

## **MIDDLE EAST CAULDRON**

*As Iraq struggles to find itself among sectarian violence, suicide bombers and a general terrorist malaise thwarting United States and coalition attempts to secure and pacify the area and hopefully take the first steps to a form of democracy among ancient enemies and provide a stable platform for Iraq, a new threat comes by way of Hezbollah attacks and Israel retaliation. For those who believe we are in a War of civilizations, again we see wounded spirits in the promise land as Arab and Jew meet in battle.*

*Scholars remind that much of the turmoil has historical connotation: We are reminded of early archaeological evidence found in Jericho, 9000 BC. Urban life in Syria-Palestine and Egypt, circa 3500 BC. Abraham traveled from Ur to Canaan in 1900 BC and Moses led the Israeli exodus from Egypt in 1200 BC, and 1000 yrs before Christ, Israelites under Saul, David and Solomon initiated a golden age. The Phillistines-people of the sea-frequented the area and fought against David-Solomon line unsuccessfully. Palestine is derived from the Phillistiness and lived in southern Israel and the Gaza Strip. They were said to be idol worshipers rather than belief in God. "This land is mine' could be the historical whisper of the semites of Jewish and Arabic origin.*

*Conflict was paramount from the early settling of Israel and Judah: defeat by the Assyrians in 700 BC; destruction by the Babylonians later, taking many Jews captive; Babylonian defeat by Cyrus the Great of Persia and the return of the Jews to their land; followed by Alexander's capture of the land in*

*332BC. Despite all of these set-backs, the Jew tries to retain his religion, dignity and place. During Nero's time, the Romans capture Palestine and control Jerusalem in 63 BC. Arrival of Jesus, his ministry of about 3 years, betrayal, crucifixion at the hands of the Romans, ascension and return in Christian lore.*