

Blaming the Victims - The Dominant Media Vilify Hamas

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Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)
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The blame game - no one plays it better than the dominant media, and they're at it again over Gaza. Expect no comments below in their spaces, yet honest journalism would headline them.

After Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, Franklin Roosevelt addressed Congress - with an appropriating updating for Gaza:

December 27 "will live in infamy." The people of Gaza were "suddenly and deliberately attacked by....air forces of the" State of Israel. The "attack was deliberately planned many (months) ago. During the intervening time (Israel) deliberately sought to deceive (Palestinians) by false statements and expressions of hope for" the peace process.

"The (weekend and continued) attack(s) caused severe damage to" property throughout Gaza. In addition, "many (Palestinian) lives have been lost. The facts (on the ground) speak for themselves....this "unprovoked and dastardly attack" must not go unanswered.

Note the contrast. Japan in the 1940s sought accord, not conflict. Not America. FDR goaded them to attack through numerous harassments and provocations - selling arms to Tokyo's enemies, denying Japan strategic resources and port access, as well as imposing a damaging embargo.

For its part, Hamas has been conciliatory and sought peace. It's willing to recognize Israel in return for a sovereign Palestinian state inside pre-1967 borders - just 22% of its original homeland. In 2008 and earlier, it agreed to unilateral ceasefires in spite of repeated Israeli violations and Gaza in duress under siege. It responds only in self-defense when attacked as international law allows, yet Washington, Israel, and the West call it "terrorism."

The dominant media also in their customary role - guarding the powerful and suppressing uncomfortable truths in lieu of full and accurate reporting. They're in high gear over Gaza. They vilify Hamas, stay silent about Gazan suffering, are mute on the crippling blockade, its devastating human toll, and practically champion Israel's call for "all-out war" and the slaughter of defenseless men, women, children and infants.

"The more damage to Hamas, the better the chances for peace" says the Wall Street Journal in a lead December 28 editorial headlined "Israel's Gaza Defense." The Journal rewrites history this way:

"The chronology of this latest violence is important to understand. Israel withdrew both its soldiers and all of its settlers from Gaza in August 2005. Hamas won its internal power

struggle with Mr. Abbas' Fatah organization to control Gaza in 2006. Since 2005 Hamas has fired some 6300 rockets at Israeli civilians from Gaza, killing 10 and wounding 780."

"Hamas did agree to a six-month ceasefire earlier this year, during which the rocket attacks declined in number but never stopped. But Hamas refused to extend the truce past December 19, and the group has since resumed attacks...." Israelis in the south "live under constant threat, often in bomb shelters, and the economy has suffered. Yet the world's media (only pays) attention when Israel responds to that Hamas barrage."

The Journal's op-ed page standard fare twists facts into a fabric of misinformation and agitprop, and when vilifying Hamas it's vicious. A few corrections:

- Israel never disengaged from Gaza;

- it relocated its settlers to seized West Bank land to strengthen its hold on the Territory;

- it redeployed to new positions; re-enters Gaza at will; controls its airspace and coastline; movement within and between Gaza and the West Bank; virtually all other aspects of Palestinians' lives; and since Hamas' January 2006 electoral victory, falsely called it a terrorist organization; cut off all outside aid; imposed a crippling economic embargo; imprisoned 1.5 million Gazans in isolation; inflicted devastating human suffering; and stepped up oppression in an all too familiar pattern: repeated incursions, killings, targeted assassinations, mass arrests, incarcerations, torture, and all the rest;

- then, after mid-June 2007, collaboratively and at the behest of Washington and Israel, president Mahmoud Abbas declared a "state of emergency" (when there was none); he dismissed Hamas' prime minister; appointed an "emergency" cabinet; split Palestinian authority between Gaza and the West Bank; incited internal conflict to divide and conquer; and acceded to Israel blockading Gaza - closing all border crossings; cutting off most essential to life supplies; creating critical shortages of everything; devastating local production and agriculture; sending poverty and unemployment soaring; and grievously harming the health and welfare of the population;

- no Journal op-eds condemn this; they call Israel the region's "only democracy" and a model for others to emulate;

- no op-eds mention thousands of Palestinians killed, many more wounded, even greater numbers imprisoned, many uncharged, torture as official policy, and no chance for redress in Israeli courts;

