

MID-EAST e-NEWS

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Welcome

Having basically been traveling for the last week, e-News arrives a little late, but better for it. The next article on Christian Zionism will be delayed until issue 71 - it required thought, whereas the current contents primarily required work.

Go to the internet to keep up with the events in Lebanon (I have been off-line for 4 days, but back now!) and refer to the map on page 2 for an idea of the locations mentioned.

Qana. Isn't that familiar? What happened there in 1986?

Email your responses to pkclark@pmbx.net & check the web for back issues.

Another View

In Bernard Lewis' book *What Went Wrong?* (2002, Oxford University Press) he has some interesting observations on the Islamic reaction to modernization, and specifically inventions and innovations introduced by the West. Particularly after the Ottoman defeat at Vienna, and the Treaty of Carlowitz (1699 the Ottomans realized that they had been left behind by Western ingenuity, and began to look for solutions. One was to visit the Western countries of England, France and Austria, and try to learn from them. But even just traveling outside of the Islamic world raised questions:

On the Muslim side, there was ... reluctance to go to Europe. The Muslim jurists discuss at some length whether it is permissible for a Muslim to live in a non-Muslim country. They consider the case of the non-Muslim in his own country, or in their terms, the infidel in the land of the infidels, who sees the light and is converted to the true faith. May he stay where he is or may he not? The general consensus of the classical jurists is no. It is not possible for a Muslim to live a good Muslim life in an infidel land. He must leave home and go to some Muslim country (p. 36).

On another hand, the question arose as to whether it was moral to learn from infidels, and apply their teachings:

The question of learning from infidels arose at a relatively early date in connection with directly military matters. The story is told in the Turkish chronicles of a Venetian war galley that was cast ashore in a storm and abandoned by its crew. Ottoman naval specialists examined the hulk, and found things that they thought it might be useful to adopt. But the religious question arose - is it permissible to imitate the infidels? The answer of the religious authorities was that it was permissible to imitate the infidels in order to more effectively fight against them (p. 43).

It was impossible for Muslims to accept that there was anything in the Christian religion that contributed to Western leadership in ideas and technology:

Middle Easterners found it difficult to consider what we might call civilizational or cultural answers to this question [of why the West was winning]. To preach a return to authentic, pristine Islam was one thing; to seek the answer in Christian ways or ideas was another - and, according to the notions of the time, self-evidently absurd. Muslims were accustomed to regard Christianity as an earlier, corrupted version of the true faith of which Islam was the final perfection. One does not go forward by going backward. There must therefore be some circumstance other than religion...to account for the otherwise unaccountable superiority achieved by the Western world. A Westerner at the time - and many Muslims at the present day - might suggest science and the philosophy that sustains it. This view would not have occurred to those for whom philosophy was the handmaiden of theology, and science merely a collection of pieces of knowledge and of devices (pp. 45-46).

These issues seem less irrelevant when we realize that the West is currently attempting to restrain Iran from acquiring its own nuclear weapon material. Also, recently it has been disclosed that Pakistan seems to be building a large reactor with which it could multiply its weapons grade plutonium source. These are examples of Muslim countries seeking to catch up, to be able to meet the West's level of weapons technology. It can be seen from the examples above that military might is the primary reason for acquiring modern technology.

