

Politics - March 2008

History teaches us that men and nations behave wisely once they have exhausted all other alternatives.

Abba Eban

Gaza and Sderot - Terror in Jerusalem - Hamas Popularity - Lebanon - Al Qaeda in Iraq: Options After the Surge -New Electoral Initiative - American Diplomacy - 2007 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - The Danish Cartoons - UNITED KINGDOM: ARTICLE 19 COMMENDS VOTE TO REPEAL BLASPHEMY - Internet Research - March 12:First Online Free Expression Day launched on Reporters Without Borders website - Nominate a Knight International Journalism Award Candidate - 21st Century Trust - Global Integrity CALL FOR EXPERTS - New Article - Anthony Minghella: 1954 - 2008 - Thank You - New Books - Gem of the Month: Shalom Hanoch - Poem of the Month - Light Notes - Gender Differences



Purim is the happiest festival on the Jewish calendar. I wish all of you an unspoiled, joyful, funny, amusing, beautiful, charming, enchanting holiday and festive season. Enjoy, relish and make the most of it.

You, too, kids (and we are all kids this time).

Gaza and Sderot



There is war in the southern part of Israel. It is bloody, and it might escalate out of control.

During the past months I had the opportunity to meet some Palestinians. I was astonished to hear

them ridiculing the Qassams, saying that these “harmless, primitive rockets” are just a pretext for Israel to launch attacks on Gaza. They all underestimated the role of the Qassams. Whenever speaking of them, suddenly a smile shined of their faces. Astonishing.



On February 27, 2008 over 40 rockets were fired from Gaza, hitting factories, homes and a hospital. A Sapir College student, Roni Yechiah, father of four children, was killed after a rocket landed in a parking lot adjacent to the campus. Several others were wounded and many were treated for shock.

Later, four GRADs struck Ashkelon, one of them adjacent to the local hospital. One person was lightly hurt and several people suffered shock. Hamas claimed responsibility for the attacks. Apparently, the Palestinians were able to smuggle from Iran 122 mm. GRAD missiles, whose range is broader than the Qassam’s. Fawzi Barhoum, a spokesman for Hamas in Gaza, told the NY Times (March 4, 2008) that like Hezbollah, Hamas had “gone from the stone to the rocket... What we learned from Hezbollah,” he said, “is that resistance is a choice that can work.”

Israel had to respond. On February 29, large IDF forces entered Gaza and killed dozens of Palestinians. Two soldiers were killed.

Israel does not have an interest in remaining in Gaza. However, we need to invest much thinking as to what to do about this expanding threat. Sooner or later, the rockets will reach Tel Aviv as well. This threat needs to be contained. On March 16, the Islamic Jihad announced that it has developed a new rocket with a range of 22 kilometers, capable of striking areas north of Ashkelon. The issue is not capability. The issue is deterrence: What price are the Palestinians not willing to pay for their attacks?

I don’t know when technology will be handy to fight down those deadly rockets and missiles. My good friend, Sam Lehman-Wilzig, tells me that it will be only in 2012. Israel should invest resources in equipping itself with the appropriate technological answer, very soon.

Furthermore, we should invest more thinking “out of the box” as to deterrence measures. One measure is to cut fuel supplies to Gaza. This is in order to impede terrorists’ transportation. It will affect the lives of innocent civilians as well, but it cannot be that only Israeli civilians will pay high price in this terrorist conflict, that aims at hurting civilians. Israel claims that the amount of fuel entering the Strip is sufficient for all humanitarian needs, and has the full support of the Supreme Court. The official standpoint further maintains that the quantity

transferred exceeds basic needs by a factor of 3:1. The transfer of fuel is also done under fire. On March 3, 2008, a fuel truck coming from Nahal Oz to the Strip was targeted by snipers. Apparently, Hamas is diverting the fuel entering the Gaza Strip for its own use and for terrorism. This should be stopped.

Moreover, as the citizens of Sderot live day in, day out, under the looming fear of sirens, the Gazans should also hear those sirens. Every time that Israelis hear the siren, day or night, so the Gazans should hear them. Israel should invest efforts in undermining public support for the Hamas, making the Gazans realize the nightmare inflicted by terrorism, and the price exacted on them as a result. The Gazans can stop the rockets, if they want to. Israel should strive to make them pursue another policy, as the toll might be too high for them to tolerate.

Terror in Jerusalem



On March 6, 2008, a Palestinian terrorist infiltrated the Mercaz Harav rabbinical seminary and opened a hail of fire on a crowded library and study hall, killing eight young students (aged 15 to 19 and one aged 26) and

wounding eleven others. The young students had just returned from prayers at the Western Wall. They organized a party celebrating the beginning of the month of Adar - a month of joy marked by the Purim holiday. Purim is the most joyful holiday on the Jewish calendar and for a number of years now it has not passed peacefully. Violent people have transformed it into something very different and contradictory to joy and happiness.

The yeshiva,

<http://www.blogger.com/primary%20user/Local%20Settings/Temporary%20Internet%20Files/Content.IE5/4DURW563/www.mercazharav.org.il/eng.asp>,
<http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/asection/la-fg-yeshiva7mar07,1,5493923.story?ctrack=1&cset=true>, located in the Kiryat Moshe neighborhood near the entrance to Jerusalem, is home to some four hundred students, most aged 18-30. The yeshiva, founded in 1924 by Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, is a symbol of the national religious stream and of scholarly excellence. Many of the Gush Emunim movement have studied in this Yeshiva whose leaders are nationally known and respected, with many links to the Mafdal Party.