- none mention previous Hamas unilateral ceasefires, one lasting 18 months despite repeated Israeli violations and continued other failures to observe international law;

- none explain that rocket fire from Gaza during Hamas' ceasefire came from other elements in the Territory, not its own members;

- none say that Hamas uses crude, homemade rockets and light arms against the world's fourth most powerful military, a nuclear power, with the latest home-produced and US supplied technology and weapons;

- nothing gets reported about over 60 years of Israeli state terror; the unimaginable harm it's done; the continued theft of Palestinian lands; the destruction of their homes, crops and

other property; the ethnic cleansing of its people; and Israel's slow-motion genocide against a population too isolated and weak to contest it;

— no op-eds about one-sided media reporting; suppressing uncomfortable truths; defending the indefensible; ignoring Israeli crimes; vilifying Hamas without cause; Palestinians for being Arabs; and Arab Israeli citizens because they're not Jews;

— no mention that the ratio of Arabs to Jews killed and harmed is disproportionately one-sided; or

— that Palestinians have endured a brutal, illegal 41-year occupation in violation of international law; Journal editors find those facts uncomfortable, unimportant so they ignore them.

Instead the Journal supports the Gaza siege, and says "If Hamas wants its people to have freer movement, it can stop sponsoring terror killings." Even Arab leaders were "urged to demand that Hamas maintain the truce....so we could have avoided what happened."

In the aftermath, Journal editors hold Hamas responsible as does Washington. Arab leaders "understand that (Hamas' leaders), like Hezbollah, (are) increasingly allied with Iran and its goals for fomenting regional instability."

In fact, despite pro-forma criticism and anger on Arab streets, leaders in the region's capitals offered little support for Gazans for fear of antagonizing Washington and their powerful Israeli neighbor.

The Arab League won't discuss a common response until a January 2 Doha summit, and when it does expect little more than from the UN. As for Arab foreign ministers, they postponed an "emergency" meeting until December 31, so the killing continues while they attend to more pressing business.

Journal editors have a message for Obama. He's "about to discover that the terrorists of the Middle East (won't) change their radical ambitions merely because America has a new president." For their part, Palestinians will learn that the new one is no friendlier than the incumbent and may turn out even worse. White House occupants, key congressional members, and the entire Senate pledge unswerving support for Israel. At the same time, blaming their victims (and ours) is one of Washington's favorite spectator sports.

On December 28, the Journal gave two noted Israeli flacks prominent space - Michael Oren of Jerusalem's Shalem Center and Yossi Klein Halevi of the Shalem Center's Adelson Institute for Strategic Studies for their op-ed headlined: "Palestinians Need Israel to Win."

They claim that while Israeli foreign minister Tzipi Livni "implore(d) Egyptian leaders (on December 19) to urge restraint on Hamas....prime minister Ehud Olmert told viewers of Al-Arabiya Television that Israel had no interest in a military confrontation" at the very time it was long-planned and about to be unleashed.

"If Israel was guilty of acting disproportionately, it was in its willingness to seek any means, even at the risk of its citizens' lives, to resolve the (brewing) crisis diplomatically." The writers blame the UN for not condemning Hamas and for "growing media criticism of Israel."

Israeli security comes first, and "Gaza is the test case. Much more is at stake than merely

the military outcome.” It’s about Israel’s “deterrence power and uphold(ing) the principle that its citizens cannot be targeted with impunity.” They’re not unless Palestinians are attacked first and even then have little to fear beyond their government’s own rhetoric.

Syria is an issue as well....”triggering the Gaza conflict only deepens Israeli mistrust. The Damascus office of Hamas, which operates under the aegis of the regime of Bashar al Assad, vetoed the efforts of Hamas leaders to extend the ceasefire and insisted on escalated rocket attacks.”

The Gaza conflict may “intensify with a possible incursion of Israeli ground forces. Israel must be allowed to conclude this operation with a decisive victory over Hamas....This is an opportunity to redress Israel’s failure to humble Hezbollah (in 2006), and to deal a substantial setback to another jihadist proxy of Iran....without Hamas’ defeat, there can be no serious progress toward a treaty that both satisfies Palestinian aspirations and allays Israel’s fears. At stake in Gaza is nothing less than the future of the peace process.”

Their rhetoric defies comment. It’s breathtaking, mirror opposite of the truth, and credible only to the truest of true believers of the most dubious analysis the two writers lay out.

