

# Mid-East e-News

An electronic journal of the Middle East, for those who want to be informed.

Issue No. 24 Amman

August 28th, 2004

<http://www.morethantourists.com>

## Contexts

<b>Historical</b>	
<i>The Crusades - Introduction</i>	1
<b>Topical</b>	
<i>Iraq – Coalition Activities</i>	2
<b>Political</b>	
<i>Israel - Politics</i>	3
<b>Calendar</b>	
<i>This Month in the Middle East</i>	4

## Welcome

Happy Anniversary! With this 24<sup>th</sup> issue e-News has been around for a year. Some folks have collected and printed all 24 issues! Thank you for your interest. Let us know what your favorite articles are, and what you would like included. Look to issue 3 for our introduction to Ayatollah Sistani and Muqtada as Sadr – the battle in Najaf is primarily a struggle between different factions of Shi'ites, as evidenced by Saturday's statement that they reject violence against coalition forces.

Make sure of your own copy twice monthly. Request it from [pkclark@pmbx.net](mailto:pkclark@pmbx.net).

## The Crusades

The Crusades were a medieval phenomenon in western Europe, a consequence of prevailing religious beliefs and attitudes that were affected by contemporary society in decay.

Arising out of the Feudalism of the 11<sup>th</sup> Century, the crusades took thousands of Europeans and placed them in the Middle East. There, and on their journey, they came into conflict with other Christians – the Orthodox of the east, from whom Catholicism had recently, in 1054, become excommunicated. They came into conflict with Muslims, themselves undergoing internal strife in the decay of their Golden Age. They came into conflict with Jews, not only – and horrifically – in Jerusalem, but also in Europe.

For a period of a hundred years they established feudal territories in the Levant, including Byzantine Palestine, the Lebanon and western Syria. Their legacy was the **destruction** of a native way of life, the **decimation** of the Jewish population in the Holy Land, and the **dishonor** brought to their own religion, Christianity, the consequence of which lingers through the centuries.

The original call for help came from the Byzantine emperor, Alexius I, whose army had been defeated at the Battle of Manzikurt, and lost territory to the Muslim Seljuk dynasty. Christian pilgrims were being harassed and victimized as they traveled towards Jerusalem. In 1095 Pope Urban II made a speech in France calling for a magnificent enterprise which would free the Holy Land from Muslim domination. Urban II was also interested in reversing the schism between the eastern and western church, and his response to Alexius' plea arose partly from this.

The response to Pope Urban's call was unprecedented, and says much about the situation in contemporary Europe. Without formal leaders, men and women, nobility and peasants, knights and farmers began to make their way to Constantinople, where they would join forces with the Byzantines (who knew themselves as "Roman") in their offensive on Jerusalem. Some followed major European landlords, such as Bohemond, Godfrey and Raymond, while others traveled independently, hoping for riches, fame or territory.

Even as they traveled they came into conflict, with fellow-travelers but also with peoples through whose territory they passed. The first to suffer were Jewish communities throughout Europe, whose homes were destroyed and themselves massacred by these leaderless, undisciplined campaigners. The westerners then began to meet with Orthodox Christians, whose break with Catholicism had been gradual, and ran deeper than might be suggested by the four score years since the schism. Externally, the first crusade survived these and other internal conflicts, but during the whole period they brought down the high – though even then, misguided – ideals of the movement, and most frequently ended in disarray.



Shobak Castle, in the South of Jordan, was built by the Crusaders. Originally named *Montreal*, it was constructed by Baldwin I in 1115 AD.

In future issues of e-News we shall look at the period of the Crusades, the major players – and victims – and the consequences that this period of history has even for today.

## *Iraq – Coalition activities*

As we watch the news we are discouraged by the conflict that continues in Iraq. Besides Najaf and Fallujah there are numerous minor incidents around Baghdad, and others particularly on transport routes between major cities.

These incidents, and particular those involving fatalities (or casualties) of American, coalition troops or Iraqis, cause us concern about the progress being made. Justified criticism of the actions of some individuals can prevent us recognizing the valuable work being done around Iraq. A couple of examples:

### **May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2004**

Alpha Company 2-108<sup>th</sup> Infantry conducted a combat patrol through the town of Ad Dujayl. As with any other patrol we looked to learn more about the town and the people we are to encounter each day for the next year. This day brought us to a small village on the outskirts of town where we were told not to expect a warm welcome, as we had through the rest of the town. These people did not care for Coalition Forces and were possible enemies of the coalition.

As they rode through this tiny enclave of buildings they stopped to take pictures of the area, learn more about the residents and develop a potential target. While the patrol was stopped and reviewing the surroundings they were approached by a very concerned man. After some interpretation it appeared that his son was burned badly by scalding hot water and was in serious need of medical attention. With limited resources available the patrol assessed the situation and had the medic, SGT Freeman, determine the extent of his injuries.