The 'Galilee Freedom Brigades' - an Israeli-Arab group - has claimed responsibility for the attack. So did the Hamas but then denied it was involved shortly afterwards. Thousand of Palestinian citizens of Gaza reacted to the bloody news with jubilation, filling the streets in spontaneous appreciation for this "act of heroism" that avenged for the loss of some 130 Palestinians lives, killed by the IDF in recent attacks aimed at rocket launchers.

And so it continues in this vicious cycle of unending violence, where blood yields more blood. The Palestinians have the key to stop this, if they were to recognize Israel and its right to exist in peace with them. Terror is not a solution to anything. It is the core of the problem.

Hamis Popularity



Polling data collected in the West Bank and Gaza this month show that Hamas has gained sharply in popularity since December, reversing a two-year decline. The poll was conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research. Its details were published by LA Times on March 18, 2008.

According to the poll, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh would

receive 47% of the vote if the Palestinian Authority held presidential elections today, compared with 46% for the U.S.-backed incumbent, Mahmoud Abbas. The center's polling in December showed Abbas defeating Haniyeh in such an election by 56% to 37%.

In a new parliamentary election, Fatah would defeat Hamas by a margin of 42% to 35%, according to the poll, but the gap is less than half what it was in December.

Possible explanations for this turnabout are:

The current peace talks, launched by President Bush in November, have failed to stop Israel's military incursions and airstrikes in Gaza. Nor have they halted the growth of Jewish settlements in the West Bank; eased Israel's security checkpoints there; or made evident progress on the big issues of a final peace accord, such as the borders of an independent Palestinian state and the status of Palestinian refugees.

Meanwhile, Hamas has boldly reasserted itself. In January it demolished parts of a wall along the Gazan-Egyptian border, enabling Palestinians to leave en masse to stock up on goods made scarce by an Israeli blockade of Gaza. Later, Hamas carried out its first suicide attack in Israel in more than three years and stepped up rocket attacks on Israel during a five-day Israeli incursion early this month that left more than 120 Palestinian militants and civilians dead in Gaza.

To Palestinians, "these developments managed to present Hamas as successful in breaking the siege and as a victim of Israeli attacks," the survey's authors wrote. "These also presented . . . Abbas and his Fatah faction as impotent, unable to change the bitter reality in the West Bank" or end the Israeli occupation through diplomacy.

Lebanon



Israel has said Hezbollah is rearming and has an arsenal that includes 10,000 long-range rockets and 20,000 short-range rockets in southern Lebanon, according to a report from Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, published by Edith M. Lederer of Associated Press Writer on March 4, 2008.

Ban's report to the Security Council reiterated his concern about Hezbollah's public

statements and persistent reports pointing to breaches of a U.N. arms embargo, which bans weapons transfers to the militant Islamic group. Ban also expressed concern at "the threats of open war against Israel" by Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah.

Ban told the council he continues to believe that the disarmament of Hezbollah and other militias must be part of a Lebanese-led political process that would fully restore the government's authority throughout the country. He expressed regret "that the persistent deterioration of the political climate and the prolonged deadlock" over the election of a new Lebanese president have made it impossible to deal with the disarmament issue.

"I, therefore, remain concerned that this border remains vulnerable to such breaches, which would represent serious violations of the resolution and constitute a significant threat to the stability and security of Lebanon," he said. Israel maintains that Hezbollah "is significantly rebuilding its military presence"

inside the U.N.'s area of operations. But Ban said U.N. and Lebanese forces have found no evidence so far of new infrastructure.

Before the war, Israel estimated that Hezbollah had 13,000 rockets deployed. During the war, Hezbollah bombarded Israel with nearly 4,000 rockets. Since the war, Nasrallah has boasted his group possesses an arsenal of rockets that can reach all of Israel, including the main metropolis of Tel Aviv. Shortly after the war, he said the guerrillas had 33,000 rockets.

Source:

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20080304/ap_on_re_mi_ea/un_lebanon_israel&printer=1

Now decide whom you believe: the Israeli official sources who claim that the war was a great achievement for Israel, or to the sources who complain that Hezbollah is rebuilding its forces in southern Lebanon. Then make your judgment as to how necessary the war was.

Al Qaeda in Iraq: Options After the Surge



On March 17, 2008 the Woodrow Wilson Center (International Security Studies and Middle East Programs), the Council on Global Terrorism, and Georgetown University's Center for Peace and Security Studies hosted Brian Fishman, Senior Associate, Combating Terrorism Center, U.S. Military Academy--West Point. I thank Rob Litwak for the following information.

According to Fishman, the most effective component of the U.S. military "surge" in Iraq has been the empowering of the Sunni community to defend itself. According to Fishman, the leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), the late Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, did not think that the United States could successfully implement this strategy. But he was worried that the post-Saddam, Shiah-dominated government in Baghdad might develop the political will to do so.

In mid-2005, Osama bin Laden's deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, wrote his now famous letter to Zarqawi, which was intercepted by U.S. intelligence and made public. Zarqawi's letter criticized AQI's terrorist campaign that had produced large-scale civilian casualties and had undermined its ability to unite Sunni insurgents against the U.S. occupation. These AQI attacks included the February

2006 bombing of the Golden Mosque, one of Iraq's most revered Shiite shrines, in Samarra. Zarqawi was killed in a U.S. airstrike in June 2006 and was replaced by Abu Ayyub al-Masri, an Egyptian. Fishman argued that Zarqawi had a coherent, albeit flawed, strategy, and noted that he was the kind of operational commander that Al Qaeda has found difficult to replace.