New York Times Press Handout-Style Journalism

The Times’ 1997 proxy statement calls itself “an independent newspaper, entirely fearless, free of ulterior influence and unselfishly devoted to the public welfare” in reporting “all the news fit to print.” No media source anywhere has more clout. None more effectively influences world opinion, and none show more one-sided support for Israel, disdain for Palestinian rights, and justifying the unjustifiable when they’re so grievously harmed.

It’s December 29 Ethan Bronner/Taghreed El-Khodary “No Early End Seen to ‘All-Out-War on Hamas in Gaza” article is typical. It highlights Israel’s aim “to cripple Hamas’ ability to fire rockets into Israel,” never mentioning they’re for legitimate self-defense and never preemptively fired. It calls Hamas a “terrorist organization” when, in fact, it’s Palestine’s legitimate government. It respects the rule of law, and it fearlessly defends the rights of its people. It reports nothing about its democratic election, its seeking peace and rapprochement, its unilateral ceasefires, its support by the great majority of Gazans, and the efforts it makes for them in spite of overwhelming challenges under siege.

Instead it states that “Hamas killed four Israelis on (December 28) after firing more than 70 rockets, including a long-range one into the booming city of Ashdod some 18 miles from Gaza, where it hit a bus stop, killing a woman and injuring two other people. Earlier a rocket hit nearby Ashkelon, killing an Israeli-Arab construction worker and wounding three others. The other dead Israelis....were a civilian in the Negev desert and a soldier.”

“Thousands of Israelis huddled in shelters as the long-range rockets hit streets or open areas in....the most serious display of Hamas’ arsenal since the Israeli assault began.” It referred to “Hamas gunmen,” reported that “Israel would widen and deepen the attack if necessary....until Hamas no longer had the ability to fire rockets into Israel.” It said that Israel has “nothing against the citizens of Gaza and that it had more than once offered its hand in peace to the Palestinian nation.”

“Israel sent in some 40 trucks of humanitarian relief, including blood from Jordan and medicine. Egypt opened its border with Gaza to some similar aid and to allow some of the

wounded through.” No mention of the Gaza siege, the devastating pre-conflict humanitarian crisis, or that Egypt’s president Hosni Mubarak initially ordered his soldiers to shoot Gazans breaching border barriers, then only reluctantly allowed in some of the seriously wounded for medical treatment.

“Meanwhile in Israel, sirens wailed over mostly empty streets in the seaside city of Ashkelon. Storefronts were battered shut. Families clustered inside the city’s stretches of towering white apartment blocks and single-family houses. Weary of venturing too far outside, they scurried into protected rooms when sirens sounded, listening for the sound of another rocket crashing somewhere in their city. ‘It’s frightening, but what can we do?’ asked a high school senior.”

Plenty The Times won’t report. Ask your government to stop attacking Gazans so they won’t respond in self-defense. Demand that Palestinian rights be respected, the illegal siege ended, the IDF aggression stopped, and the occupation of the West Bank. Insist Israeli laws apply equally to Arab citizens, that Palestinians no longer will be persecuted, that peace will take precedence of war, that Israel will engage its neighbors, not attack them, and that real democracy will replace the sham kind now practiced.

Make it impossible for The (outrageous December 29) New York Times’ “War Over Gaza” editorial to be written. It begins:

“Israel must defend itself. And Hamas must bear responsibility for ending a six-month cease-fire this month with a barrage of rocket attacks into Israeli territory. Still we fear that Israel’s response....is unlikely to weaken the militant Palestinian group substantially or move things any closer to what all Israelis and Palestinians need: a durable peace agreement and a two-state solution.”

“Hamas’ leaders, especially those safely ensconced in Damascus, are unconcerned about their people’s suffering – and (are) masters at capitalizing on it.” The writer urges other Arab leaders “to cajole or more likely threaten Hamas (or its patrons in Syria and Iran) to accept a new cease-fire (read “surrender”).”

The editorial claims most casualties were “Hamas security forces” when, in fact, the great majority are civilian men, women and children, including police with no military connection. It stresses Ehud Barak’s promised “war to the bitter end.”