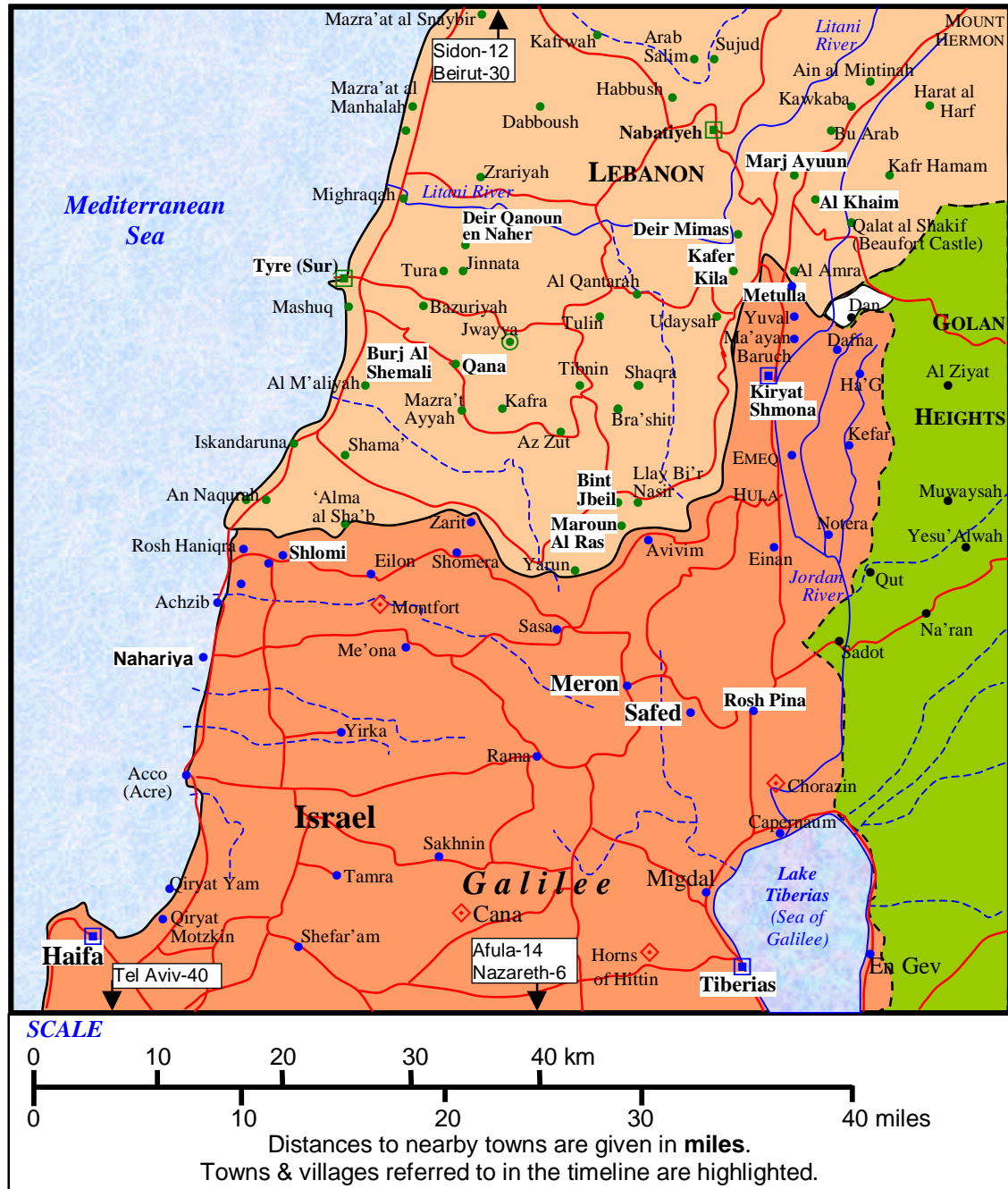
A few years ago, perhaps in 2002, I read an article by Muhammad Mahathir, then Prime Minister of Malaysia. The bulk of the article was encouraging Muslim countries to improve their methods of education, even their structure of society, and seek to develop their own new technologies, instead of always having to play catch-up. The purpose, so that Islam may have better weapons than the West.

Israel in Lebanon

The Israel-Lebanon border has been the scene of much of the recent conflict between Israel and Hezbollah. This map shows the towns close to the border on either side. Also shown are some of the villages within the Golan Heights, part of Syrian territory but occupied by Israel since 1973.

At the northern tip of Israel, the area in white indicates the Shebaa Farms area, which has been an item in dispute between Syria, Lebanon and Israel. Shebaa Farms itself is located between Dan and the Lebanese border.

This map is designed to be used alongside the timeline of the Israeli action against Hezbollah, updated frequently, and available from the website www.morethantourists.com & click e-NEWS.



Recently the Red Cross approved the use of separate logos for the organization in Israel. The Red Crescent has been in operation for a number of years. These ambulances were recently seen and photographed as they were about to be loaded onto a cargo ship not very far from home - in the Port of Houston. As'af, "ambulance" is written in Arabic, right to left.