In the post-Zarqawi era, according to Fishman, there has been an unresolved tension in AQI's strategy over whether the military struggle should focus on the "near enemy," the post-Saddam regime and its supporters (including U.S. occupation forces), or the "far enemy" beyond Iraqi territory. Fishman argued that the paradox is how to combine the practical demands of Iraqis with the doctrinal

demands of Al Qaeda's leading thinkers outside Iraq. Those theoreticians had been highly critical of AQI's decision to announce the establishment of the Islamic State in Iraq (ISI): They argued that AQI did not control enough territory and could not provide security; that major Sunni leaders were not involved; and that ISI would lead to the disintegration of Iraq. AQI rejected this criticism, arguing that "improving the conditions [of the people] is less important than the conditions of their religion." This decision produced the widespread alienation within the Sunni community that U.S. military commanders have been able to capitalize on during the surge. AQI is currently capable of mounting intermittent military attacks and assassinations, but is incapable of controlling territory.

Fishman thinks that Al Qaeda will try to infiltrate into Lebanon and Gaza. Its jihadi activists will struggle against the Hezbollah and Hamas strongholds in these regions in order to establish a place for themselves.

Al Qaeda gets its financing from the oil black market, and from donations – outside money people bring into Iraq.

There were 3 or 4 cases of known Internet recruitments, this out of 600 cases known to Fishman. The Internet mainly serves for information and propaganda. The Internet is an instrument to excite the masses.

New Electoral Initiative



MK Ophir Pines-Paz, head of the Knesset's Internal Affairs Committee (Labour) is pushing a new and most welcomed electoral initiative, suggesting that 60 out of the 120 Knesset members will be elected in the national, general elections customary today, while 60 others will be elected in regional elections.

The 60 regions will be decided on by the Central Elections Committee. Each party will be able to nominate only one of its members for election per region; and the ballots will include both the party and the candidate's name on them.

The electoral threshold suggested will be 2% (3% would be better, RCA), and any party winning at least one mandate in any of the regions will be inducted into the

Knesset.

A candidate will be able to run for elections both in his region and in the national elections. Should a candidate win both bids, she will be considered as the winner in the regional elections, making way for the next candidate on the party's list in the national ones.

The bill was co-signed by MK Menahem Ben-Sasson ([Kadima](#)), MK Gideon Sa'ar, chairman of the [Likud](#) and Labour Chairman MK Eitan Cabel. Should it pass, all three parties stand to gain major political strength, leaving the smaller parties treading behind. The small parties, as in the past, will do their best to sabotage the initiative.

The Knesset today has far too many parties. Consequently, its legislative effectiveness is relatively small, and the government's ability to sustain power is lessened. The multi-faction composition opens the way to manipulations, gives rise to blackmail and undermines coalition effectiveness. The low threshold to enter parliament gives leeway to representation and exploitation at the expense of stability, working to further the ends of partisan groups. In this context, Israel may learn from the German experience.

Germany has certainly learnt the lessons of its history and can serve as an

2007 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices
U. S. State Department, March 11, 2008

Challenges to human rights, and many others, are fully recorded in the country reports infra. I thank Ralph Amelan for the information.

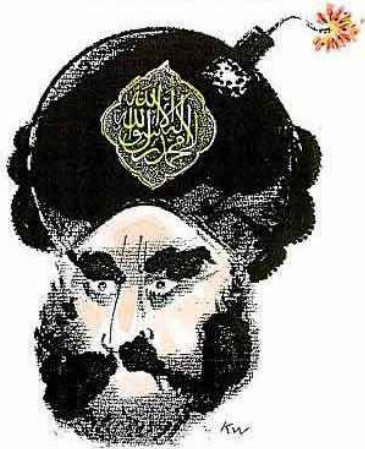
<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/>

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100597.htm> (Link to section on Israel and the Occupied Territories)

The Danish Cartoons

Here is another angle to the controversy, this time from the Hamas point of view as reflected in its children program. This clip appeared on Hamas' Al-aqsa TV station in late February 2008. Sad to hear that these are the concerns, this is the agenda of a children TV show. It is sad to listen to the clear message advocated by children. With this kind of education, we are doomed to inherit blood and

suffering.



Thomas della Peruta said: "Our children are not born to hate, they are raised to hate".

See

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AF6HOx6TGr8>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3jHj93JFMQ>

UNITED KINGDOM: ARTICLE 19 COMMENDS VOTE TO REPEAL BLASPHEMY

In an historic break with tradition, the U.K. House of Lords has voted to abolish laws that make it a crime to commit blasphemy against Christianity, report ARTICLE 19 and news reports.

The House of Lords voted 148-87 on March 5, 2008 to abolish the centuries-old laws against blasphemy and blasphemous libel.

"While blasphemy laws have long fallen into disuse in England, their continued presence casts a shadow on free expression in the U.K. and sends a signal to other countries that such laws are acceptable," says ARTICLE 19, which has long called for the repeal of blasphemy laws because they limit legitimate criticism of religion.

There have been only four successful prosecutions since 1676 under the laws. Proponents of abolishing the laws argue that the laws are in disuse and have been effectively replaced by the Racial and Religious Hatred Act of 2006, which makes it a crime to incite hatred against any religion.