It says there’s “no justification for Hamas’ attacks or its virulent rejectionism,” but turns a blind eye to Israel’s culpability. It refers to the failure of the never was and never will be “peace process” but won’t report that Washington and Tel Aviv won’t tolerate one. That they choose dominance over peace, violence over reconciliation, and conquest above the rule of law.

It claims Condoleezza Rice sought Middle East peace, and it’s up to Barack Obama to accomplish it himself – when, in fact, Democrats and Republicans one-sidedly support Israel, seek dominance over Middle East states, want a subservient Hamas like Fatah, back the Gaza conflict to weaken its effective rule, and are for the illegal occupation of Palestine to continue.

Times’ articles reveal more about what they don’t report than what they do. They:

- leave Israeli brutality unexplained; its vicious 41 year occupation;
- let Gaza images inciting world outrage go unpublished;
- suppress Israel's continued waging of the bloodiest, most unjustifiable war on Palestine since 1967;
- won't report how its current air strikes hit civilian targets (including residential neighborhoods, homes, workshops, medical warehouses, a sewage lagoon, a plastics factory, a TV broadcasting center, universities and mosques) while claiming only military ones are attacked;
- don't explain the terror on ordinary Gazans; the traumatizing effects on children and how psychologically damaged they are;
- the night phone calls Israeli intelligence personnel make to families, ordering them out of homes to be bombed;
- Gaza's humanitarian crisis compounded by Israel's "war to the bitter end;"
- the immensity of Israel's crimes of war and against humanity; its mockery of the rule of law; its worse than apartheid South African practices according to observers who know.
- the near-silence and inaction of the international community; the compliance of regional Arab states;
- the Palestinians' total isolation; Gaza's tighter than ever siege; the media mostly barred from entering and when allowed are few in number, carefully screened, and greatly circumscribed; reports are from Gazans on the ground; they include much higher death and injury totals; hundreds still alive but clinically dead and will perish; surgeries performed without anesthesia because little to none is available; and the impossibility of proper medical care because of Israel's imposed blockade.

The Gaza-based Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) reports that "its field workers have faced extreme difficulties in documenting crimes due to the dangers of getting close to" bombed areas and the chaos throughout the Territory as war rages round the clock. Yet they do what they can throughout Gaza and in horrific pictures they take and publish - images suppressed in America.

It urgently asked the UN Human Rights Council to act under its ("Uniting for Peace") UN Resolution 377 authority. It permits the General Assembly to address peace and security matters when the Security Council doesn't do it. General Assembly President Miguel D'Escoto said: "the time has come to take firm action if the UN does not want to be rightly accused of complicity by omission."

As of New Year's day, Ma'an News reported 428 known killed (other reports are higher) and over 2000 injured, many too seriously to survive.

On December 28, the US vetoed a Security Council draft resolution to end Israel's "disproportionate use of force" on Gazans. The vote was 11 ayes, three abstentions (Britain, Germany and Bulgaria), and one nay - America. John Negroponte did the dishonor following a long-standing practice of blocking any UN condemnation of Israel, regardless of how

justified.

The Security Council held an emergency meeting on New Year's eve at which Negroponte again rejected a legally binding resolution condemning Israel and demanding its attacks stop. At the same time, Israel rejected pressures for a 48-hour ceasefire to allow in humanitarian aid. According to The New York Times, "The government said it would push ahead with its air, sea, and ultimately ground operation, which one senior military official described as 'making Hamas lose their will or lose their weapons.' "

Earlier on December 30 at 5:00AM, Israeli gunboats (without warning) attacked the humanitarian boat Dignity (in international waters 90 miles from Gaza) bringing three tons of medical supplies. It was rammed three times, heavily damaged, and took on water. Israelis also threatened to shoot its occupants and fired machine guns overhead and around it attempting to head it off. It managed to get to the Lebanese port of Tyre in the afternoon. Luckily no one was injured. The Free Gaza Movement founder, Paul Laurdee, said 11 Israeli vessels surrounded Dignity, ordered it to stop, but it refused.

The New York Times was silent on the incident. However, on December 29, it gave pro-genocide historian Benny Morris space for his "Why Israel Feels Threatened" op-ed - a disturbing justification of Israel's attacks and warning of much more to come. This by an advocate of attacking Iran with nuclear weapons and a believer in ethnic cleansing who once described Palestinians as "wild animal(s who have) to be locked up in one way or another....When the choice is between destroying or being destroyed, it's better to destroy."

