September 5, 2006

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Top Stories

Israel offers peace treaty with Lebanon
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Over 1000 illegal immigrants arrived at Canary Isles this weekend
A high number of illegal immigrants, mainly of African origin, arrived on the beaches of the Canary Islands this weekend. Although the exact number reported varies, it seems that more than 1000 have been registered. One person did not survive the trip.

Featured story

Crocodile Hunter's Steve Irwin dies at 44
Steve Irwin, the environmentalist and star of The Crocodile Hunter, died Monday after an accident with a stingray near Cairns, Australia, according to local Australian media. He was 44.

Wikipedia Current Events

EU and Iranian leaders to meet over nuclear row
In what are being called last-ditch talks to head off a nuclear row between the US and Iran, the EU policy chief Javier Solana and the Iranian nuclear senior negotiator will have a two day meeting in an attempt to diffuse tensions.

The Iranian official has not been identified in order to protect the secrecy of the talks.

The location and date of the venue could change at any time - currently the venue is set for Vienna, Austria. The date has not been announced.

Turkey - Two more killed in PKK-related bombings
Bomb blasts in South-eastern Turkey have claimed the lives two people, one of them a police officer. Up to 14 other people were injured. Thew bombing comes during the escalating battle between the Turkish government and Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) separatists fighting for an independent state between the Iraq-Turkish border.

The two bombs appear to have been detonated by remote control as police investigated claims of a suspicious package left near a garden area in the town of Catak (in the Van province). Authorities in the area said that the bomb had been located in a rubbish bin. The Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (TAK), who are linked to the PKK, have claimed the attack. On Tuesday 29th August the groups website

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Wikipedia Current Events

Two-thousand traffic fines laid in Ontario this weekend
2,000 charges had been laid province-wide in Ontario for highway traffic act offences over the Labour Day weekend. More than 100 charges for people not wearing seatbelts. 17 drivers have been charged with impaired driving, 17 others received 12-hour suspensions.

Remnants of tropical storm Ernesto in southern Ontario could have caused accidents. OPP Sgt. Cam Woolley said on Sunday that about 130 crashes could be attributed to "people going too fast in the rain and hydroplaning."

Students heading to college residences posed another problem. Improperly secured desks, futon frames and even a refrigerator were found on provincial highways.

"About 200 unsafe vehicles taken off the road this weekend, some with no brakes, bald tires, wheels ready to separate, that sort of thing," said OPP Sgt. Cam Woolley. "And also drunk drivers continue to be arrested, continue to be in crashes and Labour Day has traditionally been deadly and that's what we found this weekend."

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carried the words. "We will turn Turkey into hell." They also warned foreign tourists to stay away from the country.

The frequency and sophistication of these attacks appear to be on the rise following other bombings last week. The previous attacks at Turkish holiday resorts, which killed 3 people and injured over 100 (10 of them britons), were also claimed by TAK. Many of the recent bombings have been aimed at tourists. In recent years Turkey has improved its foreign reputation as a safe country by promoting tourism, now the disruption to that industry places thousands of jobs (and millions of dollars in revenue) at risk.

In a separate incident, 7 Turkish soldiers were killed in a clash with PKK militants in the South East. The militants are reported to have launched an attack against the soldiers in their army post on the Iraq-Turkey border. The Turkish government has warned that unless Kurdish separatist violence stops it will take action against PKK targets in Iraq, sending its own troops across the border. The threat is made all the bolder by the newly-inaugurated chief of Turkish defense forces General Yasar Buyukanit, who vowed to defeat Kurdish terrorism.

**Crocodile Hunter's Steve Irwin dies at 44**

Steve Irwin, the environmentalist and star of The Crocodile Hunter, died Monday after an accident with a stingray near Cairns, Queensland in Australia, according to local Australian media. He was 44.

Irwin was filming an underwater documentary for his daughter's television show, by Port Douglas, Queensland around 11 a.m. Eastern Australian Time (0100 UTC) when he was struck by a stingray barb in the chest. While the stingray barb had penetrated the left side of his chest, the exact cause of death is still officially unknown. Steve Edmondson, a local diving operator, listed cardiac arrest from the injury as a possibility.

