as we all are, that the Palestinians hate the state of Israel. What has surprised me is the virulence of this new anti-Semitism throughout all the Muslim countries. It is frenzied, vociferous, paranoid, vicious and prolific, and is only incidentally connected to the Palestinian conflict. Hope, the familiar bromide, seems to have little to do with it. The moment of high hope following Camp David saw a surge, not a diminution, in the tide. It is a singular phenomenon; there is nothing comparable to it in relation to Arabs or Muslims.

Everyone talking about Palestine or terrorism is talking in a vacuum, for nothing can be understood without a proper appreciation of the way minds have been poisoned. A single skinhead assault on a synagogue in Europe is

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news, but not the unrelenting daily assault on Jews waged from Morocco to Cairo to Damascus, from Baghdad to Teheran, the Gaza Strip to Karachi.

The paradox is that the world is connected as never before in terms of the flow of current, but many of the wires are lethally bare. The religious fanaticism that has spawned and condoned terrorism and drives the new anti-Semitism is insensible to reason. Jonathan Swift recognised our dilemma more than 200 years ago: "You cannot reason a person out of something he did not reason himself into."

What we are up against is best illustrated by what the Jews did to the World Trade Centre. Everyone in the Muslim world knows that September 11 was a Jewish plot to pave the way for a joint Israeli-US military operation against not just Osama bin Laden and the Taliban but also Islamic militants in Palestine. On the day of the bombing, 4,000 Jews were absent from the World Trade Centre; they had been tipped off.

I thought this canard had long ago vanished up its own orifice, but it was being retailed with all sincerity by a Pakistani taxi driver last week in New York of all places -which proves nothing except that he is an accurate representation of a now unshakeable Muslim conviction. Millions and millions and millions believe this rubbish, as a Gallup Poll has found after questioning people in nine predominantly Islamic countries -Pakistan, Iran, Indonesia, Turkey, Lebanon, Morocco, Kuwait, Jordan and Saudi Arabia -representing about half the world's Muslim population.

Some 67 per cent found the attacks morally unjustified, which is something why not 100 per cent? -but they were also asked if they believed reports that groups of Arabs carried out the bombings. Only in West-aligned Turkey was the answer Yes, but it was close; 46 per cent to 43 per cent. In all the other eight Islamic countries, the populations rejected the idea that Arabs or al-Qaeda were responsible. Repeat, that is a poll just a couple of months ago, after millions of words from reporters and exultant videos from the Osama bin Laden show. The majorities are overwhelming in Pakistan, Kuwait, Iran and Indonesia -in Pakistan only 4 per cent accept that the killers were Arabs. Thomas Friedman, of The New York Times, reported last month from Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim state, that nobody has any doubt about the Mossad conspiracy.

Who could be naive/crazy/malign/misguided enough to disseminate such fabrications? The effluent is from official sources, newspapers and television in Arab states, from schools and government-funded mosques, from Arab columnists and editorial writers, cartoonists, clerics and intellectuals, from websites that trail into an infinity of iniquity. The appearance of modernity in the Arab media is illusory. More important than the presence of the hardware is the absence of the software, the notion of a ruggedly independent self-critical free press. CNN will film American bomb damage in Afghanistan; al-Jazeera and the Middle East stations would never dream of talking to the orphans and widows whose loved ones were blown apart by a suicide bomber. An Arab critic of America and the coalition is always given the last word. How could people be so susceptible to misinformation? Well, conspiracy theories simplify a complex world. The absence of evidence is itself proof of plot: missing records at Pearl Harbor, missing bullets in Dallas, missing bodies in Jenin. Preconceptions are outfitted in fantasy. Contradiction by authority is mere affirmation of the vastness of the plot: so he's in it, too. Conspiracy and rumour bloom, especially where the flow of news and opinion is restricted and illiteracy is high.

But there is another explanation for the potency of lies today. It is the aura of authenticity provided by technology, by the internet. John Daniszewski, of the Los Angeles Times, asked an editor of The Nation in Islamabad, Ayesha Haroon, why they blamed Israel. "It is quite possible that there was deliberate malice in printing it," she admitted. "I also think it has to do with the internet. When you see something on a computer, you tend to believe it is true." Here in our new magic is a source of much misery. An Indonesian visiting the Islamic stronghold of Yogyakarta, according to Friedman, was alarmed by the tide running for jihad against Christians and Jews. Internet users are only 5 per cent of the population, but these 5 per cent spread rumours about Jews to everyone else. "They say, 'He got it from the internet'. They think it's the Bible."

The smear that defiles the Jews who died in the World Trade Centre, that millions perceive as reality, owes its original currency in September 2001 to a website called InformationTimes.com, "an independent news and information service" whose address was given as the Press Building in Washington. I thought it worth asking the

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editor in chief, Syed Adeeb, for the evidence. He told me his source was the TV station Al Manar in the Lebanon. When I asked if he had any qualms about relying on Al Manar because it was a mouthpiece for the terrorist group Hezbollah, which exists "to stage an effective psychological warfare with the Zionist enemy", Adeeb's reply was: "Well, it is a very popular station." Adeeb clearly believed his story; when I mentioned that there were Jews who died in the towers, he conceded that one or two might have died, but he found it sinister that nobody could tell him just how many.

He volunteered that he was an American citizen and that some of his best friends were Jews. Adeeb's approach to the world speaks for itself in his headlines: "Israelis with bomb material arrested in Washington"; "Israeli mafia controls US Congress"; "Crazy Hindu terrorists threaten America"; "FBI and CIA should investigate the Israeli lobby"; "Barbarous Israeli soldiers rape and torture 86 women in Nablus, Palestine".

I asked for the source of that rape story and was referred to the Labour MP for Birmingham Selly Oak, Lynne Jones. I checked. Dr Jones did indeed put the atrocity in circulation, quoting an e-mail from an Anthony Razook in Nablus, but she was careful to say that "this report has not been authenticated". Such qualifications evaporate in the endless laundering of information.

Once upon a time stories such as this would circulate only on smudged cyclostyled sheets that would never see the light of day. But now Wizards of Oz such as Adeeb have a megaphone to a gullible world, with this spurious authenticity of electronic delivery. In the thirties, Cordell Hull complained of print and radio that a lie went half way round the world before truth had time to put its trousers on; nowadays it has been to Mars and back before anyone is half awake. At the end of the line of incendiary headlines and the careless propagation of e-mail there is Danny Pearl, tortured and butchered because he was a Jew and a reporter.

Unfortunately, reporting and comment in the West all too often, with the best of motives, ingenuously reinforce the anti-Semitic mindset. Israel is supported, in Lenin's phrase, like a rope supports a hanging man. Equal weight is given to information from corrupt police states and proven liars as to information from a vigorous, self-critical democracy. The pious but fatuous posture is that this is somehow fair, as if truth existed in a moral vacuum, something to be measured by the yard, like calico. Five million Jews in Israel are a vulnerable minority surrounded by 300 million Muslims governed for the most part by authoritarian regimes, quasi-police states that in more than 50 years have never ceased trying to wipe it out by war and terrorism. They muzzle dissent and critical reporting, they run vengeful penal systems and toxic schools, they have failed in almost every measure of social and political justice, they deflect the frustrations of their streets to the scapegoat of Zionism and they breed and finance international terrorism. Yet it is Israel that is regarded with scepticism and sometimes hostility.

Take the battle of Jenin. The presumption in the feeding frenzy in the best newspapers in Europe and in hours and hours of television was that the Palestinian stories of 3,000 killed and buried in secret mass graves must be true, though the main propagator of this story, Saeb Erekat, has been accused of being a liar. The Guardian was even moved to write the editorial opinion that Israel's attacks on Jenin were "every bit as repellent" as Osama bin Laden's attack on New York on September 11.