He paints a totally disingenuous picture of isolated Israel surrounded by hostile neighbors and losing support from the West. "To the east, Iran....to the north, the Lebanese fundamentalist Hezbollah....to the south...the Islamist Hamas movement (controlling) the Gaza Strip."

These "dire threats" make Israel "feel that the walls - and history - are closing in on their 60-year-old state."

Israel threatened? Syria, Lebanon and Iran should worry based on past and current provocations. No country attacked Israel since the 1973 Yom Kippur war, and none today would dare - given its military strength, nuclear arsenal, and close ties to America and the West.

Morris cites another threat - demography. The 1.3 million Israeli Arabs "offer the recipe (for the) dissolution of the Jewish state." They've become "radicalized, embrac(e) Palestinian national aims," Jews see them as a "potential fifth column," and, with their higher birthrate, will outnumber Israeli Jews by 2040. Within five years, Arabs may become the majority in pre-1948 Palestine.

According to Morris, Israel is endangered because of its commitment to "Western democratic and liberal norms." Violence in Gaza resulted, and "it would not be surprising if more powerful explosions were to follow" - a clear assessment that slaughter is OK in the name of "self-defense" and an indication that The Times agrees.

The Los Angeles Times' Misinformation "primer on Gaza, Israel, and some key factors behind the current violence."

On December 30, Michael Muskal wrote it asking:

— “Why is Israel attacking Hamas? To curb rocket attacks he maintains, when, in fact, neutralizing the government is the real aim, destroying its ability to rule effectively, weakening its support on the ground, and, in the end, co-opt it like Fatah and the PLO under Arafat; rocket attacks are just pretext.

— “What is Hamas?” An Islamist group founded to destroy Israel and refuses to accept its right to exist, he claims. In fact, after its establishment during the First Intifada (in 1987), Israel supported it against the PLO (as it now backs Fatah against Hamas). Ever since, it’s been an effective resistance movement. Its goal – ending Israel’s illegal occupation through negotiation and international consensus, not terrorism, war, or denying Israel’s right to exist. However, its charter states that it wants peace, equity and justice for all Palestinians; supports the weak; defends the oppressed; and will fight for its rights if Israel won’t grant them peacefully. Hamas is clear on its willingness to recognize Israel in return for a Palestinian state inside pre-1967 borders – a nonstarter for Israel.

— “Does Hamas speak for all Palestinians? No. Hamas gunmen took full control of Gaza in the summer of 2007. The West would prefer to deal with (Fatah’s) Abbas, who has shown a willingness to negotiate with Israel, and it tried to topple Hamas with economic and political sanctions.” No is right as well as the West going along with Washington and Israel trying to topple Hamas, but unmentioned is the crippling siege. Hamas is a legitimate political group with a military wing for defense, not offense. They’re not “gunmen” or militants. Abbas’ subservience endears him to America and Tel Aviv. Hamas is independent. It champions Palestinians’ rights, and therein lies the conflict.

— “If Hamas is so opposed to Israel, why did it agree to a truce? Hamas had hoped to end the blockade, but the cease-fire collapsed in November and expired Dec. 19. Abbas blamed Hamas for prompting the Israeli attack by refusing to extend the cease-fire.” True on the first point. False or misleading on the rest. Hamas declared a ceasefire unilaterally. Israel never respected it and killed over two dozen Gazans while it was in force. Abbas blamed the victims and absolved the aggressor in deference to Tel Aviv and Washington – in betrayal of his people for his own political aims.

— “What has been the response to the Israeli attacks in the Arab world?” Saying that anti-Israeli demonstrations have been held in several countries greatly understates how many, their size and where. They’re large and growing and are being held across America, throughout the Middle East, and in many other countries worldwide.

“What about Egypt? (It) opposes Islamic radical groups, including its own Muslim Brotherhood, which helped give birth to Hamas. Egypt has a difficult relationship because they share a border (and) clashes have been reported between Palestinians and Egyptian security forces at border crossings?” Half truths and misleading. Egypt is allied to Washington and Israel. It opposes the Muslim Brotherhood and all independent opposition to president Hosni Mubarak’s dictatorship. Egyptian forces initiated border clashes by firing on Gazans trying to escape the violence.