John Stainton, producer of Steve Irwin's Film Company, disclosed the information. "Steve decided to shoot a couple of segments for a new TV show that he's doing with his daughter Bindi and, with the cameramen, went out on to the reef at Batt Reef to do a little segment on stingrays. He came over the top of the stingray... and the stingray's barb went up and went into his chest and put a hole into his heart."

Ross Coleman of the University of Sydney Institute of Marine Science said it was rare for someone to die from contact with a stingray barb, and that he doesn't remember hearing of any similar incidents. He says that stingrays are "dangerous if provoked," and "as a recreational diving instructor you hear of people getting injured by standing on them ... but they rarely die."

The Queensland Ambulance Service said a call was received about 11 a.m. local time on Monday and an emergency services helicopter was flown to a boat on Batt Reef. Irwin was dead before medical attention arrived, and was pronounced dead at the scene.

Irwin's body is being flown to a morgue in Cairns where he will remain until he is formally identified.

He is survived by his wife Terri, who was believed to be exploring Cradle Mountain in Tasmania, as well as his children Bindi Sue, age 8, and Bob, age 2. They have been notified of Irwin's death.

Steve Irwin's death was considered to be very unexpected; Australian Prime Minister John Howard said he was "quite shocked and distressed at Steve Irwin's sudden, untimely and freakish death."

"It's a huge loss to Australia. He was a wonderful character. He was a passionate environmentalist. He brought joy and entertainment and excitement to millions of people," continued Howard.

Similarly, Mark O'Shea, a British zoologist, said that Irwin's death will "leave an immense hole," while Jeff Wilks of the University of Queensland called Irwin "a great ambassador."

John Stainton, Steve Irwin's manager, claimed he always feared that Irwin would lose his life while working in nature. He also stated that he's gotten into "close shaves" with Irwin, but regardless always feared that this day would come.

"You think about all the documentaries we've made and all the dangerous situations that we have been in, you always think 'Is this it, is this a day that maybe is his demise?,'" asked Sainton, "We've been in some pretty close shaves. [But] nothing would ever scare Steve or would worry him. He didn't have a fear of death at all."

**Russian President Putin visits Greece to discuss energy issues**

The Burgas-Alexandroupolis pipeline will be the major issue of the discussions between the Greek
Premier Costas Karamanlis and his counterparts, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Bulgarian President Georgi Parvanov, which will take place in Athens, Greece. The three-party meeting is scheduled to follow afterwards on cooperation on issues regarding energy and economy among Greece, Russia and Bulgaria, with the construction of the oil pipeline Burgas-Alexandroupolis being an issue of important geostrategic importance for SE Europe.

The Burgas-Alexandroupoli oil pipeline will stretch for around 280 kilometres and is expected to transfer 35 million tonnes per year. The cost of its construction will be 800 million euros. The meeting has been scheduled upon President Putin's request, who has submitted a draft plan aimed to be signed by the three countries by the end of the year. It is characteristic that Putin and Karamanlis met two times since September 2005, including one meeting in Chalkidiki, northern Greece, as well as one in Moscow, Russia.

Vladimir Putin is expected at Maximus Palace at 3pm (GTM+2), while he will be escorted by a delegation of Russian politicians, leading businessmen and energy corporation officials. At 7:30pm, Greek Premier Karamanlis will host a dinner in honour of the Presidents of Russia and Bulgaria.

The arrival of the two leaders in Athens has prompted the capital's Traffic Police to proceed with traffic adjustments in the city centre. The major traffic adjustments relate to streets around Athens Hilton, where President Putin will stay during his visit in Greece.

**Enforcement Directorate issues notice to Natwar Singh**

India's former External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh has, for the first time, been directly accused by the Enforcement Directorate for his involvement in the Iraq oil scam. The Directorate has alleged that Singh "jointly and severally" illegally acquired foreign exchange $8.9 lakh along with his son Jagat and three others. The 18-page show-cause notice issued by the ED says the money was acquired by the accused, in violation of U.N regulations, in exchange for two oil contracts awarded to Iraq's State Oil Marketing Organisation (SOMO).