Talk of abolishing blasphemy has provoked fears of the U.K. moving in a "secular" direction. In a joint letter to the Communities Secretary prior to the vote, the Church of England's archbishops said they had "serious reservations about the wisdom of legislating at this moment." While they would not oppose the abolition of blasphemy, they argued that it should not be seen as a "secularising move" or as a general licence to attack or insult religious beliefs and believers.

The archbishops say it is still too early to be sure how the new offence of incitement to religious hatred will operate in practice and that laws which carry "a significant symbolic charge" should not be changed lightly.

The amendment will go to the House of Commons later this year as part of a larger criminal justice and immigration bill, where it is expected to be passed because of government support.

ARTICLE 19 is now calling on Parliament to repeal the similarly outdated offences of criminal defamation and sedition.

Visit these links:

- ARTICLE 19: <http://tinyurl.com/3bloyr>

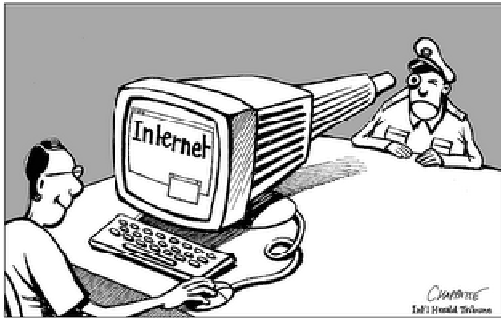
- BBC: <http://tinyurl.com/2mqfsq>

- Cybercast News Service: <http://tinyurl.com/36s2d3>

- "The Guardian", "Archbishops question timing of plans to abolish blasphemy laws": <http://tinyurl.com/3e2vw5>

Source: International Freedom of Expression eXchange (IFEX).

Internet Research



Recently, a bill aimed at censoring internet sites with content deemed 'inappropriate' for minors was passed in its first reading by the Knesset plenum. The bill was passed by a 42-20 vote and is now with the Economic Affairs Committee for further probing before returning for its second and final readings. According to the controversial proposal, Internet Service Providers (ISPs)

will automatically include filtering software for all new clients unless specifically asked not to. It is unclear what contents exactly the filter will aim to stop. Pornography is a major concern of the Shas Party that initiated this law proposal.

Here is my take on things. The Wilson Center's CenterPoint featured the following in its March 2008 issue. I thank Dana Steinberg for this venue.



Fellow Researches Extremism on the Internet Scholar
Spotlight, Centerpoint March 2008

http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=news.item&news_id=3960
[83](#)

In democracies, free expression comes at a price. Many people might use a medium for noble purposes, but that same medium might be abused by bigots and criminals. One such medium with instantaneous and global reach is the Internet. "In 1994, the Internet came into our lives unexpectedly without any design or plan," said Wilson Center Fellow Raphael Cohen-Almagor. "It's free for all, offers a platform to say whatever, has no boundaries, and many of us get most of our information from it."

But such an outlet can be both an opportunity and a curse. "The Internet is a wonderful innovation, but as it serves the best products of humanity, so does it serve the worst products of humanity," said Cohen-Almagor, who is researching how organizations utilize the Internet in the democratic world and how to address the exploits.

Cohen-Almagor, who is chair and professor of politics at the University of Hull in the United Kingdom, is comparing how the United States, Canada, the United

Kingdom, and Israel are addressing the spread of terrorism, racism, hate speech, violent criminal activity, and pedophilia on the Internet.

“There’s no doubt the Internet played a role in the planning and executing of 9/11,” said Cohen-Almagor. Terrorists use the Internet to communicate with their cells around the world, spreading propaganda, recruiting, fundraising, and seeking legitimacy. “The Internet is also a great place for hatemongers as in the United States there are no limits on hate speech and they can disseminate their message widely and cheaply.”

Meanwhile, some use the Internet for criminal training, such as instructing how to procure weapons or carry out an assassination. And pedophiles access child pornography, spurring them to commit dangerous acts.

“We have the technology to control content, such as blocking websites, but the question is whether we have the will to do it,” he said. “The United States takes the most liberal position on free speech in the world” and, generally, refrains from censoring content. So much falls under First Amendment-protected speech, yet the other countries in his study all place limits on dangerous and inciting content. Governments are still learning about, and grappling with, the Internet’s dangers. The United Kingdom, for example, implemented filters on all UK servers to prevent pedophilia. And, the United States, under the “true threat” doctrine, has shut down websites if they specifically incite murder.

Many countries have connected dangerous speech and action. Israel, some European countries – notably Germany – and Canada, prosecute anyone who transmits messages of hate. Yet in the United States, where 60 percent of Internet content is produced, some efforts help prevent terrorism and pedophilia on the Internet, but there are none to stop hate speech or speech designed to provoke criminality. Cohen-Almagor said he hopes his forthcoming book will provide new voices and data so people can know of the lurking dangers. He recommends that alongside regular browsers, there would be a “CleaNet” browser so anyone can flag and block troubling content. And, he said, perhaps emphasizing the liability of Internet providers could encourage action. “I don’t want censorship,” insisted Cohen-Almagor. “I want awareness, discussion, and a selection of Internet browsers. I want choice.”

March 12 - First Online Free Expression Day launched on Reporters Without Borders website - http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=26086

Reporters Without Borders declared: “From now on, we will organise activities every March 12 to condemn cyber-censorship throughout the world... A response of this kind is needed to the growing tendency to crack down on

bloggers and to close websites."