— “What about the US?” A “power vacuum” suggests Muskal until Obama takes office. Unexplained is a continuity of policy that unswervingly supports Israel, its right to wage aggressive war, violate international law, slaughter Gazan civilians, maintain its illegal occupation, and deny Palestinians their right to self-determination.

— “What has the Bush administration done?” Saying it blamed Hamas and asked Israel

publicly to avoid civilian casualties is right but misleading. For eight years, George Bush disdained Palestinian rights, supplies Israel with billions of dollars in aid, the latest weapons and technology, and full support for its occupation, oppression and aggressive wars.

— “What about the Obama administration?” Repeating his saying the US has only one president at a time is right. So is affirming his strong support for Israel. Unmentioned is his indifference to Palestinian issues and that chances for regional peace will be no greater than under George Bush so expect little hopeful change.

— “How do Israeli politics figure in the equation? Muskal is right in relating the current conflict to Israel’s February 10 elections. A new prime minister and Knesset will be chosen and polls show a large majority of Israelis back its government’s attacks. Acting tough could prove a winning strategy even at the expense of human lives and less security than without conflict.

Misinformation like the above is de rigueur throughout the dominant media, especially when it comes to Israel. Tel Aviv can do no wrong even when it inflicts vast amounts of destruction, massacres hundreds of civilians, and injures tens of hundreds more, defenseless against its onslaught.

Profiting from Human Slaughter

On December 27, the London Guardian reported that the “Israeli far right gains ground as Gaza rockets fuel tension.” Jerusalem-based Toni O’Loughlin wrote that pre-conflict polls showed “the Israeli public calling for harsher military strikes in Gaza.” It’s been a boon for former Likud member Avigdor Lieberman’s extremist Yisrael Beiteinu. It advocates ethnic cleansing by revoking Israeli Arabs’ citizenship and transferring Palestinian towns in Israel to PA control.

Likud leader, Binyamin Netanyahu also stands to gain because he states: “In the long run, we have no choice but to topple Hamas rule....we have to go from passive response to active assault.” That got Kadima’s foreign minister Tzipi Livni saying: “Israel must topple the Hamas rule in Gaza and a government under my command will do just that.” Campaigning is in high gear for the upcoming February elections with all sides vying to look toughest.

War rages as a result, and according to Alternative Information Center in Jerusalem founder Michael Warschawski: “all Israeli leaders are competing over who is the toughest and who is ready to kill more.” Mass slaughter makes good campaign politics, and whoever looks the meanest may become Israel’s next prime minister. Follow the body count for clues. Watch TV clips of Tzipi Livni disheveled with no makeup to show machismo, and as Tariq Ali puts it: “dead Palestinians are little more than election fodder” and may help Kadima retain power.

Justifying the Unjustifiable

On December 28, O’Loughlin in the Guardian headlined: “Israel mounts PR campaign to blame Hamas for Gaza destruction” as Kadima put positive spin on mass murder and destruction.

Israeli media suggested the following preceded the attack:

— six months of intelligence-gathering to pinpoint bases, weapons silos, supplies, training camps, senior officials’ homes, and other strategic targets, including civilian ones; the

attack also began exactly at 11:30AM Saturday when children just finished morning classes, were in the streets, and others were en route to school;

— disinformation and deception were used to keep the media and public uninformed and off guard;

— Hamas was lulled momentarily into a false sense of security to give the initial onslaught maximum tactical effectiveness;

— on December 26, food, fuel and other humanitarian supplies were let into Gaza as part of the deception; and

— when the assault came, officials justified it saying “patience ran out” to hide their real motives.

Ahead of the attack, Britain, the EU, Egypt and Saudi Arabia were briefed, and Israel coordinated everything with Washington the way it’s always done at least since the 1967 war. According to the Jerusalem Post, the Bush administration also supplied the Israeli Air Force with “a new bunker-buster missile” called GBU-39 – a small-diameter bomb for low-cost, high-precision, minimal collateral damage strikes.

Congress authorized 1000 of them in September, and defense officials said the first shipment arrived in early December for use in penetrating underground Gaza Kassam launcher sites and bombing Egyptian border tunnels in Rafah through which emergency supplies were funneled.

Israel’s PR spin began before the assault. According to the Guardian, “the foreign ministry honed its message and amassed its staff....Israeli diplomats were recalled from holidays and ordered back to work, and in” Sderot, a multilingual media center was opened to brief foreign journalists.