Every bit as repellent? Did we miss something? Some American provocation of Osama comparable to the continuous murder of Israeli women, children, the old and the sick? Was something going on in the World Trade Centre as menacing as the making of bombs in Jenin, known proudly to Palestinians as Suicide Capital? In fact, there was no massacre, no mass graves. Human Rights Watch has since put the death toll at 54, including, on their count, 22 civilians -the Israelis say 3. Some Palestinian militants in fact claim Jenin as a victory in the killing of 23 Israeli soldiers.

Of course, the press had a duty to report the Palestinians' allegations of massacre; it was entitled to raise questions and express alarm in the editorial columns. But truth did not lie in the balance between competing statements, and it was ill served by hysteria. Big stories such as this demand special rigour in the reporting, restraint in the language, scrupulous care in the headlining, proper attribution of sources and above all a sense of responsibility: "genocide" is too agonising when real for it to be devalued by its use as small change. To describe suicide bombers as "martyrs", as a recent British headline did, is to endorse a barbarity; Palestinians can call

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bombers martyrs if they like but it is a defamation of historic martyrs who gave their lives to save others, not to kill randomly and for financial reward for their families. Words, said Churchill, are the only things that last for ever. We should all have as much care with the explosive power of words as we expect airports to have with our luggage.

Let me reject the sophistry that to question such matters is to excuse everything done under the guise of protesting anti-Semitism. It is not anti-Semitic to raise questions about Jenin, no more than it is anti-press to raise questions about the reporting. It is not anti-Semitic to report and protest at ill treatment of Palestinians. It is not anti-Semitic to consider whether Sharon's past belies his promises for the future. It is not anti-Semitic to deplore the long occupation, though originally brought about by the Arab leaders who instigated and lost three wars.

It IS anti-Semitic to vilify the state of Israel as a diabolical abstraction, reserving tolerance for the individual Jew but not the collective Jew; it IS anti-Semitic to invent malignant outrages; it is anti-Semitic consistently to condemn in Israel what you ignore or condone elsewhere; it is, above all, anti-Semitic to de-humanise Judaism and the Jewish people such as to incite and justify their extermination. That is what we have seen thousands and thousands of times over on a preposterous scale.

The European Community recently voted more millions to the Palestinian Authority. Corrupt as it is, one sympathises with its need for the relief of suffering and poverty, but should it not have been made a condition that the PA must cease using European money for racist propaganda through its schools, its mosques, on television and radio, in political rallies and summer camps? The fanaticism Arafat offers to renounce -as a bargaining chip, not a moral principle -is the fanaticism stimulated by his Palestinian Authority which, among other enlightenments, makes educational films of little girls singing their dedication to martyrdom. The degree of infection was manifest at Al Najah University in the city of Nablus, where the students put on a display entitled "The Sbarro Cafe Exhibition".

The Sbarro Cafe is the pizza parlour where a Palestinian suicide bomber murdered 15 people taking a meal. The display, according to the Associated Press and Israeli media, included an exhibit with pizza slices and body parts strewn across the room. The walls were painted red to represent scattered blood.

It is hard looking for sanity to put in the picture -especially in the Department of Psychiatry at Ein Shams University in Cairo. Here is Dr Adel Sadeq, who is also chairman of the Arab Psychiatrists' Association, on suicide bombings: "As a professional psychiatrist, I say that the height of bliss comes with the end of the countdown: ten, nine, eight, seven six, five, four three, two, one. When the martyr reaches 'one' and he explodes, he has a sense of himself flying, because he knows for certain that he is not dead. It is a transition to another, more beautiful, world. None in the Western world sacrifices his life for his homeland. If his homeland is drowning, he is the first to jump ship. In our culture it is different...this is the only Arab weapon there is and anyone who says otherwise is a conspirator."

Next patient, please!

The Muslim world's relentless caricatures of the Jew are boringly on the same one note; Jews are always dirty, hook-nosed, money-grubbing, vindictive and scheming parasites. They are barbarians who deliberately spread vice, drugs and prostitution, and poison water. Among the fabrications: Israeli authorities infected by injection 300 Palestinian children with HIV during the years of the intifada; Israel poisoned Palestinians with uranium and nerve gas; Israel is giving out drug-laced chewing gum and chocolate intended to make women sexually corrupt; Jews use the blood of gentiles to make matzos for Passover (Al-Ahram, Cairo). This past April, state-funded San Francisco students put out a poster of a baby "slaughtered according to Jewish rites under American licence".

Incredibly, the Arab and Muslim media, and behind them their states, have resurrected that notorious Bolshevik forgery, the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. This supposedly occult document, which reads like something discarded as too ridiculous for the script of Mel Brooks's The Producers, is the secret Zionist plan by which satanic Jews will gain world domination. It has had more scholarly stakes through its heart than the umpteen re-enactments of Dracula, but this bizarre counterfeit is common currency in the Muslim world. A multi-million dollar 30-part series was produced in Egypt by Arab Radio and Television. With a cast of 400! And not as satire.

It is the Protocols that inspire Hamas, the Islamic resistance movement, to teach their children that the Jews control the world's wealth and mass media. According to Hamas -and who will be there in the classroom or on the

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street to raise a question? -Jews deliberately instigated the French and Russian revolutions, and World War I, so that they could wipe out the Islamic caliphate, and establish the League of Nations "in order to rule the world by their intermediary".

When I checked on the website Palestine Watch, by the way, to report on what they were telling the world about Israeli propaganda, I drew a blank, but there it described Hamas as seeking nothing other than peace with dignity, forbearing to mention the small matter that Hamas is dedicated to the destruction of the state of Israel.

Apart from the volume and intensity of the multi-media global campaign, there has been an ominous change in political direction. Arab frustration with the recognition of the state of Israel after the Second World War has for decades been expressed as "why should the Arabs have to compensate the Jews for the Holocaust that was perpetrated by Europeans".

Today the theme is that the Holocaust is a Zionist invention. It is expressed with a vehemence as astounding as the contempt for scholarship.

A typical columnist in Al-Akhbar, the Egyptian Government daily, on April 29: "The entire matter (the Holocaust), as many French and British scientists have proven, is nothing more than a huge Israeli plot aimed at extorting the German Government in particular and the European countries. I personally and in the light of this imaginary tale complain to Hitler, even saying to him, 'If only you had done it, brother, if only it had really happened, so that that the world could sigh in relief (without) their evil and sin'."

Hiri Manzour in the official Palestinian newspaper: "The figure of six million Jews cremated in the Nazi Auschwitz camps is a lie," a hoax promoted by Jews as part of their international "marketing operation".

Seif al-Jarawn in the Palestinian newspaper Al-Hayat al-Jadeeda: "They concocted horrible stories of gas chambers which Hitler, they claimed, used to burn them alive. The press overflowed with pictures of Jews being gunned down...or being pushed into gas chambers. The truth is that such malicious persecution was a malicious fabrication by the Jews."

Clearly here is a consistent attempt to undermine the moral foundations of the state of Israel and it is espoused by a number of supposedly moderate people. The former President of Iran, Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, had this to say on Tehran Radio: "One atomic bomb would wipe out Israel without trace while the Islamic world would only be damaged rather than destroyed by Israeli nuclear retaliation."