"Today, the first time this day is being marked, we are giving all Internet users the opportunity to demonstrate in places where protests are not normally possible. We hope many will come and protest in virtual versions of Beijing's Tiananmen Square, Cuba's Revolution Square or on the streets of Rangoon, in Burma. At least 62 cyber-dissidents are currently imprisoned worldwide, while more than 2,600 websites, blogs or discussions forums were closed or made inaccessible in 2007."

The press freedom organisation added: "Our list of 'Internet Enemies' has also been updated with the addition of two countries - Ethiopia and Zimbabwe. And we are offering a new version of our Handbook for Bloggers and Cyber-Dissidents."

There are 15 countries in this year's Reporters Without Borders list of "Internet Enemies" - Belarus, Burma, China, Cuba, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Vietnam and Zimbabwe. There were only 13 in 2007. The two new additions to the traditional censors are both to be found in sub-Saharan Africa: Zimbabwe and Ethiopia.

There is also a supplementary list of 11 "countries under watch." They are Bahrain, Eritrea, Gambia, Jordan, Libya, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Unlike the "enemies," these countries do not imprison bloggers or censor the Internet massively. But they are sorely tempted and abuses are common. Many of them have laws that they could use to gag the Internet if they wanted. And the judicial or political authorities often use anti-terrorism laws to identify and monitor government opponents and activists expressing themselves online.

"The hunting down of independent thinkers online is all the more effective as several major western companies have colluded with governments in pinpointing 'trouble-makers,'" the reports says. "US company Yahoo! apologised in 2007 for a 'misunderstanding' which ended in journalist Shi Tao being sent to prison for ten years. The company has been responsible for the imprisonment of a total of four Chinese cyber-dissidents. It was apparently willing to 'obey local laws' that forced it to identify Internet users deemed to be dangerous."

Nominate a Knight International Journalism Award Candidate

The International Center for Journalists seeks nominations for the 2008 Knight International Journalism Awards. The Awards recognize outstanding international journalists who demonstrate an extraordinary devotion to the craft by upholding and promoting the highest journalistic standards, despite overwhelming challenges. The Awards, presented at ICFJ's Excellence in International Journalism annual awards dinner, honor the struggle for independent, high-quality journalism that makes a difference in communities around the world, especially those without a long history of free media. Please fill out this form; we will seek additional information if your candidate becomes a finalist.



Further information:

<http://knight.icfj.org/Awards/Nominate/tabid/83/Default.aspx>

21st Century Trust - Conferences For The Leaders Of Tomorrow

I have been a fellow in this organization since 1994 and am happy to endorse it with a warm recommendation.

The 21st Century Trust, chaired by Lord (Chris) Patten, promotes international encounters and debates at its conferences which bring together the rising generation of decision takers and opinion leaders worldwide. We would warmly invite applications from past and present Chevening Scholars for our 2008 programme, from all countries and all fields of endeavour, including business, politics, academia, government, media, NGOs, and the arts; our age range is 25 to 40. Applications are particularly welcome from generalists interested in a given topic, as well as from specialists. Some bursaries will be available.

2008 Programme:

1. Managing migration: the neglected face of globalization?
03 - 10 April 2008, London and Oxford, United Kingdom (with Goodenough College and the London Chambers of Commerce and Industry Educational Trust)
2. Meeting social need: what can be achieved by social entrepreneurs, corporate citizens and business in general?
23 - 30 October 2008, London and Cambridge, United Kingdom (with Goodenough College and the London Chambers of Commerce and Industry Educational Trust)

For further details, please contact:

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The 21st Century Trust is a Registered Charity, No. 295676

Global Integrity CALL FOR EXPERTS



Global Integrity, an award-winning international non-profit organization dedicated to tracking governance and corruption trends around the world, is seeking interested journalists, researchers, social scientists, and other experts

with a background in governance and corruption issues to prepare its Global Integrity Report: 2008.

The Global Integrity Report is a compilation of in-depth country assessments prepared by local experts that combines qualitative journalistic reporting with quantitative data gathering to produce a powerful “snapshot” of the strengths and weaknesses of national anti-corruption mechanisms. The Report is widely used by development experts and donors; reform-minded governments; private sector investors; and grassroots journalists and advocates to prioritize governance challenges and promote anti-corruption reform efforts.

In January 2008 Global Integrity released its Global Integrity Report: 2007, covering 55 diverse countries around the world. Our goal for 2008 is to generate our innovative assessments for roughly 70 countries. Final country selection has not yet been determined and is influenced by the interest expressed by qualified country experts, all of whom are compensated for their efforts.

To learn more about collaborating with us on the Global Integrity Report: 2008, please visit <http://www.globalintegrity.org/inviteletter.cfm> . Interested candidates should send a CV/resume with full contact information to info@globalintegrity.org no later than May 15, 2008. Additional information about Global Integrity is available on our website (<http://www.globalintegrity.org/>).

We look forward to working with you to produce a truly groundbreaking report in 2008.

Nathaniel Heller Marianne Camerer
Managing Director International Director

Who We Are: Global Integrity is an international, non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to tracking governance and corruption trends around the world. We work with local experts in countries around the world to combine journalistic reporting with in-depth data gathering to produce actionable analysis that arms decision makers – including donors, government officials, investors, journalists, and grassroots advocates – with evidence-based strategies for promoting anti-corruption reform. Our work is unique in that it relies on the contributions of local in-country experts and seeks to assess the opposite of corruption (good governance and anti-corruption mechanisms) rather than corruption itself.