Of the $8,90,000, $7,48,550 was allegedly transferred by them to an account in the Jordan National Bank, the remaining $1,46,247.23, which was the commission for the oil-contracts, was deposited with Barclays Bank, in the Channel Islands. The money was transferred to an account in the name of Indus Trading Company, which itself is owned by Andaleeb Sehgal, a friend of Mr. Singh.

The accused are required to respond to the show-cause notice (issued on the 2nd of September), which Natwar says is an attempt by the ED to "defame" him, within 30 days. The independent Pathak Commission's report had stated that there was "no material evidence to show that Natwar Singh derived any financial or other personal benefits from the contracts."

**Sri Lanka - Government announces first significant gain into rebel-held territory**

In the first attrition since the Sri Lankan peace accord went into effect four years ago, government troops are claiming their first significant victory by snatching the rebel-held enclave of Sempur in Sri Lanka's embattled east.

"We captured the main Sempur artillery position of the Tigers, We suspect they dismantled the guns or pulled them back. We are now in Sempur," said Kelehiya Rambukwella. Rambukwella noted that the government's troops received little or no resistance as they took the 10-km swath of land.

Overnight shelling and mortar attacks from the Tamil Tigers, the main rebel group involved in the fighting, killed one government soldier and injured several others. The objective of the incursion, said Rambukwella, was to neutralize the use of three Tamil Tiger guns aimed on government troops to the south. Tamil Tigers are claiming that they have not fled the area, and are continuing to engage government troops.

**Tropical Depression Six Shows Signs of Organization**

An advisory has been issued for Tropical Depression "Six" by the National Hurricane Center. The storm is currently located about 1165 miles East of the Lesser Antilles in the North Atlantic and estimated to be near latitude 16.9 North, Longitude 43.8 West. This depression is moving toward the Northwest at 12 MPH and is expected to continue for the next 24 hours. No major change in strength is expected in the next 24 hours while winds are close to 35 MPH with higher gusts. The depression is a little disorganized according to the National Hurricane Center and showers and thunderstorms are still showing signs of organization within a large circulation. The depression may become a tropical storm later today or tonight.

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Canadian soldiers killed, wounded by U.S. A-10 Thunderbolts' "friendly fire"

A Canadian soldier was killed and five seriously wounded in Afghanistan today in an incident being described as "friendly fire".

The Canadian soldiers came under fire from NATO airplanes, reported to be two U.S. A-10 Thunderbolts.

Brigadier-General David Fraser, the Canadian commander of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force in southern Afghanistan said an investigation has been ordered; "An aircraft flying in support of ISAF operations accidentally engaged a Canadian position in Panjwaii at approximately 5:30 this morning, killing one soldier and wounding a number of others. An investigation has been ordered into this event and while this event is tragic, Operation Medusa and the Canadians continue to operate in the Panjwaii district in support of Afghan government efforts to rid the area of Taliban."

"We've got to find out what were the details there." said Fraser. "We do have procedures, we do have communications, we do have training and tactics and techniques and procedures to mitigate the risk, but we can't reduce those risks to zero."

Four Canadian soldiers were killed in a 2002 "friendly fire" incident when they were bombed by an American F-16 fighter plane.

Kofi Annan to appoint secret mediator for Israeli soldier release negotiations

United Nations secretary-general Kofi Annan has announced he will appoint a secret mediator to oversee negotiations for the release of Israeli prisoners held by Hezbollah. The soldiers were captured by the guerrilla group on July 12, 2006 in a cross border raid, sparking a 34 day war by Israel on Southern Lebanon. The captives are mentioned in UN Resolution 1701, which requests their release. Israel has also previously said that the soldiers return is crucial to any peace effort.

Annan announced to a press conference in Saudi Arabia that his efforts were requested by both Israel and Hezbollah. Speaking in the Red sea port of Jiddah today he told reporters: "I will appoint a person to work secretly with the two sides ... I will not announce his name today or tomorrow." The secretary-general is currently on an 11 day tour of the Middle East.

Hezbollah reportedly wishes to swap Lebanese prisoners held in Israel for the soldiers. This is something the two parties have done before although, currently, Israel is refusing to negotiate any form of swap.