The brilliance of the whole campaign of anti-Semitism is its stupefying perversity: the Arab and Muslim media and mosques depict Israelis as Nazis even the conciliatory Barak and the hawkish Sharon are alike dressed up in swastikas with fangs dripping with blood -but media and mosque peddle the same Judeophobia that paved the way to Auschwitz. How can you talk to someone who conducts all discourse standing on his head screaming? People in the West who adopt the same murderous metaphor for Israel, and I heard it often on my recent visit to Europe, may be regarded as a joke in their own country, but that is not where the action is. They are moral idiots but they lend credibility to malevolent liars in the Middle East.

By comparison with the phantasmagoria I have described, it seems a small matter that without exception Palestinian school textbooks supplied by the PA Authority, and funded by Europe, have no space in the maps for the sovereign state of Israel, no mention of its five million people, no recognition of the Jews' historic links to Jerusalem.

The Palestinian claim to statehood is unanswerable, and with wiser leadership it would have been flourishing for years. It is tragic that the cause is now being so ruthlessly exploited with Jew as a code word for extremist incitement of hatred of America and the West. This is jihad. It is aimed at us all, at Europeans who "look like" Americans because they believe in liberal democracy and are infected by American culture. But its first victims are the Palestinians and the frustrated masses of the Muslim world. Their leaders have led them into ignominy in three wars. They have failed to reform their corrupt and incompetent societies. It is convenient to deflect the despair and

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anger of the street to Israel and the Jews who supposedly control the West, but terror and hate have a way of poisoning every society that encourages or tolerates them.

When Bernard Lewis observed 16 years ago that anti-Semitism was becoming part of Arab intellectual life "almost as much as happened in Nazi Germany", he added the comforting thought that it lacked the visceral quality of Central and East European anti-Semitism, being "still largely political and ideological, intellectual and literary", lacking any deep personal animosity or popular resonance, something cynically exploited by Arab rulers and elites, a polemical weapon to be discarded when no longer required.

But that was before the current electronic efflorescence of hate, before the brainwashing I have sketched, before September 11. Habits of mind tending to approve terror are becoming ingrained in the Muslim world, sanctioned by the lethargy and prejudice in Europe: those Palestinians who danced for joy on September 11 and those students who staged the grisly exhibition of pizza parlour murders were not al-Qaeda, but their acceptance of terror as a substitute for politics does not augur well for the future of their country or the possibilities of peaceful political dialogue in any of the Arab states.

This article is abridged from a lecture prepared for the 30th anniversary of Index on Censorship. Harold Evans, a former editor of The Sunday Times and The Times, was most recently president of Random House, New York, and editorial director of the Daily News, Atlantic Monthly and US News & World Report. He is the author of The American Century.

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The Enigma of Damascus

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Byline: By James Bennet

James Bennet is a staff writer for the magazine. His most recent article was about Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president.

Body

The opera house in Damascus was a long time coming. Hafez al-Assad, the iron-willed military man who ruled Syria for three decades, was in power just a few years when he laid the cornerstone. But lack of materials and equipment, hard economic times and a devastating fire delayed the project year after year. It fell to Assad's son and successor, Bashar, to finish the job. He opened Al Assad opera house with his wife, Asma, last year. Decorated with paintings and sculptures by Syrian artists, offering up classical concerts and works by Arab playwrights, the building expresses something of the elder Assad's vision of Damascus as the Arab capital of cultural, if not political, enlightenment. The name of his controlling party, Baath, means resurrection, and nothing could better reflect an Arab renaissance than achievement in the arts.

For a dance performance one evening last month, a mixed crowd streamed through the doors. Women with showy hairstyles mingled with others in head scarves; men came in suits or jeans. One teenage boy wore a T-shirt that admonished in English, "Your game is still as ugly as your girl." As curtain time approached, Syria's power couple walked in.

President Assad wore a black suit and a charcoal shirt without a tie; Mrs. Assad, a sea-foam green sweater over a sheer top and a white skirt. Her long, honey-colored hair was uncovered. Together they made a kind of visual rhyme with the building: tall, slender and young, they seemed the essence of secular Western-Arab fusion, the elegant doctor-turned-president out on the town with his dazzling British-born Syrian wife, the former J. P. Morgan banker whom Syrians call their Princess Diana.

For the Bush administration, many European leaders and many reform-minded Syrians, this is a mirage. Some of them had hopes for this Assad when he came to power after his father's death five years ago. But since then, what they have seen as a pattern of empty promises, nasty oratory and bloody tactics has turned them against the Syrian regime. Since Saddam Hussein's rule ended in Iraq, no other Arab government has come in for as much pressure and disdain from the Bush administration. In December 2003, President Bush imposed economic sanctions on Syria. This February, the administration recalled its ambassador, who has not returned to Damascus. It acted after a powerful bomb in Beirut killed Rafik Hariri, the former Lebanese prime minister and a critic of the Syrian regime. International pressure soon forced Syria to end its military occupation of Lebanon, which began in 1976 during Lebanon's civil war.

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By ideology, inclination and geography, Bashar al-Assad's regime looms as a rock in the road to fulfillment of the Bush administration's foreign policy, if not its philosophy. It is the one government in the Middle East that has not recognized that Bush is serious about comprehensive reform, a senior administration official told me, speaking on condition of anonymity. To the administration, Assad is a murderous proxy warrior, permitting or even encouraging jihadists to stream eastward into Iraq, and allowing Iranian weapons to stream westward to the guerrilla group Hezbollah in Lebanon. The Bush administration accuses him also of encouraging terrorism to the south, against Israel, by permitting militant Palestinian leaders to operate in Damascus. It sees him as a dictator interrupting a new expansion of democracy from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf. If, as Bush has said, "in the long run, stability cannot be purchased at the expense of liberty," then Syria's relative stability, after 35 years, may be due to run out.

For Assad, however, it is the Bush administration that is sowing chaos in the region and reaping new extremists who menace Syria as well as its neighbors. Assad contends that he is opening his economy and preparing for a day he can be peacefully voted out. Although he is viewed in Washington as possibly a mere figurehead, he says he is just at the point of consolidating control by removing the so-called old guard of his father's government and installing change-minded technocrats. While his Syrian critics see him as trapped in the system created by his father, or complicit in it, or simply uncertain what to do, Assad insists he has a plan but is implementing it at a rate that Syria can manage, given its turbulent past and social divides. In any event, he is acting like a man with plenty of time. His unhurried pace may be a sign of a self-assurance that his critics insist he lacks, or else of a dangerous complacency, or possibly of both.

When he paused on his way through the opera house to say hello, I asked if he was concerned about a report that American troops were again operating in western Iraq, near the Syrian border. The report had renewed rumors in Damascus of an imminent American invasion. Assad shrugged. "The United States is a very powerful country," he said -- one that could strike as easily from the Mediterranean as from Iraq. "It's not a matter of where they are," he said. "It's a matter of how they behave."

Well, was he worried that they may indeed strike from somewhere? "No," he said, as a wry smile formed on his lips. "I think the experience in Iraq has not" -- he hesitated for a beat -- "worked out." His wife flashed a warm smile and deftly flicked me away. "We're off duty," she said in her plummy English.

The show proved not to be the ballet I anticipated but a kind of Orientalist pageant, with jingling Bedouin headdresses, flashing scimitars and barefoot women. It was a story of good versus evil, the good led by an elderly sheik and his strapping son in a black-and-gold robe, the evil led by a sinewy man with a shaved head and a snake tattooed over his left shoulder blade. He wore a sort of leather singlet studded with chrome buttons, and he brandished the biggest sword onstage.