What We Do: Our core product, which we are aiming to produce for 70 countries in 2008, is the Global Integrity Report, itself made up of individual country assessments. The two primary elements of each country assessment are the Integrity Indicators scorecard and the Reporter's Notebook. In each country that we cover, we hire a lead researcher to carry out investigative research (through interviews and document research) to score our more than 300 Integrity Indicators. The Indicators assess the laws, institutions, and mechanisms designed to curb or deter abuses of power in any country; the degree to which those mechanisms are implemented in practice; and the extent to which citizens have access to those anti-corruption mechanisms. In parallel, we hire a lead reporter in the same country to prepare a short (approximately 1,250 words) qualitative "Reporter's Notebook" that highlights, in narrative form, the current climate of corruption in the country – how corruption looks, tastes, feels and smells to the average citizen. Finally, we hire 3-5 peer reviewers (both in-country and out-of-country experts) who blindly review both the Reporter's Notebooks and the Integrity Indicators to contribute additional information, comments, and criticisms of both products – the peer review comments are published as an integral component of the final report. You can find examples of our country reports as well as a detailed description of our methodology and impact on our website: <http://www.globalintegrity.org/>.

Who We Are Looking For: We are seeking qualified and motivated experts to work with Global Integrity as we go into the field in 2008. We are inviting interested journalists, researchers, social scientists, and academic experts from any country with expertise in governance and corruption issues to send a resume/curriculum vitae (including your full contact information and names of three references) to info@globalintegrity.org no later than May 15, 2008. Our experts' professionalism, objectivity, and independence are critical qualifications; a working proficiency in English is also necessary. Reporters and researchers

should be currently working in-country; peer reviewers can be both in-country and out-of-country experts. The majority of our experts have at least 3-5 years professional working experience. Candidates should identify their specific country (or countries) of expertise and preferred email address.

Timing: Based on previous field work experience, we anticipate lead researchers and journalists beginning their field work by early-June 2008. Peer reviewers will receive the raw reporting and data for their review beginning in late-August/early-September 2008. Our goal is to release the Global Integrity Report: 2008 in December 2008/January 2009.

Country Selection: The selection of the 70 countries to be included in the 2008 report is not yet final and in part will depend on our ability to assemble a qualified team in each country. As such, we are inviting qualified experts from any country to express their interest in joining our team for 2008. We aim to repeat a number of the countries assessed in our 2004, 2006, and 2007 Reports.

Compensation: We compensate all of our experts for their efforts. Global Integrity contracts with individuals, not institutions, and final payment schedules and deadlines are agreed upon in a contract before work commences. We typically pay our lead reporters approximately US\$1,250 for preparing the Reporter's Notebooks, our lead researchers approximately US\$2,000 for scoring the Integrity Indicators, and our peer reviewers US\$250 for each country assessment they review (some review more than one country assessment and are compensated additionally).

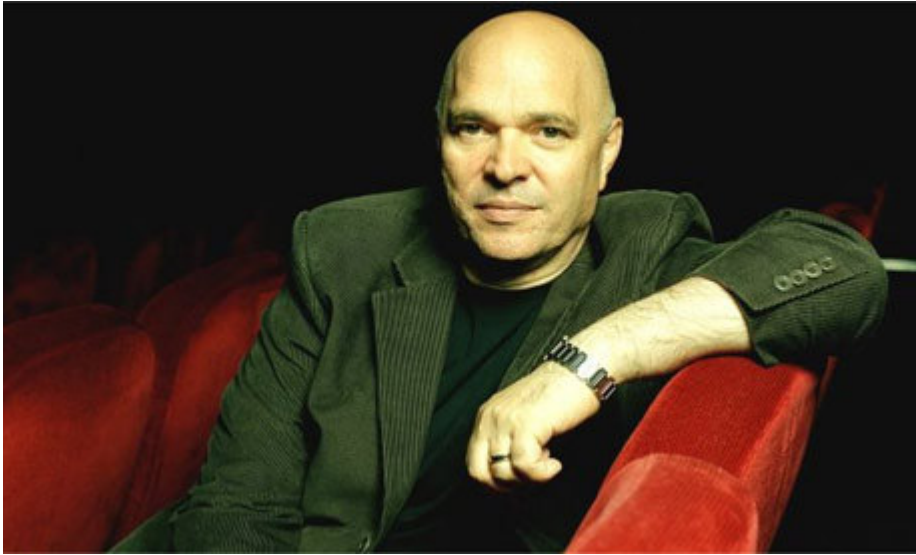
New Article

R. Cohen-Almagor and Amit Rahat, "The Work of the Ombudsman: A Comparative Analysis", *Media Frameworks - Israeli Communication Association Journal*, Vol. 1 (2007), pp. 61-94 (Hebrew). All comments are most welcome.

The article is available on my website at

http://hcc.haifa.ac.il/~rca/articles/Complaints_Handling.pdf

Anthony Minghella: 1954 - 2008



I was saddened to hear about the sudden death of the multi-talented Anthony Minghella, writer, director and producer, at the age of 54. Minghella touched me the first time with his superb sensitive film "The English Patient". It was one of the rare times in which I found the film far superior to the book. Since then I followed his career.

Minghella impressed me again with "Cold Mountain". This was a captivating saga with [Nicole Kidman](#) greater than the screen. I think this was her most marvelous performance as the role enabled her to mesh beauty and pain which is, apparently, the story of her own life.