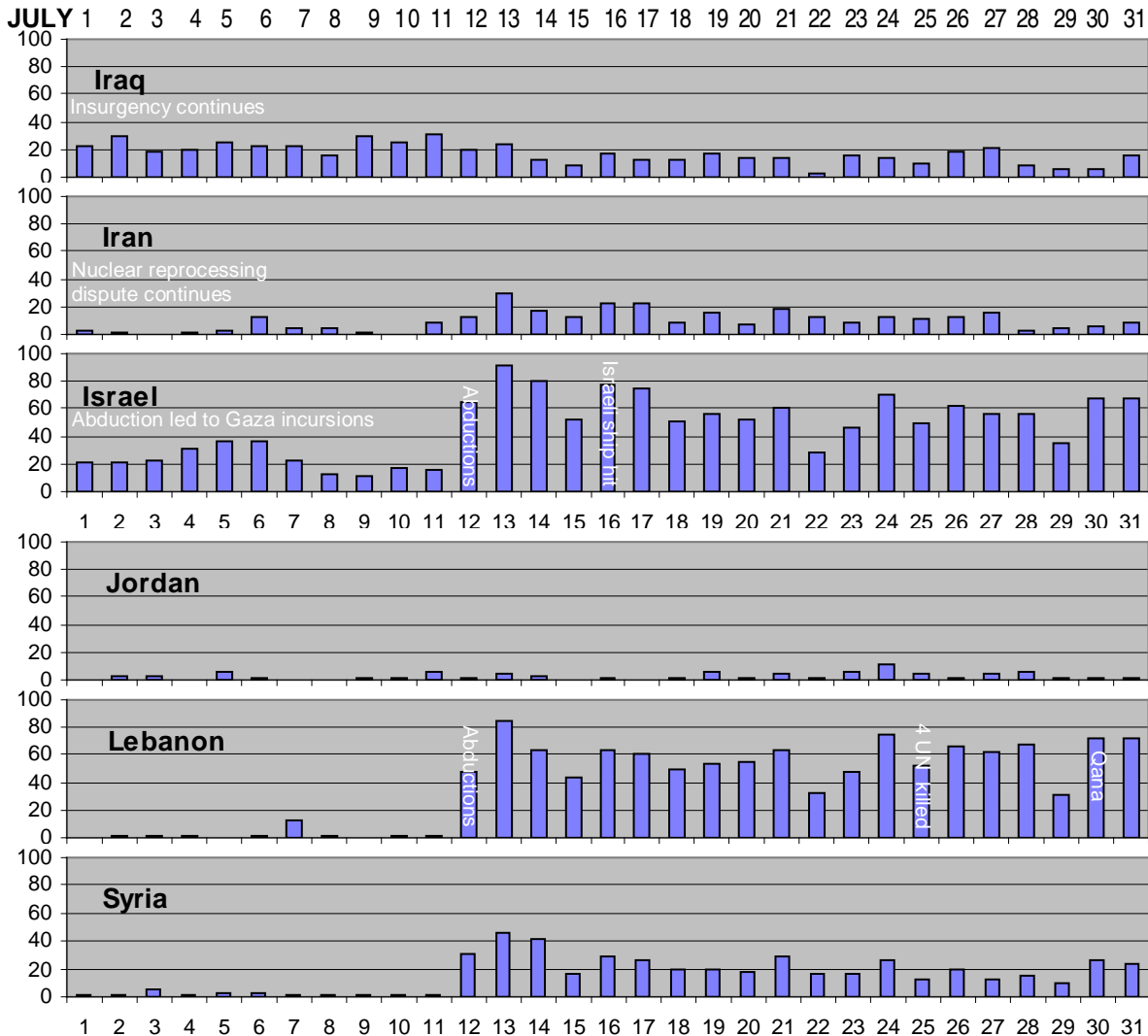
Counting on the News

Since the middle of June I have kept a log of the number of news reports that have related to the countries in the Middle East. I originally thought it was for my own private amusement, but the graphs that emerge are an interesting reflection of the trouble in the coastal strip - sometimes still called the *Levant* - of the eastern Mediterranean.

During late June the Iraq insurgency was continuing, with the violence increasing, though the news reports were steady at about 20-30 per day. In late June the abduction into Gaza by Hamas, of Gilad Shalit, a 19-year-old IDF reservist, dramatically increased the level of reporting from that Israel, with between 20 and 40 reports most days.

As we move into July the incidence of reports from Iran, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria are minimal, but there is a dramatic change on July 12th, when two IDF soldiers are abducted in a carefully planned operation by Hezbollah that required them to break through a border fence. Three were also killed, and another later died of his injuries. The immediate response, an attempt by Israeli troops to retrieve their comrades, led to an ambush in which another 4 were killed by Hezbollah.

Previously, news reports from Iran focused on the nuclear reprocessing issue. Many of the additional news reports that relate to Iran are a result of the country being mentioned in the report, rather than any action initiated by Iran itself, though there have been some comments by the president, Ahmedinejad. Syria, as the graph shows, is more significantly involved in the conflict. In fact, recent reports claim that Syria was responsible for shooting down the Israeli drone on Friday, July 28th.