Like Big Macs or a fully convertible currency, news of the end of history and the triumph of liberal capitalism has not reached Syria. Although Assad has begun to update it, the ideology of the Arab Socialist Baath Party -- less a vehicle for political participation than a far-reaching instrument of state control -- pulls at the economy, politics and society. The dance evoked the romantic pan-Arab dream that still burns in Syria, and in the Baath Party, long after it has faded through most of the Arab world. This once-revolutionary dream of a border-erasing, secular-leaning Arab union, promoted by the Assads and historically centered on Damascus, is now being squeezed between two more dynamic movements: its longtime, bloody Islamist rival, the vision of a renewed, border-defying caliphate; and the countering demand by Bush and Arab democrats for a Middle East of defined borders and democratic governments.

During the performance, the bad guys at first had the good guys on the ropes, stealing their women and abusing them. But then the Arab tribes united and stood up to the villains. Clearly enchanted, the man in the seat next to me leaned over and whispered, "This is our history."

"Syrian history?" I asked.

"Arabic history," he replied.

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The audience burst into applause and whoops when a chorus figure lip-synched a warning: "Do not make peace with them, for they are truly evil!" In the ensuing battle, Snake Tattoo killed the sheik's son by stabbing him in the back. Then came despair and a funeral, followed by the happy arrival of a handsome stranger from another tribe to marry the sheik's daughter. The performance ended with the wedding, a tableau of celebration and Arab unity despite the evil that remained unvanquished. Nobody mentioned Israel.

The Assads' applause never ventured beyond the perfunctory. After the bows, the actor who portrayed the sheik began the inevitable chant -- "In our blood, in our souls, we sacrifice for you, Bashar" -- but Assad did not pause in his exit from the theater, and the chant quickly died. Once outside the hall, the couple stopped to shake hands and chat. Scores of audience members clustered by the president's Audi sedan. Some held high their cellular telephones -- legalized by Assad only three years ago -- to snap digital photographs. "God protect you!" one woman called. Then Asma al-Assad climbed into the passenger's seat, Bashar al-Assad slipped behind the wheel, and they drove off alone into the jostling traffic and the balmy Damascus night.

The next day, when I asked Asma al-Assad what she thought of the dance, she winced. "I think there was a lot of talent," she said carefully. But, she added, "I don't think it portrayed what Syria is, in any era."

Yet what Syria is -- what it means to be Syrian -- is at the center of the debate over the country's future. To the extent that Syria has had a national identity, it has been based on the dismissal of a local Syrian identity in favor of its grander claim, to be "the beating heart of Arabism." Along with the presidency, Arab socialism, the occupation of Lebanon, a network of corruption and the security state, Hafez al-Assad bequeathed that perplexing legacy, and the question of what, if anything, to do about it, to his son, who had expected to be an eye doctor.

I spoke with the Assads on successive days in the same setting, their private office in a small, sand-colored villa on the western hills overlooking Damascus. On the first occasion, Assad was waiting alone in the doorway. He ducked his head slightly as we shook hands. Perched atop that attenuated body, his head and features seem small; his deep- and close-set eyes make his default expression one of worry. That morning, his mustache, the essential accessory of the Baathist male, was shaved to a bar of stubble above his lip. He led me to the office, where he sat on a black leather sofa. An interpreter sat across from him, but Assad, who spoke in English with a slight lisp, would turn to him for a word only a handful of times over the next two hours. Hafez al-Assad was notorious for lecturing visitors for hours on end, testing their patience and their bladders. His son waited politely for my first question.

I began by noting that there was a debate in Washington over whether he was in control of his government. I asked his view. He laughed. "That was before our conference," he said, referring to the Baath Party congress that had just ended. Several senior figures had stepped down; Assad had now replaced all but 6 of the 21 members of the Syrian Baath Party's top panel, its Regional Command, and in replacing them, he had whittled their total number to 15.

Assad said he had been following the Washington debate. "There are maybe two different articles," he said. " 'He is not in control' -- but in the other article, 'He is a dictator.' So there is a contradiction." Neither description fit, he said. "By law and by constitution, the president of Syria has a lot of authority. But if you take a decision by yourself - it doesn't matter if it's a big decision, an important decision or a normal decision -- you do a lot of mistakes. You must consult everybody. This is my way. Second, they say, 'He's reluctant, not in control,' because I take my time. I'm not hasty." He pointed to another change made at the Baath congress, the substitution among the party's goals of a social-market economy for socialism. That change was 18 months in the works, he said. I knew that, in the past, Assad had asked for patience from Americans by indicating that the old guard -- remnants of his father's regime -- were thwarting him. But now he brought up the members of the old guard only to dismiss their influence. "Now they're gone," he said. "We made that change."

Under Bashar al-Assad, Syria is more isolated in the world than it has ever been. Hafez al-Assad made his share of mistakes; he did not fully emerge as the "lion of Damascus" until years after taking control. Yet the father had the Soviet Union and cold-war gamesmanship to fall back on. He also had on-again-off-again peace talks with Israel, which gave him a framework for talking with the United States. Bashar al-Assad has had neither of these tools. He came into power after talks collapsed in 2000 over the return to Syria of the Golan Heights, which Israel occupied in

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1967, in the Six-Day War. Soon a new Palestinian intifada was raging. And then came Sept. 11, 2001. In the eyes of the Bush administration, Assad set about digging himself a deeper hole. His father supported the Persian Gulf war, but Bashar al-Assad opposed the war with Iraq in 2003. He pushed the Lebanese to change their constitution to extend the term of President Emile Lahoud, an Assad loyalist. Then, on Feb. 14, 2005, Rafik Hariri and 19 other people died in the Beirut bombing.

Assad denies having anything to do with the Hariri assassination. He told me that allies of Syria had also been killed in Lebanon, and no one had figured out who was responsible. "There are always assassinations in Lebanon," he said. "Hariri was an international businessman. We don't know anything about his relations." I asked if he agreed with a recent op-ed column in the Arabic press by one of his ministers, Buthaina Shaaban, suggesting that American or Israeli intelligence was responsible. "Even if I want to blame any other international or regional party, I can't say it as president," he said. "That's why we supported the international investigation."

Responding to claims made in Washington, Assad said Syria had complied completely with a United Nations Security Council resolution calling on it to withdraw its soldiers and intelligence agents. When I asked if he would help the United Nations fulfill another component of that resolution -- the disarming of Hezbollah -- he shrugged. "They asked Syria not to interfere in Lebanon, so it is not our issue." What did he think the Bush administration wanted from him? "I don't know," he said. "This is the problem." He said that all he heard from the Americans was about sealing the Iraqi border, which runs more than 300 miles through the desert. "They say, 'You do not do enough,' but we ask what is the meaning of 'enough'?" American officials have acknowledged that the Syrian government provided valuable intelligence in the aftermath of Sept. 11. But they said Assad repeatedly dragged his heels when it came to combating the insurgency in Iraq. They said that in January, when Richard L. Armitage, then the deputy secretary of state, gave him a list of former Iraqi officials hiding in Syria, Assad did nothing. The Syrian version is quite different. A senior Syrian official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told me that after the Armitage visit, Syria arrested and turned over a suspected insurgent leader, Saddam Hussein's half-brother Sabawi Ibrahim al-Hassan al-Tikriti, and more than 20 others. But he said that the Syrians, while seeking nothing in return, asked to keep their cooperation quiet for fear of alienating Arab opinion and angering extremists. The arrest by Syria made headlines worldwide, and the disclosure was seen in Damascus as double-dealing. Syria immediately denied any involvement.

The senior Bush administration official, by contrast, characterized the Syrian arrest of Hassan as one more attempt by Assad to play his father's hedging game, trading a chit sought by the Americans for the freedom to work against Bush policies elsewhere. Assad simply did not realize that the Bush administration would not play this game, the official said.