When I moved to Hull I learned that Minghella was a graduate of the university. I asked the dean whether he is involved in fund raising for the university, and whether the university tries to take advantage of his many talents. I also voiced my desire to meet with him on one of his future visits to the university. Now it is too late.

Minghella also made "Truly Madly Deeply," "The Talented Mr. Ripley," "Breaking and Entering," and "No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency." His 1986 play "Made in Bangkok," about sex tourism, was named best new play. In the late 1980s, he wrote the original episodes of a popular British TV detective series, "Inspector Morse," and adapted myths and folk tales for puppet characters in Jim Henson's "The Storyteller." In 2005 and 2006, Mr. Minghella turned his vision to opera, directing new productions of Puccini's "Madam Butterfly" for the English National Opera and the Metropolitan Opera in New York, with choreography by his wife. He also made short films for the British Labor Party and served as chairman of the British Film Institute.

For further details, see The Washington Post Obituaries, March 19, 2008; Page B07.

Thank You

I thank Ruth Faden for her invitation to present my work at Johns Hopkins. I also thank Peggy Pearlstein for organizing an audience for me at the Library of Congress to present my new poetry book, *Voyages*. Finally, I thank Joe Brinley, Flipp Strum and Haleh Esfandiary for inviting me to present three components of my scholarship at the Woodrow Wilson Center. It has been a busy and enjoyable month.

New Books

Congratulations to Aaron Miller on his new, much-awaited book: *THE MUCH TOO PROMISED LAND* From

<http://www.randomhouse.com/bantamdell/muchtoopromisedland/>

For nearly twenty years, Aaron David Miller has played a central role in U.S. efforts to broker Arab-Israeli peace. His position as an advisor to presidents, secretaries of state, and national security advisors has given him a unique perspective on a problem that American leaders have wrestled with for more than half a century. Why has the world's greatest superpower failed to broker, or impose, a solution in the Middle East? If a solution is possible, what would it take? And why after so many years of struggle and failure, with the entire region even more unsettled than ever, should Americans even care?

As a historian, analyst, and negotiator, perhaps no one is more qualified to answer these questions than Aaron David Miller. Without partisanship or finger-pointing, Miller lucidly and honestly records what went right, what went wrong, and how we got where we are today. Here is an insider's view of the peace process from a place at the negotiating table, filled with unforgettable stories and colorful behind-the-scenes anecdotes. Here, too, are new interviews with all the key players, including Presidents Carter, Ford, and Bush forty-one, all nine U.S. secretaries of state, as well as Arab and Israeli leaders, who disclose the inner thoughts and strategies that motivated them. The result is a book that shatters all preconceived notions to tackle the complicated issues of culture, religion, domestic politics, and national security that have defined – and often derailed – a half century of diplomacy.

Honest, critical, and certain to be controversial, this insightful first-person account offers a brilliant new analysis of the problem of Arab-Israeli peace and how, against all odds, it still might be solved.



Richard Keeble (ed.), *Communication Ethics Now*

Communication lies at the heart of human experience. After all, we know about our world largely through communication. We engage in discussions with family, friends and colleagues (both on and off-line and via the telephone). We consume books, advertisements, photographs, letters, newspapers, magazines and the broadcast media. Increasingly we use the Internet. But these are extraordinary times. We face enormous, perhaps unprecedented crises: global warming, mass poverty, environmental degradation, the ever-onward rise of authoritarianism and militarism to name but a few. In order to tackle these issues we need to be able to engage in dialogue, to communicate well, to break down divisions and encourage understanding rather than hatred. And we need to act creatively and imaginatively to inspire new ways of communicating. This is the context in which the quarterly journal, *Ethical Space: The International Journal of Communication Ethics* operates. This book draws together selected pieces from the 2005 volume: inter-disciplinary, international, philosophically and theoretically eclectic and rooted in a determination to approach in original ways the pressing political, cultural, environmental issues of today.

ISBN: 978-1906221-041 http://www.troubador.co.uk/book_info.asp?bookid=623

From Russell Stone:

ISRAEL IN THE MIDDLE EAST: Documents and Readings on Society, Politics, and Foreign Relations, pre-1948 to the Present, edited by Itamar Rabinovich and Jehuda Reinharz.

This is the second edition--completely revised and updated--of a classic anthology of the most important documents on domestic and foreign policy issues of the modern state of Israel in relation to the rest of the Middle East, that was first published in 1984, but has been out of print for several years.

We know that those of you who teach may now be planning your syllabi for courses to be offered in Fall 2008, so for your easy reference, we are including a link to the special flier on our website that gives some pages from this forthcoming book (Table of Contents, and excerpts from some of the documents) and a link to the book description and purchase page--either click on this link or copy and paste it into your web browser: www.upne.com/IME_flyer_web.pdf

NEGOTIATING ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE American Leadership in the Middle East

[Daniel C. Kurtzer](#) and [Scott B. Lasensky](#)

<http://bookstore.usip.org/books/BookDetail.aspx?productID=183320>

Guy Ben-Porat, Yagil Levy, Shlomo Mizrahi, Arye Naor, Erez Tzfadia, *Israel since 1980*

Cambridge University Press, Hardback | Published February 2008

<http://www.cambridge.org/catalogue/catalogue.asp?isbn=9780521855921>

State of the World's Minorities 2008, 11 March 2008, 200pp, ISBN 978-1-904584-72-8

In 2008, Minority Rights Group will mark 40 years of working with minority and indigenous communities around the world. Progress has been made, but much remains to be done. New challenges are emerging. In 2007, climate change raced up the international agenda. Many minority communities are already bearing the brunt of extended drought, rising water levels or the planting of biofuel crops to combat global warming. As policy-makers develop strategies to cope with climate change, it is vitally important that the rights of minorities are taken into account.