As the team was treating this young boy, it was discovered through conversation with his father that the boy also has a heart condition, a coarctation of the aorta, which only aggravated the current medical condition. The unit knew that this boy needed help and they were determined to get it for him.



### **July 10th**

And today another two Iraqi children, Fatma and Abdul Jabbar, have flown from Baghdad to Amman for eventual transfer for heart surgeries in Cincinnati and Boston. Both children are eight years old and will not live without heart repair. Below is a photo and letter ... just received from Second Lieutenant Todd Wilson, the US Army officer in Iraq who has arranged for Fatma's treatment and asked for our help to get her to the US.

*I saw Fatma [pictured in pink] bright and early this morning [before she left for the airport]...As we can all imagine, her emotion covered the spectrum of joy, fear, and sadness. It is particularly difficult for the father as he is extremely close to her. He expressed to me that his heart would be sad and that he would sit on her bed and think of her till she returns. I comforted him by letting him know that she would be well cared for and looked after by the folks at Cincinnati Children's Hospital and the city of Cincinnati. He could barely express his gratitude for we American soldiers and the hope that his daughter will now have through our diligent efforts and God's grace. (Letter from 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Todd Wilson, who found Fatma)*

### **July 12<sup>th</sup>**

Fatma collapsed on arrival in Amman, Jordan, and our volunteers there rushed her to the hospital. A life-threatening infection was discovered and a central line put in place so that she could receive daily intravenous antibiotics. The volunteers cared for Fatma and her aunt around the clock for 40 days, as her medical bills mounted to approximately \$3000. A week ago she and her aunt flew to the US (again on the same flight as Abdul Jabbar), and doctors in Cincinnati decided they could go forward with her surgery today despite the complication of infection. Fatma is pictured below in her hospital bed in Cincinnati; please will you join us in holding her and her doctors before the Lord during and after her surgery. (Army Lieutenant Todd Wilson personally paid for Fatma's flight to the US.)

### **August 24<sup>th</sup>**

It has since been a long road. Our volunteers in Jordan had Abdul Jabbar and his grandmother flown out to Amman on July 10 to confirm his diagnosis. Our partner hospital in Israel then agreed to accept him for surgery, but the Iraqi grandmother was too frightened to go there. We asked a hospital in Boston to consider his case, but in the end they declined, saying his surgery could wait. Realizing this could be Abdul Jabbar's one chance in a lifetime, we asked St. Joseph's Children's Hospital in Tampa to review his case. They responded enthusiastically, and Abdul Jabbar flew into Tampa Thursday, a few days after Hurricane Charley had blown through. At midday today (Monday) he is due to go into surgery. Please pray with us for the safe conclusion of this mission, born of mercy in the hearts of a combat patrol in Iraq, and also for God's provision of the cost of airline tickets (\$1800).



### **August 25<sup>th</sup>**

Abdul Jabbar's heart operation is over and described as a perfect surgery and a complete success, thank God. Today (Wednesday) a press conference will be held in Tampa to introduce him to the world.

*Israel - Politics*

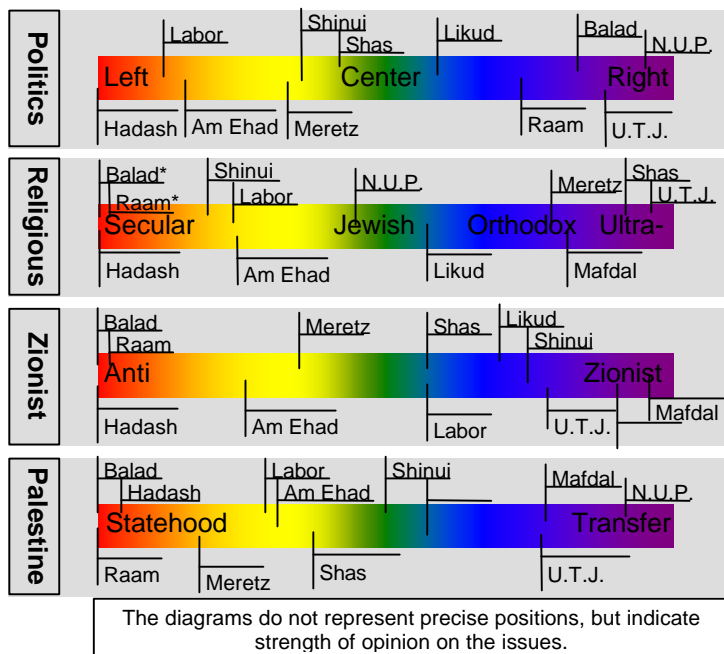
In issue 23 of **e-News** we looked at the breakdown of political parties as a result of the 2003 election. Alliances have been broken and made since then, and particularly in recent weeks, as Ariel Sharon has tried to rebuild a coalition after losing support due to his plan to pull out of Gaza and close some West Bank settlements.