Assad told me he had arrested more than 1,500 extremists who tried to cross the border, to or from Iraq. He said his repeated offers of border cooperation with the Bush administration had gone ignored. "First of all, who to cooperate with?" he asked. "If you go to the border, there are only Syrian guards on our side. But if you look at the Iraqi side, there is nobody. No Iraqi guards, no American guards. Nobody."

I asked if he considered the violence in Iraq to be legitimate resistance. He sidestepped, saying he had put the same question to Iraqis. "Of course, about suicide bombers and killing tens every day, nobody considers it legitimate resistance anywhere in this region," he said. "But at the same time, they talk about Iraqis attacking allied forces -- they consider it resistance." Despite their shared ideology of Arab unity, the Baathists of Iraq and Syria were always trying to kill each other off, plotting coups and countercoups. Hafez al-Assad supported Iran in its war with Iraq, a decision that Bashar al-Assad listed for me as an instance of his father's farsightedness. Assad told me he did not regret his own opposition to the latest war with Iraq. He said he was against war on principle, and that he knew that Syria would "pay the price of any side effects of this war in Iraq." He said Syria was now paying that price. Days before our interview, the Syrian government announced that it had arrested one man and killed two others who had been planning an attack in Damascus on behalf of an organization called Soldiers of Al Sham, a reference to a "greater Syria" that would include Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine. Assad now provided new details. He said that the group intended to send a 3-year-old girl laden with explosives into the crowded Ministry of Justice. He also said that the Syrians had foiled a planned attack last year on the American Embassy by a man "with a bomb and machine gun." Assad said the Americans did not understand what he called their common enemy, the

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forces of religious extremism and intolerance he said Syria had been fighting since the 1950's. "This state of mind is dangerous for everybody, for East and West, for everybody," he said, and as he talked he laid out what amounted to a three-step formula for his governance. He said that his top priority was stability. To achieve that, to dispel rising extremism, he needed to achieve a new prosperity. To achieve prosperity, he needed democracy. The adjectives he used throughout our conversation were "open-minded" and "closed-minded." Emphasizing the former, he said, was his key to prosperity. "When you talk about upgrading society, you talk about open-minded," he said. "When you talk about open-minded, you mean freedom. Freedom of thinking."

Bashar al-Assad was a spare, not the heir. His elder brother, Basil, was groomed to lead. Growing up under their own Baathist father, the Assad brothers of Syria were never like the wilding Hussein boys of Iraq. Neither had a reputation for personal corruption or cruelty. Yet they were very different from each other. Old friends and teachers of the Assad children remember Basil as charismatic and commanding, Bashar as self-effacing. Bashar had fewer, though long-lasting, friends. Basil was a champion equestrian and followed his father's path into the military. Bashar chose medicine, the profession his austere father had dreamed of pursuing as a boy. When Basil died in a car accident in 1994, Hafez al-Assad summoned his second son home from his studies in London, dispatched him to the army and began promoting him through the ranks. As president, Assad has chosen to decorate his office with paintings and sculptures of horses drawn from his brother's collection. Bearded, eyes blanked by aviator sunglasses, Basil's face still haunts many walls in Damascus.

When asked about himself, Assad tends to drift into using the second person -- a kind of grammatical step away from oneself, the opposite of the embracing royal we. When I asked if he sometimes wished he was pursuing his chosen profession, ophthalmology, he replied that he was accustomed to Syrians turning to him, as his father's son, for help. "You're maybe just an ordinary person, but they don't consider you as ordinary," he said. "They want you to help them. So this is since you are young. So you get attached to the problems of the general people." Assad seems to draw a line between himself as a person and his attempt to perform his father's self-designated job of Arab spokesman. In May 2001, while greeting Pope John Paul II in Damascus, Assad suggested that Christians and Muslims make common cause against those "who try to kill the principles of all religions with the same mentality with which they betrayed Jesus Christ." Yet in the crowd at the funeral of that pope this year, Assad reached out to shake the hand of Israel's president, Moshe Katsav. Even when they were negotiating with Israelis during the Clinton presidency, Syrian officials resisted any public handshakes. "God made him," Assad said of Katsav when I asked him about the handshake. "Anybody God made should be recognized.

"As Syrians," he added, "we have never been closed-minded."

Assad told me he had moved to open general debate in Syria, permitting new criticism of the regime. When I asked if he really believed that people felt free to speak their minds now, he said: "No, we don't say that we achieved democracy. We don't allege that. It's a long way. But we are going this way. The situation today, the question that we should ask, Is the situation today like the situation, say, 10 years ago? It's definitely not the same. So it's a road. You should walk the road." He added, "They want us to jump." But, he said, "if you jump, you will fall on your head." I said that some Syrian reformers, after watching him for five years, concluded he was not serious about political change. He said that his priority had to be economics, and he grew impatient: "What should I feed them? Statements? Or paper? They want to eat food." He had to act against corruption immediately, he said. "If we don't have a new party today, we can have it two years later, nobody will die. But if you don't have the food today, they will die tomorrow."

The next day, when I sat in the same seat across from Asma al-Assad, she seized the initiative. What had I expected from my visit to Syria? What had I found? My first, vague response was met with polite impatience. "Away from the cosmetic," she emphasized. "I mean underneath." She went on to surprise me -- and to flatter my line of work -- by describing the difficulty of promoting development in a nation without a free press or, as she put it, "in a country like Syria, where the media hasn't reached its full potential."

She went on to say, "The employee will give you his perspective as a government employee -- he wants modernization, but he doesn't want the government to be able to fire him." The businessman, she added, "wants development, but he wants the market to remain closed, because he's benefiting." So "everybody's looking at

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development from within his own aspect, rather than seeing a country's development." The media "gives it a national perspective, rather than a community perspective."

So could Syrians expect to see a free press soon? "Absolutely." How soon? She hesitated, then smiled to acknowledge the impending evasion. "Let me start by telling you a bit about myself."

The daughter of a Syrian cardiologist, Asma al-Akhras grew up in London and graduated from the University of London. She did stints as a banker in New York, first with Deutsche Bank and then with J.P. Morgan, where she worked in mergers and acquisitions. She loved New York, and while she lived in a corporate apartment uptown, she wants it to be understood that she preferred to hang out downtown. She also worked in Paris, and she speaks French and Spanish. She has relatives in Houston. She had been accepted to Harvard's M.B.A. program when she chose to return to Syria and marry Assad, less than a year after he succeeded his father. The couple have two boys and a girl; the eldest, Hafez, is 3 1/2. The Assads had just begun speaking English with Hafez, having focused on his Arabic first. They have no professional day care and rely instead on the extended family. Asma al-Assad is 29 years old, 10 years younger than her husband.

But all that came later in the conversation. It turned out that in saying she wanted to talk about herself, she had a particular aspect in mind, one that seemed meant as a caution to an outsider asking about change, and maybe to an American administration hoping to reshape the Middle East. "I came to live in Syria for the first time five years ago," she said, "and I haven't even touched the surface. The fact that I speak the same language means nothing. The fact that I understand the culture means nothing. Because I didn't know what the mechanics of the society were."

She was accustomed to working in a large bank with a clear objective, where "the system doesn't allow you to go away from that objective or go out of that focus." Syria lacked institutions, she said, and even basic habits like "absence of leave" forms: "Here, in Syria, if somebody wants to take a day off -- 'Where is he? Don't know, hold on, let me find out. Where is his contact number? Oh, let's ask admin.' And they've got a number that's 20 years old." Every ministry, she said a few minutes later, was "a one-man show." The dearth of competent administrators was a refrain for both Assads.