The 'war on terrorism' continues to impact adversely on minorities, in countries as diverse as China, Pakistan, the Philippines, Somalia and Sri Lanka. Ethnic conflict is spreading in Central Africa, the deadly consequences of the unresolved Darfur crisis. Afro-descendant communities in many Latin American countries face deeply entrenched racism. The Roma minority in Europe often faces discrimination in accessing basic social services, such as housing, education and health. This third annual edition of *State of the World's Minorities* looks at these and other issues affecting the human rights and security of ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities and indigenous peoples. It includes:

- a preface by 2004 Nobel Peace Laureate, Professor Wangari Maathai
- a ground-breaking analysis of the impact of climate change on minorities
- First-hand accounts of the impact of global warming from minorities themselves
- an eye-witness report from Pakistan on the plight of the country's religious minorities
- comprehensive regional sections, highlighting the main areas for concern, as well as any notable progress
- a unique statistical analysis and ranking of Peoples under Threat 2008.

State of the World's Minorities is an invaluable reference for policy-makers, academics, journalists and everyone who is interested in the conditions facing minorities and indigenous peoples around the world. Price: £14.95

<http://www.minorityrights.org/?lid=6138>

Gem of the Month- Shalom Hanoch

Shalom Hanoch is one of the most talented musicians in Israel's history. He has been writing, composing and singing since the early 1970s, and his repertoire is rich and beautiful: from soft melodies to Led-Zeppelin like rock. His performance in Washington meshed songs from all periods of his lengthy career, evoking memories from all stages of my life.

Accompanied with highly talented musicians, first and foremost Moshe Levy, Shalom enjoys what he is doing, and the audience loves him. How can't you? Shalom has one of the biggest souls you can imagine, a hearty smile, deep voice, and erupting talent. Wonderful. It was a real gem to relish for a long time. Thank you, Shalom.



Poem of the Month

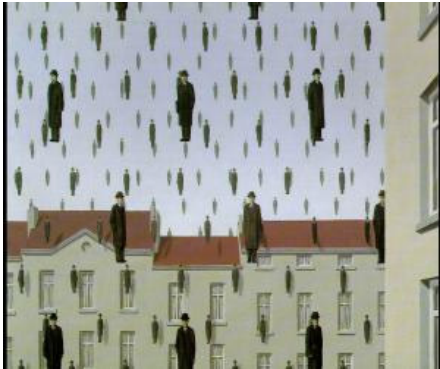
Paganini Plays/ Raphael Cohen-Almagor

I could have expressed that which cannot be expressed
 Safely investigate the skies' secrets
 Drowned in a million dollar smile
 Breathless swallow the present as if there is no tomorrow
 Is it love or mere lust?

Gulp every word miss heartbeat
 No lips, eyes, breast
 Completeness of two
 Field to shepherd for two thousand years, and for one more minute
 Tomorrow I bury my face, day after tomorrow

You uplifted me to unreachable places
 The clouds are no longer thick, the cold does not penetrate
 Dancing, floating, go over and beyond the sun
 As Icarus, but do not burn
 Is this Paganini who plays?

Light Notes - Gender Differences



A store that sells new husbands has just opened in New York City, where a woman may go to choose a husband. Among the instructions at the entrance is a description of how the store operates: You may visit this store ONLY ONCE! There are six floors and the value of the products increase as the shopper ascends the flights.

The shopper may choose any item from a particular floor, or may choose to go up to the next floor, but you cannot go back down except to exit the building! So, a woman goes to the Husband Store to find a husband. On the first floor the sign on the door reads: Floor 1 - These men Have Jobs.

She is intrigued, but continues to the second floor, where the sign reads: Floor 2 - These men Have Jobs and Love Kids. 'That's nice', she thinks, 'but I want more.'

So she continues upward. The third floor sign reads: Floor 3 - These men Have Jobs, Love Kids, and are Extremely Good Looking. 'Wow,' she thinks, but feels compelled to keep going.

She goes to the fourth floor and the sign reads: Floor 4 - These men Have Jobs, Love Kids, are Drop-dead Good Looking and Help With Housework. 'Oh, mercy me!' she exclaims, 'I can hardly stand it!'

Still, she goes to the fifth floor and the sign reads: Floor 5 - These men Have Jobs, Love Kids, are Drop-dead Gorgeous, Help with Housework, and Have a Strong Romantic Streak.

She is so tempted to stay, but she goes to the sixth floor, where the sign reads: Floor 6 - You are visitor 31,456,012 to this floor. There are no men on this floor. This floor exists solely as proof that women are impossible to please. Thank you for shopping at the Husband Store.

PLEASE NOTE: To avoid gender bias charges, the store's owner opened a New Wives store just across the street. The first floor has wives that love sex. The second floor has wives that love sex and have money. The third, fourth, fifth and sixth floors have never been visited.



Happy Crazy Funny Purim,
with my very best wishes,
Yours as ever,
Rafi

My last communications are available on <http://almagor.blogspot.com/>
Earlier posts at my home page: <http://hcc.haifa.ac.il/~rca/>
<<http://hcc.haifa.ac.il/~rca/>>

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