In the table below the parties are listed according to the number of seats they gained in the 2003 election. In this issue we shall take a concise look at the various parties, and their positions on key issues.

Party	Name	Ideology	Leader
Likud	"Union" or "consolidation"	Center-right nationalist	Ariel Sharon
Labour		Socialist	Amram Mitzna
Shinui	"Change"	Zionist, secular, liberal	Yosef Lapid
Shas	"Sephardim Shomeri Torah"	Ultra-orthodox Sephardic Jews	Eliyahu Yishai
National Union Party	"Ha ihud Haleumi"	Right-wing Zionist	Avigdor Lieberman
Meretz (now Yachad)	"Vitality"("Together")	Social Democratic (left)	Yossi Beilin
United Torah Judaism	"Yahdut Hatorah"	Ultra-orthodox Ashkenazi coalition	Yaakov Litsman
Mafdal	"Miflaga Datit Le'umit - Nat'l Religious Party"	Religious Zionist	Ephraim Eitam
Hadash	"Democratic Front for Peace and Equality"	Communist (Arab/Jewish) anti-Zionist co.	Muhammad Baraka
Am Ehad	"One People"	Social Democratic (now part of Labor)	Amir Peretz (of Histadrut)
Balad	"Nation"	Nationalist Arabs	Azmi Bishara
Yisra'el Ba'Aliya	"Israel for Immigration" (now part of Likud)	Represents the immigrant population	Natan Scharansky
Raam	United Arab List	Conservative Islamic Arabs	Abd al-Malik Dahamshah

"Politics as usual" has a different meaning in Israel, where the traditional divisions, right and left, have less significance than elsewhere. Party positions over religion (orthodox – secular), Zionism (pro- or anti-) and the issue of the 'occupied territories' ("resettle them elsewhere", "autonomy within Israel" or "Palestinian state") are in the spotlight - and this whole gamut of positions is held by Israelis, and political parties representing Israeli Jews.

How do the different parties stand over the various issues? Perhaps the following diagrams will help illustrate the variety of opinions.



Though less significant than elsewhere, Israel does have left-wing (communist, socialist) and right wing (nationalist) parties. In some the tendency more in one direction than the other depends upon the context, with, for example, social welfare being a higher priority than liberal economic policies.

Some parties are so focused on other issues that their political position is incidental and, therefore, negotiable. This allows them to make alliances with either side of the political spectrum. Shas and Shinui, in particular, are able to work with either Likud or Labor to form a coalition, though even then additional parties are needed to form the necessary majority.

The consequences of this are that Likud/Labor platforms are diluted, and it is difficult for either coalition leader to successfully pursue any other than middle-of -the-road policies.

On July 30<sup>th</sup> Sharon had proposed a coalition that included Labor and Shinui. Shinui, an "ultra-secular" party objects to the inclusion of the U.T.J. party in such a coalition; the demands made by U.T.J. – that conscription not apply to Orthodox Jews, that only religious marriages are valid – diametrically oppose Shinui policies. On August 18<sup>th</sup> this was rejected by Likud members. Sharon had been seeking the coalition to obtain support for his plan to pull out of Gaza, and needed to appeal to parties who would be

more willing to move in that direction. Since the party vote (58% against working with Labor in a coalition) was non-binding Sharon has insisted that he will pursue this course nevertheless. Such a National Unity government has worked before.

Labor, on August 20<sup>th</sup>, called for early elections, since Sharon no longer enjoys a parliamentary majority. Suggestions are that these may occur within the next six months, though they are not due for two more years. Recently, Israeli governments have rarely survived their terms, having been brought down by deteriorating coalitions, as will possibly happen in this case.



This Month

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	
<b>Sudan</b>					UN/Sudan agree on process									Sudan president orders tribes to restrain Jinjawid						Hepatitis E hits refugee camps		UN team assesses Darfur needs										
<b>Turkey</b>												Istanbul hotel bombs kill 2																				
<b>Pakistan</b>					Al Qaeda leaders arrested				Karachi Islamic school bomb-8 die																							
<b>Afghan.</b>					Woman plans to run as president			IED kills 2 US troops						US 'copter crashes-1 dead				US guards peace in Herat														
<b>Iran</b>																																
<b>Yemen</b>																																
<b>Saudi</b>																																
<b>95 Iraq</b>																																
<b>Jordan</b>																																
<b>Lebanon</b>																																
<b>Syria</b>																																
<b>Israel</b>																																
<b>Palestine</b>																																
<b>Aug</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	