Statue of Ibn Khaldoun on Avenue Habib Bourguiba, Tunis.

This Month

July	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	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							
Africa			Sudan refuses UN force in Darfur							Fighting in Somalia-60 killed				Somali government boycotts talks with Islamist movement									Somali Govt. minister shot dead															
			Darfur rebels attack town E of Darfur								SLA infighting in Darfur-8,000 die this month				Ethiopian troops threaten Somali Islamist rebels								Sudan army attacks Darfur towns															
				Gunmen kill 5 nr Juba								Aid worker killed in N Darfur																										
Asia												Azer-Turk Caspian oil pipeline opens											Thailand teacher shot in class, Islamists blamed															
Pakistan			Bomb kills 6 commandos in NW							Air crash kills 45		Suicide bomb kills Shiite cleric Turabi		200 Taliban arrested in Quetta raids		Mudslides kill 40+ earthquake refugees																						
			Army kills 25 rebels in Baluchistan							Bombay bombs kill 179		600 rebels lay down arms in pact		Tribal Jirgas discuss peace in Waziristan		Bomb hits troops convoy-soldier killed																						
Afghan.			20 Taliban killed in ambush attempt							UK troops attack base-40 rebels killed		Heavy fighting with US in Uruzgan prov.												5.5 quake hits NE Afghanistan														
			4 Afghans from US base killed							US troops kill 30 Taliban in Helmand		Drought & violence cause villagers to flee Helmand																										
Arabia			Qaeda reject renewed amnesty offer							Saudi criticizes Hezbollah																												
Iraq		Sunni woman MP kidnapped						3 US killed in Anbar				Balad Ruz-Mortars hit Shia mosque					US marine killed in Anbar prov.							2 shootings at Sunni mosques														
US Deaths: 3/30: 2,317 5/31: 2,459 7/24: 2,565 7/31: 2,578		Gunmen warn Kirkuk police to quit					Shia gunmen kill 42+ in rampage				Olympic committee meeting raided, members abducted					Home bombed by US, killing 2 insurgents, 2 women, child							4 US marines killed in Anbar province															
		Attempted kidnap of Shia woman MP					Bombs at Shia mosque-17 die					Gunmen free 13 prisoners from Baquba hospital, 4 killed				Maliki leads peace plan initiative							Car bomb kills 9 in Shia suburb															
		Clashes with insurgents in Sunni Adhamiya-7 4 US soldiers charged in rape case					Diyala council member killed					Mehdi army leader arrested in Basra, 1UK soldier killed				Kirkuk courthouse car bomb kills 20							Japanese troops return home															
		450 men of village held for questioning					Shia/Sunnis clash in mosque attack					Suicide bomb in café kills 13					Mortar attack on UK Basra base						17 kidnapped in Baghdad															
		Oil production 2.5/export 1.9bbl/day					3 bombs kill 5 nr Green Zone					Mortar attack on UK Basra base					Gunmen kill 15 in Mahmudiya market						6 insurgents killed, 27 held on Haifa St, Baghdad															
		Dep. Electric minister abducted, escapes					Attack on contractor's office-8 die					Suicide bomb kills 59 day laborers					Series of militant leaders arrested across Iraq						4 US marines killed in Anbar															
		Ramadi hospital raided to seek insurgents					20 bus drivers abducted, killed					City council bomb-6 die					Gunmen kill 12 at Kirkuk base						19 Sunni mosque workers abducted															
		Suicide bomb at Mosul health clinic					2 bombs in Kirkuk, Peshmerga killed					Car bomb kills 12 Shia in Najaf					Baquba mosque bombed-7 hurt						Police patrol attacked-5 die															
		2 bombs in Kirkuk, Peshmerga killed					City council bomb-6 die					Gunmen kill 12 at Kirkuk base					19 Sunni mosque workers abducted						US/Iraqi forces raid Al Qaeda towns nr Kirkuk															
		Car bomb kills 12 Shia in Najaf					Baquba mosque bombed-7 hurt					Troops kill 9 in battle w/ Mehdi militia					Bomb at Baghdad Sunni mosque						Iran accused of shelling Kurds in N Iraq															
		E Baghdad market car bomb kills 62 Shia					Saddam hunger strike					Saddam hunger strike					Saddam hunger strike						Saddam hunger strike															
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