The announcement is another sign of progress in the region since the ceasefire. Although Lebanon indicated earlier today that it would reject an imminent peace treaty from Israel and agreed to file complaints about the latter's eight week sea and air blockade with the UN.

So far there has been no reaction to the statement either from Hezbollah or Israel.

New Zealand recycles old computers for free

Saturday, September 2nd, Wellington held a computer recycling day for free hosted by computer maker, Dell. Now Auckland is looking to host one of their own.

During the recycling day, sponsored by Environment Ministry and Computer Access New Zealand Trust, Dell New Zealand took in more than 30 tonnes of obsolete equipment by 1,200 people at Wellington's Westpac Stadium. Instead of the equipment going to a landfill where it is unable to decompose and will leak chemicals into the ground, 97% of all equipment collected will be recycled.

Susan McGregor, an Auckland City Council spokesperson, said: "There is a regional forum looking into waste disposal; but to date there is only a scheme for hazardous material to be collected separately by the council. It [the council] would welcome computer companies taking some responsibility for disposing of old computer ware."

Dell has indicated it will hold another PC clean up next year.

According to Dell, out of the 6.3 million New Zealand computers, 250,000 of them are old and obsolete, mainly because most computer owners, according to a survey, will upgrade their computers every two to five years. Sydney, Australia had recently hosted one of their own computer recycling days; however Wellington's event was four times more successful.

Chicago apartment fire kills six children

Six children aged between 3 and 14 died early Sunday in an apartment fire on the 7700 block of Marshfield Ave on the north side of Chicago, IL. The fire also injured the victims' mother and three other siblings. Authorities say that candles are suspected as the cause, and that the
The apartment had had no electricity since May.

The three-bedroom apartment on the third-floor did not have a smoke detector, officials say. Commonwealth Edison spokesman John Edison declined to comment on why the electricity was turned off for the apartment.

Fire Commissioner Raymond Orozco told the media, "This is the largest multiple fire fatality we've had from a single fire in quite a few years. I mean it's children. It's difficult for everyone involved."

Witness Cmdr. Will Knight said, "The mother came running out with one child in her arms, screaming to the neighbors that there were other children inside."

Fire Department spokesman Larry Langford said that the children were found in the front room, huddled not far from where the fire started. He added that the fire broke out shortly after midnight.

Witness Al Tillman, 32, said that he was visiting a friend when he heard the children cry for help. He ran up to the third floor, where he managed to grab a boy's arm and drag him out to the waiting paramedics.

Tillman said, "I'm shaken up because the other children didn't make it. I only heard one child. I wish I could have saved the others."

One man said that he and several others tried to get into the building, but the intense heat forced them to turn around.

Later, people held a blanket under one of the apartment's windows, asking them to jump down. Firefighters retrieved the children remaining by ladder.

The mother is hospitalized with three other children. The Court County's medical examiner indentified the children as Vanessa Ramirez, 14; Eric Ramirez, 12; Suzette Ramirez, 10; Idaly Ramirez, 6; Kevin Ramirez, 3; and Scarlet Ramos, 3. Scarlet Ramos has been listed as living at a different address, but details regarding this have not been revealed.

**Suicide bomber kills British soldier in Afghanistan**

A British soldier has been killed and another is seriously injured after a suicide bomber struck a NATO convoy in Kabul, the capital city of Afghanistan. It is believed the attacker drove his vehicle into the convoy. Four Afghan civilians were also killed in the incident, four more were injured.

In a statement, the Ministry of Defence said: "Sadly, one UK soldier has been killed and another very seriously injured as a result of this attack. The injured soldier has been evacuated to a military medical facility for treatment. No further details of the incident will be released until next of kin have been informed."

The death comes two days after 14 British military servicemen were killed after their RAF Nimrod plane crash landed near Kandahar.

So far, 37 British troops have been killed in Afghanistan since military operations started in 2001.

**Bomb attack in Iraq kills two British soldiers**

A roadside bomb attack by insurgents near Basra, Iraq has killed two British soldiers. The explosion also injured two other soldiers, who are being treated at Shaibah Logistics Base. The troops were travelling on patrol as part of a convoy 15 miles (9 Km) from Basra when it was attacked at approximately 1300 local time.