Asma al-Assad has given almost no interviews; yet it was hard to imagine the wife of any other head of state in the region speaking with such easy assertiveness. Like an American first lady, she has focused on family issues, particularly economic empowerment and education. She said she gathered complaints and ideas and studied those around her to see, for example, if Syrians were following a new seat-belt law (they were not, she said). She presented herself as a full partner to her husband. When I asked if she passed this information on to him, she said: "Of course. We exchange it, not only pass it on."

She said that she initially approached Syria's problems as a businesswoman but added, with a laugh to drain the pomposity, that Assad "gave me back my humanity." Cutting state jobs, however necessary it was, meant hurting families. "We've got to make sure there's opportunity someplace else," she said. "It's about finding the right balance between creating opportunity and managing risk. And that's for me what Syria is about today, and that's the transition process we're going through."

As the sentences paraded smartly by, I thought of Syrians I had met who spent years in prison for opposing Hafez al-Assad, of the stories of torture I had heard. I thought of accusations of murderous policies pursued under Bashar al-Assad, of corruption among his relatives. It made for a jarring juxtaposition with this earnest talk of bureaucratic reform. You grew up in a capitalist democracy, I said at last. Didn't Syria seem kind of crazy to you when you moved here?

"Um," she said, momentarily searching. When she began again, she spoke more slowly. "It's a process. And I know. I've seen the end of the process, if you like, and we are moving toward that objective."

What did she say to Syrians who considered this a repressive government that jailed political opponents? "How many political prisoners and how many have been released?" she shot back. Assad has released hundreds of people imprisoned by his father, though he has also jailed some of his own. "How many prisoners do you have in

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the U.S., political or otherwise? It doesn't mean you're a repressive society either. But just by focusing on one, you skew the picture."

I noted that in Washington her husband was called a dictator who did terrible things. What was it Americans did not understand about him? Leaning forward on the sofa with her hands clasped in front of her, she sat silently for 13 seconds. "I don't know which angle to take it from," she said at last. Another pause. "I think people need to see the man behind the presidency," she said at last. "They need to see what values he has. What his work ethics are. What his personal characteristics are. And then they can understand more about who he is and what he's trying to do." As I left the villa, I thought her initial inquiry was still the most important. What was, in fact, cosmetic, and what might be underneath?

Time has not forgotten Damascus, but it seems to have remembered it only on special occasions -- the invention of the tail fin, for example, or of the Soviet-style apartment block or, more recently, the rediscovery of the latte. But as Assad's stop-and-go changes open cracks in the socialist economy, money and modernity are trickling in. A few Internet cafes have opened their doors. People can now use credit cards. "Kingdom of Heaven" was playing downtown. One afternoon, a man in a Spider-Man suit was hawking Tweety Bird balloons outside the Scuzzi Cafe. "Hi," he said, when he caught me staring.

Culturally, the atmosphere is far more open than it is in much of the Arab world. Lovers hold hands and cuddle in the parks. Over a sushi lunch one day, I watched the Syrian couple at the next table suck down six Scotches between them. It is a dissonant environment, of a policed liberalism confined to religious and cultural life and banned from politics. White-gloved policemen are everywhere directing the clogged traffic. They are obeyed. Syria's state of emergency, dating to 1963, gives them the power to arrest anyone with no stated cause. Some reformers hoped Assad would cancel the emergency law, but he told me he planned to change it "to have more security, less abuse of the people." He cited as a model the Patriot Act.

The poverty is stark. Unemployment is said to stand at 20 percent. Maybe even more dangerous to the regime than American pressure is that the oil is running out. Nabil Sukkar, an economist and business consultant in Damascus, told me that Syria may become a net importer of oil by 2008. Sukkar said that he used to believe the regime could separate political and economic reform, but that it had now run out of time and had to do both over the next two or three years. "You can't have the party monopolizing decision making," he said. Sukkar said that gulf investors were eager to build in Syria, but the Baathist ideology was scaring them off.

In his documentary "A Flood in Baath Country," the Syrian filmmaker Omar Amiralay gives a chilling look at a society stunted by Baathism. As his camera stares, children in uniform in the barren classroom of a rural village mouth their slogans: "We the Vanguards of Light salute our leader, Bashar." Together, the children chant: "We are the voice of the proletariat. In sacrifice, we eat little." The film is banned in Syria. Like everyone else there, I watched it on DVD.

I met Amiralay at a Damascus coffeehouse with walls banded in black and white marble. As a fountain splashed nearby, backgammon pieces clicked and Madonna warbled, he told me his story of long-term cultural resistance. He came to politics after the Arab defeat in 1967, and to filmmaking and Marxism on the barricades in Paris in 1968. His first film was a celebration of a giant dam that Hafez al-Assad built across the Euphrates. "As a Marxist, I found it something to honor," he said wryly, in French-accented English. For the new film, he visited villagers relocated to make room for Lake Assad.

Amiralay said that one of the Arab satellite networks had bought "A Flood in Baath Country" Since Bashar al-Assad had permitted satellite television, this meant the movie would be shown in Syria after all. Amiralay said he had asked the network to include a dedication to a friend, Samir Kassir, a Lebanese journalist and critic of the Syrian regime who was killed on June 2 by a bomb hidden in his car. The dedication seemed tantamount to accusing the regime of the murder, and I asked Amiralay how he could be sure he was not going too far. He touched his right index finger to his nose. "It's an animal sense," he said. But he also said that times had changed: "There was a demystification after the death of Hafez al-Assad of the fear, because he personified this power, this charisma and

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this capacity of violence. There was a psychological release, because the people felt the state was not controlled as before, and because the state is confused."

The journalistic shorthand for Syrian critics of the regime is the "opposition." It is the wrong word. It suggests coherence, organization and political leverage that do not exist. It suggests the existence of leaders with followers. A better word might be "dissidents," with its connotations of moral authority and solitude. They are a mix of Baathist reformers, communists, Islamists and even one or two Syrian-style neoconservatives. In Arabic and English, they have seized the tools of communication that Assad has permitted: the Internet and satellite television. Assad told me he had hoped to foster a productive conversation about reform and that he kept track "from time to time" of the Internet chatter. "Some people, they just talk because they want to talk," he said. "Some people, they just hate. And some people, they want to criticize because they need a better country. That's what you want."

Ayman Abdel Nour, 40, puts himself in the last category. A Baathist, he issues an e-mail bulletin bird-dogging corruption and promoting change within the movement. He attacks senior Baath figures by name. He sees himself as strengthening Assad's hand. When I visited him at his apartment, he was enthusiastic about the sacking of Baath leaders during the party congress. Now, he said, "we expect that the decisions will be more radical, and faster." He said that Assad was now in "100 percent full control," which meant he also had complete responsibility for delivering and no more excuses. Abdel Nour told me there would certainly be multiparty elections by 2007, when Assad is to run for a second term. (Assad did not commit to this when I asked him about it. He said he would need a year or two to build consensus for a new multiparty law. "We should give it time," he said.) There may be limits even to Abdel Nour's faith. When I asked if he believed that Assad had a clear idea of what he wanted to do, the brazen reformer gave his response in baby talk, and addressed it to the infant son he was cradling in his arms. "This is a question," he told the baby. "I don't know."

Some Syrian intellectuals have a darker view. "I think the Arab regimes will live a very long life, and a prosperous life," said Mohamad Shahrour, an engineer who writes about Islam. "Because freedom as a value does not exist in our consciousness." He blamed this on "Islamic culture." In Syria and some other Arab nations, he said, regimes should fear only religious uprisings. "The government could arrest 5,000 people now in one day, and it will not be afraid of an uprising. But if in any city they will take the veil, the hijab, from 1,000 women, they will be afraid of an uprising."

Given focus by the chaos in Iraq, that is a vision of the end days of this regime that many Syrians fear. A green-domed mosque in the hills above Damascus marks the spot where Cain is said to have slain Abel. The city took its name from the stream of blood that ran down. There are those who think that a time of violent reckoning with sectarian hatreds may be necessary. Ammar Abdulhamid, 39, runs the Tharwa Project, which tracks treatment of minorities in the region. He had a fellowship at the Brookings Institution in Washington last fall, and he has decorated his Damascus office with photographs from his walk to work along Connecticut Avenue. One shows the American flag through the bare limbs of trees. When I stopped by, he called the regime "defunct" and the Baathists "idiots" and "morons" while we were still settling into our seats. He saw no alternative in civil society either. "They all want a leader or a messiah," he said. He did not advocate "bloody revolution," he said. But he also said that the civil strife accompanying regime change in Iraq might be the only way forward in the region. "Stagnation is killing our souls and our minds," he said. "Hopefully, this baptism by blood and mayhem will teach us to cherish the liberties."

A few days before I spoke with Assad, I received an e-mail message from Joshua Landis, an assistant professor of Middle Eastern studies from the University of Oklahoma who is living for the year in Damascus. Landis writes an indispensable blog about Syria, Syriacomment.com. He is married to a Syrian woman who is a member of the same esoteric Islamic sect as the Assads, the Alawites, who believe in the divinity of Ali, Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law. Alawites were oppressed as infidels for centuries by other Muslims.

Landis's e-mail message recapitulated a remarkable petition he came across while researching his dissertation, which is to be published next year as a book, "Democracy in Syria." In 1936, as the French were debating how to carve up their League of Nations mandate in the region, a group of Alawite notables urged that their northern mountainous redoubt not be annexed to Syria, which would surely be dominated by Muslims. "The spirit of hatred

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and fanaticism imbedded in the hearts of the Arab Muslims against everything that is non-Muslim has been perpetually nurtured by the Islamic religion," the petition read. "Therefore, the abolition of the mandate will expose the minorities in Syria to the dangers of death and annihilation, irrespective of the fact that such abolition will annihilate the freedom of thought and belief." According to Landis, one of the six signers was Suleiman al-Assad, Bashar's grandfather.

Before I had the chance to bring up the petition, Assad volunteered that his grandfather had petitioned the French with other Alawite leaders to "go back to our mother country, which is Syria." He said: "They knew that if we divide the country we would have wars. So it's better to be, to mingle, with the others." I had the spooky feeling that someone else was reading my e-mail.

I said that I had heard the petition proposed separation. "No, no, no, no, no," Assad replied. "It's the opposite." Setting aside that question, the petition in favor of separation helps explain the profound appeal of Baathism, with its message of an embracing Arab unity, to a man like Hafez al-Assad, a member of a brutalized minority. Baathism could be the way to bring together all religions and races -- or else the means for minority domination. It could also be the bandage beneath which sectarian wounds healed or festered. As to which effect it has had in Syria, no one can know unless the bandage is pulled off, as it has been in Iraq.

The Syrian Baathists have dealt with sectarian differences through official denial. The education system teaches one vanilla brand of Islam. Yet sectarianism is never far from the surface. Within Syria, some who blame the regime for the killing of Hariri see it as a sectarian play that cost Assad international support but strengthened him internally. Hariri, a Sunni, had money, influence and contacts with Syria's Sunnis to potentially foster an alternate power structure. (Others dismiss this theory as crediting Assad with a cunning he has not otherwise displayed.) Unlike Lebanon, Syria has a clear majority -- Sunnis -- and some view them as the potential foundation of a stable democracy. Farid Ghadry, who has set himself up in Washington as a regime opponent and has been invited in for discussions by the State Department, presents a candidly sectarian vision of Syria's future. He speaks of a state with minority rights but also argues, "We need to give Muslim Sunnis a country -- a legitimate country -- from which to launch the war on ideology," meaning extremism. Yet the new mosques that have sprung up across Syria in recent years -- another kind of patient resistance -- may well be preparing believers for a different war. They just happen to be fighting it now in Iraq.

Hafez al-Assad maneuvered endlessly to co-opt Syria's Sunnis. He reserved top posts in his government for Sunnis. Land reform helped ally him with rural Sunnis against the urban Sunni elite. Through intricate sectarian balancing, he created what Landis calls a supertribe. "You're substituting party ideology for blood," Landis told me over coffee, "but it's very similar." When this method broke down -- when the Muslim Brothers, Sunni extremists, rose against him in the 1970's -- Hafez al-Assad used his Alawite-dominated security forces to crush them. In 1982, he leveled the old town of Hama, the city where their resistance was based.

Anwar al-Bounni, a 46-year-old lawyer in Damascus, was living in Hama in 1981, when Syrian forces first moved in. Bounni is a Christian, but he was bearded, and soldiers grabbed him as a suspected Muslim Brother. As the soldiers began beating him, Bounni said, neighbors ran up to identify him. Pinning Bounni's hands behind his back, the soldiers set his beard on fire, then let him go. Bounni now does the Sisyphean work of representing political prisoners. To finance his work, he was preparing to sell his office; he had already sold his car. As we talked among his packed boxes, a beaming young man with a bouquet of flowers entered. He was Abdel Nasser Kahlous, a 33-year-old accountant for General Motors in Syria. He had just been released after a week in prison. He and eight other members of a dialogue group called the Atassi Forum were arrested after one of them read a statement by the Muslim Brothers, e-mailed by their leadership in exile, during a meeting. It is a capital offense in Syria to belong to the Muslim Brothers. "We thought it was open and modern," Kahlous said of the statement. He said that, once arrested, he expected to get at least three years in prison. But he took heart when, at the initial detention center, he glimpsed Bounni on satellite TV speaking about the case.

When I raised the Atassi Forum arrests with Assad, I thought he might call them a mistake. He did not yield an inch. "When you know in the United States that somebody has a relationship with Al Qaeda, what do you do?" he asked. "You arrest him." The Muslim Brothers, he said, "are terrorists. They killed more than 15,000 in Syria." (That

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is the official number. It is believed to be lower than the number killed in the regime's crackdown.) He said that Atassi group members were released after they said "they wouldn't do it again." As of this writing, the member of the Atassi Forum who actually read the e-mail message aloud, Ali al-Abdullah, is still in jail.

The subject of sectarianism creates a bind for the regime. On the one hand, it would like to argue that it has succeeded in easing sectarian tensions; on the other hand, it would like to argue that these tensions are a terrible threat. In the interview, Assad did both. When I cited the historic oppression of the Alawites and asked if he believed that such wounds ever healed, he responded with a rather airless tautology. "The proof is that I am in power," he said. He did not mention it, but in another way he clearly is evidence of assimilation: his wife is a Sunni. Yet Assad also argued that sectarian tensions in the Middle East recognized no borders. "There is a domino effect, not only in Syria but in the region in general," he said. "This domino effect will start from the Mediterranean -- Syria and Lebanon -- and go south to the gulf region and the Red Sea and east to Middle Asia and north to the southern borders of Russia. All these societies are linked with one another. So the answer is yes, very clearly yes. We always worry about the effect of this conflict."