In a statement, the Ministry of Defence said: "It is with great regret that we can confirm that two British soldiers have died as a result of an attack on a British patrol. One other British soldier was seriously injured, and a further one suffered minor injuries. Both have been evacuated for emergency medical care and taken by helicopter to a British Field Hospital at Shaibah Logistics Base."

A British base in Basra was also hit with a mortar or rocket attack in a separate incident. The attack set fire to boats inside the base. Military spokesman have reported no casualties.

**Gunman kills and injures tourists in Jordanian capital**

A gunman has opened fire on tourists in Amman, the capital of Jordan. One Briton was killed and five others were injured at the Roman Theatre in central Amman. Two British women were among the injured tourists, the rest were from the Netherlands, New Zealand and Australia (So far the dead man has not been named). It is not yet clear whether the man was acting on his own or as part of group.

The attack took place at 12:30 local time (09:30 GMT). The lone gunman shouted "God is great" (in Arabic) before firing up to 12 shots, according to eye witness reports given to the AFP news agency. When he ran out of ammunition the man fled the scene but was overpowered by Police and local inhabitants.

Interior Minister Eid al-Fayez
confirmed that a man was arrested and is now being questioned.

A BBC reporter in the area has said that the area is cordoned and currently being patrolled by armed police.

**Israel offers peace treaty with Lebanon**

Ehud Olmert, the Prime Minister of Israel has offered to make peace with Lebanon, calling for an end to "hostility, fanaticism and hatred" towards each nation by "shaking [each other's] hands."

"How natural it would be if the Lebanese prime minister replied to the many requests I conveyed to him, through different people, to sit down together, shake hands, make peace and end once and for all the hostility, fanaticism and hatred that part of his country feels towards us," said Olmert, who was speaking to students at a school in Ma'alot.

Olmert also said that he "hopes that day comes soon."

"We have to have a situation, where we do not see those lorries coming from Syria, full of Iranian missiles, full of Iranian rockets. That will just make Hezbollah strong again. That is not good for Lebanon; it is not good for Israel," he added.

Fouad Siniora, the Prime Minister of Lebanon said that no treaty or invitation to talk has reached his office and that any such treaty or invitation would be turned down.

The statement continued saying, "what is required from Israel is that it ... withdraw from the Lebanese territory it has occupied and from the Shebaa farms and stop violating the [UN truce] resolution by ending its unjust blockade of Lebanon. Lebanon will be the last state to sign peace with Israel and that can only happen based on the Arab peace initiative."

**Over 1000 illegal immigrants arrived at Canary Isles this weekend**

A high number of illegal immigrants, mainly of African origin, arrived on the beaches of the Canary Islands this weekend. Although the exact number reported varies, it seems that more than 1000 have been registered. One person did not survive the trip.

Earlier this year, in the weekend of May 12, 974 immigrants set foot on different isles. This Saturday alone, 674 foreigners have been found without the proper documents. Early August it already became clear that immigration numbers were increased dramatically, when officials reported a 307% increase (14,589 immigrants, compared to 4,751 during the same period in 2005).

A special session of the Canarian regional government pertaining to the immigration question is planned for Tuesday. Some Spanish sources expect these events to reopen the political debate on this issue.

The immigrants generally leave the African continent in overcrowded canoes, embarking on a dangerous boat trip. They try to reach the archipelago, which, being part of Spain, serves as an outpost for immigration into the European Union. Boats are often intercepted in Spanish territorial waters. On the shore, humanitarian organisations like the Red Cross are waiting to provide the first care to the travellers. On arrival, hypothermia, dehydration and minor injuries are the most common problems.

Thereafter, officials try to establish the immigrant's identity. Most of them have no legal grounds for immigration, but cannot be repatriated because they conceal their identity, or because they are less than 18 years old. In that case they are taken to a state Foreigner Internment Center, where they can be held up to 40 days. Since Spain lacks bilateral agreements with most countries around the Mediterranean Sea except Morocco, they cannot return the immigrants without negotiations. If they aren't arrested upon arrival, or when the procedure doesn't result in repatriation, they can freely enter Spain and the European Union.