You could blame bad intelligence for it all. In 1915, a member of a Damascus secret society opposed to the rule of the dying Ottoman Empire made his way to British intelligence headquarters in Cairo. As recounted in David Fromkin's history, "A Peace to End All Peace," claims by this young man persuaded the British officers that Arabs would rise in revolt against the Turks in exchange for commitments about the postwar Middle East. Not much of a revolt materialized, but the commitments and the borders that they led the Western powers to demarcate helped create the crisis of legitimacy that Middle Eastern regimes are still facing. Nowhere is this crisis greater than in Syria, where those postwar borders have always been scorned as imperialist artifacts. Syria has such a weak commitment to its own national identity that it once willingly surrendered its sovereignty, giving itself away in 1958 to Gamal Abdel Nasser's short-lived United Arab Republic. "What constitutes a nation?" asked Georges Jabbour, a Baathist parliamentarian. "Is it modern Syria, now? Or is it Greater Syria? Or is it the Arab nation, as the Baath Party says? Or is it the Islamic nation, as the Muslim Brotherhood says?"

Throughout the region, the struggle to clarify and legitimize borders is reaching a new pitch. The Israelis and Palestinians are edging toward another division of historic Palestine. In Iraq, the Bush administration is trying to create a government with the legitimacy to resist sectarian fragmentation and preserve the postcolonial boundaries. In Lebanon this spring, there were hints of a national patriotism that transcended ethnic and religious divisions. And in Syria, by default, design or desperation, Assad is taking steps as well. He has withdrawn his soldiers from Lebanon and moved to clarify Syria's borders with Jordan and Turkey. He has erected a berm that for the first time defines the border with Iraq.

Assad defended the pan-Arabism that his father relied on, though he described it today as more a feeling of connectedness than a desire for shared government. "The practice is more, now, open-minded," he said. Some who watch him most closely say they have detected a significant change. "There is a sort of transformation within the party," argues Jabbour, a onetime aide to Hafez al-Assad. Referring to a speech by Bashar al-Assad before the party congress, he told me: "President Assad did not talk about Arab unity. He talked about Arabism in general, the Arab identity." Ayman Abdel Nour, the Baath reformer, made a similar argument. " 'Unity' doesn't mean that you have to conquer all the Arab countries and absorb them and occupy them," he said. "No. It means to raise the standards of cooperation, of economic cooperation." Amiralay, the filmmaker and opponent of Baathism, says he also sees a change. "I think this is absolutely the end of this sorrowful page in the Syrian history," he told me. "I think that with the new era in which we are entering today, there is a redefining of the borders. They will be definite for the first time." He added, "It will be a mercy killing of Arab nationalism."

Yet if Assad sees this, he has yet to spell it out. "It's a crab-walk," Landis says. "They're backing toward this. It's not an articulated, conscious thing." It looks, much like his moves on reform or on Lebanon, more improvised than strategic. A defined Syrian nationalism could be a bulwark against sectarian chaos, a source of legitimacy and regional stability. It could also help bring home the skilled expatriates whom Assad is trying to woo, the ambitious Syrians who fled the smothering state to seek fulfillment abroad. But to achieve it, Syrians would need something to be proud of besides a threadbare pan-Arabism and their periodically glorious history.

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The crab-walk is certainly not impressing the Bush administration. Bashar al-Assad is in a box. If he makes what the administration would consider concessions, he would confirm its view that only pressure can move him. "If you give, you convince them that pressure works," argues Robert Malley of the International Crisis Group, which is closely monitoring Syria. "If you don't give, you convince them they need to put more pressure on." Flynt Leverett, a former C.I.A. analyst and Bush official and the author of a new book on Assad, "Inheriting Syria," told me that this approach was carrying the Bush administration along a fixed path. "I think this administration is basically moving in the direction of a regime-change policy in Syria," he said. Yet while some administration officials see the regime as ultimately doomed -- unable to reform because to do so would be to surrender the privileges of the ruling clique -- they also see no alternative now for governing Syria. Outside of the Baath Party and the security apparatus, Syria, like Iraq before the war, has no institutions for sustaining national coherence and channeling political expression. If he wants to build a modern Syria, Assad must -- like the American president he confronts -- develop a strategy that breaks radically with his father's.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photos: President Bashar al-Assad and his wife, Asma, at their private office overlooking Damascus.

Damascus, at once politically isolated and culturally connected (via satellite television).

Omar Amiralay, a Syrian director. His latest film criticizes the regime. (Photographs by Taryn Simon for The New York Times)

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INTELLIGENCER JOURNAL (LANCASTER, PA.)

January 13, 2004, Tuesday

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Section: A,

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Byline: ecornelius

Body

The changing tide The strategic reason for crushing Saddam was to reverse the tide of global terror that incubated in the Middle East. Is our pre-emptive policy working? Was the message sent by ousting the Baathists as well as the Taliban worth the cost? Set aside the tens of thousands of lives saved each year by ending Saddams sustained murder of Iraqi Shia and Kurds, which is of little concern to human rights inactivists. Consider only self-defense: the practical impact of U.S. action on the spread of dangerous weaponry in antidemocratic hands. t In Libya, Colonel Gadhafi took one look at our army massing for the invasion of Iraq and decided to get out of the mass-destruction business. He has since stopped lying to gullible U.N. inspectors and in return for U.S. investment instead of invasion promises civilized behavior. The notion that this terror-supporting dictators epiphany was not the direct result of our military action, but of decade-long diplomatic pleas for goodness and mercy, is laughable. tIn Afghanistan, supposedly intractable warlords in a formerly radical Islamist, female-repressing culture of conflicting tribes and languages have come together. Under our NATO security umbrella and with some U.N. guidance, a grand conclave of leaders freed by U.S. power surprised the Arab worlds doubting despots with the elements of a constitution that leads the way out of the past generations abyss of barbarism. t In Syria, a hiding place for Saddams finances, henchmen and weaponry and exporter of Hezbollah and Hamas terrorism the dictator Bashar Assad is nervously seeking to reopen negotiations with Israel to regain strategic heights his father lost in the last Syrian aggression.

#SAFIREJ13#Secret talks have already begun (I suspect through Turkey, Israels Muslim friend, rather than the unfriendly European Union); this would not have happened while Saddam was able to choke off illicit oil shipments to Syria. t On the West Bank, incipient Israeli negotiations with Syria on top of the overthrow of the despot who rewarded Palestinian suicide bombers further isolates the terror organizations behind Yasser Arafat. Under the pressure of Israels security fence, and without the active support of Egypt and Saudi Arabia (each eager to retain protection of a strong-willed Bush administration), Palestinians now have incentives to find an antiterrorist leader who can deliver statehood. t In Iran, the presence of 130,000 U.S. troops near the border was not lost on the despot-clerics in power, who suddenly seemed reasonable to European diplomats seeking guarantees that Russian-built nuclear plants would be inspected. Colin Powell has been secretly dickering with the so-called reform ayatollah for a year in hopes of being on the right side of a future revolution. The old Great Satan crowd has just barred four-score reformist Parliament members from seeking re-election. That panicky crackdown in Tehran is a sign of the rulers weakness; the example of freedom in neighboring Iraq will help cause another part of the axis to fall. t In Iraq, where casualties in Baghdad could be compared to civilian losses to everyday violence in New York and Los Angeles, a rudimentary federal republic is forming itself with all the customary growing pains. After the new Iraq walks by itself, we can expect free Iraqis to throw their crutches at the doctor. But we did not depose Saddam to impose a puppet; we are helping Iraqis defeat the die-hards and resist fragmentation to set in place a powerful democratic example. t In North Korea, a half-world away from that example, an unofficial U.S. group was shown

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