**Former South African apartheid regime's police minister repents**

Adriaan Vlok, the former South African apartheid regime's police minister, went to Reverend and director-general Frank Chikane's church in Soweto on Sunday, the 3rd of September to repent. This follows his recent apology on the 3rd of August, 2006, which was described by some as "a miracle" that has had global impact.

Vlok and Chikane met privately on the 3rd of August, 2006. As part of the apology, Vlok washed the feet of Reverend Frank Chikane. As an ordained minister, Chikane has preached at the small church in Naledi, Soweto, for 16 years. It allegedly took Vlok two months to convince Chikane to meet him and
hear his apology.

Chikane said he accepted the apology, during which Vlok admitted to atrocities committed during the apartheid era.

"I am sorry for what you had to suffer"

Vlok, who is described by some sources as "one of the most evil men that apartheid created" called Chikane's congregation his "brothers and sisters" and telling them, "I feel your pain," and "I am sorry for what you had to suffer." "We were fighting here in Soweto. It was a war. But today we're coming here to pray."

Vlok admitted that he used to "hate your pastor [Chikane]" and that "[they] were fighting each other with guns, hand grenades and poison". Vlok also said "I thank God for letting me not succeed in killing you."

Vlok described his wife's suicide in 1994 as the defining point in his life.

"It took me 12 years, after the government changed, to come to this point. I had to rid myself of my own pride, my egotism and selfishness," he said. "I don't represent anyone else because I stand before the Lord alone."

Vlok was seated in the front row next to Chikane's wife. At one point he stood and clapped along to a gospel song in the packed church. When he was introduced, he joked by saying: "You can't give a microphone to an old politician and expect him to speak for only a minute. It's not possible."

Reverend Frank Chikane spoke of how he kept a small plastic bag with a toothbrush and toothpaste, expecting to be detained. He recalled how his mother had been driven around Soweto by police who were hunting for his younger brother, with instructions to "shoot on sight".

He described today's South Africa as "a new country in an old country," and, "a country of peace." Chikane is still seeking accountability from those who tried to kill him in the late 1980s by lacing his clothes with poison.

Chikane maintained that the apology was sincere and said that: "The fact that Mr. Vlok has come to make a confession to me and is here with us today is a miracle," and, "It is the talk of the town ... Some people have told me it's profoundly historical."

American tennis player Andre Agassi retires

Andre Agassi retired after a defeat by Benjamin Becker of Germany at the U.S. Open. The score was 7-6, 6-7, 6-4, 7-5.

After the match ended, Thirty six year old Agassi sobbed as the 24,000 fans gave him a standing ovation lasting four minutes.

"The scoreboard said I lost today, but what the scoreboard doesn't say is what it is I've found," Agassi told the crowd, tears streaming down his cheeks, his voice cracking with emotion. "Over the last 21 years, I've found loyalty. You have pulled for me on the court and also in life. I have found inspiration. You have willed me to succeed sometimes even in my lowest moments."

Agassi had a 21-Year Tennis Career.


He was also World No.1 on several occasions.

Recently, he had been increasingly crippled by a bulging disc in his lower back in the last 18 months and announced on June 24 that this was his farewell tournament.

Today in History

1793 - French Revolution: The National Convention voted to implement terror measures, beginning the Reign of Terror.
1836 - Sam Houston was elected as the first President of the Republic of Texas.
1905 - The Treaty of Portsmouth was signed at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in New Hampshire, USA, officially ending the Russo-Japanese War.
1972 - Munich Massacre: A Palestinian terrorist group called "Black September" attacked Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympic Games.
1977 - NASA launched the Voyager 1 spaceprobe, currently the most distant man-made object from Earth.

September 05 is Teachers' Day in India

Quote of the Day

"A master in the art of living draws no sharp distinction between his work and his play; his labor and his leisure; his mind and his body; his education and his recreation. He hardly knows which is which. He simply pursues his vision of excellence through whatever he is doing, and leaves others to determine whether he is working or playing. To himself, he always appears to be doing both."

~ François-René de Chateaubriand
**Word of the Day**

caesura; n

1. A a pause or interruption in a poem, music, building or other work of art.
2. In Classical prosody, using two words to divide a metrical foot.

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