Everything was orchestrated. At the right moment, Tzipi Livni called foreign ministers in Washington, London, Russia, China, France and Germany as well as EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. She also briefed around 80 international representatives and dignitaries in the Sderot media center. World leaders spread her message, blamed Hamas for “breaking” the ceasefire, and claimed Israel had to respond.

Israeli envoys around the world did the same, and Livni vowed to end Hamas rule if elected. She told Kadima party members and the media that “The State of Israel, and a government under me, will make it a strategic objective to topple the Hamas regime. The means....should be military, economic and diplomatic.”

As war rages, Israel is in full spin mode. According to Haaretz, even Fatah loyalists say Gaza is “Allah’s revenge” – referring to the 2007 clashes that secured Gaza for Hamas and left Fatah, under Abbas, in control of the West Bank. For his part, prime minister Ehud Olmert said the bombardment is “the first of several stages approved by the security cabinet” – a clear signal of more to follow and Israel’s intent to destroy Hamas’ effectiveness and render it as weak as possible.

Livni also released a document to the Israeli and world press spreading deceit, disinformation, exaggeration, and agitprop. Examples included:

- “Israeli citizens have been under the threat of daily attack from Gaza for years;
- Only this week hundreds of missiles and mortar shells were fired at Israeli civilian communities;
- Until now we have shown restraint; but today there is no other option than a military operation;
- We need to protect our citizens from attack through a military response against the terror infrastructure in Gaza;
- Israel left Gaza in order to create an opportunity for peace;
- In return, the Hamas terror organization took control of Gaza and is using its citizens as cover while it deliberately targets Israeli communities and denies any chance for peace;
- We have tried everything to reach calm without using force; we agreed to a truce through Egypt that was violated by Hamas, which continued to target Israel, hold Gilat Shalit, and build up its arms;
- Israel continues to act to prevent a humanitarian crisis and to minimize harm to Palestinian civilians.”

These and other statements blame Hamas for the violence; accuse it of being a terrorist organization backed by Iran; has a radical Islamic agenda; is the enemy of all Palestinians seeking peace; is criminal under international law, and seeks Israel’s destruction.

These comments are from Israel’s foreign minister and a leading candidate for prime minister; someone representing a state founded on terrorism by massacring and ethnically cleansing Palestinians from their land; that disdains international law; illegally occupies Palestine; collectively punishes its people; denies them self-determination; their right of return; seizes their land; demolishes their homes; imprisons and tortures their people, impoverishes them; denies them free movement, essential services, employment and enough food and clean water; destroys their crops and factories; and grants them no judicial redress because they’re Arabs in a Jewish state or under occupation.

On December 31, Livni was in Paris meeting with president Nicolas Sarkozy, foreign minister Bernard Kouchner and other officials. In response to a French two-day truce proposal, she rejected the idea saying: “there is no humanitarian crisis in the Strip, and therefore there is no need for a humanitarian truce.”

Protests Worldwide Over Gaza

Carnage and destruction trump spin, and it shows worldwide on city streets – across the Arab world, in America, the EU, London, and even parts of Asia, Latin America and Africa.

The New York Times reported that “After four days of Israeli airstrikes on Gaza, an outpouring of popular anger is putting pressure on American allies in the Arab world and appears to be worsening divisions in the region.” Egypt has been especially pressured because it’s a close US and Israeli ally. But “demonstrations continued....from North Africa to Yemen.”

Al Jazeera reports that protests spread across the Middle East, and in the West Bank Israeli troops opened fire, killed one Palestinian, and critically injured two others. One was declared brain damaged from a bullet to his head. In Yemen, “tens of thousands of people gathered in and around a stadium in the capital, Sanaa, chanting anti-Israeli slogans and criticizing Arab leaders for failing to act.”

It’s been much the same in Cairo, Beirut, Baghdad, and dozens of other world capitals. In Tehran, students broke into the British Embassy’s residential compound, vandalized buildings, and replaced the British flag with a Palestinian one.

Al Jazeera added that several members of Jordan’s parliament burned the Israeli flag in protest and called for the expulsion of Kadima’s ambassador. In Lebanon, hundreds of Lebanese and Palestinian refugees staged a sit-in near the Beirut UN office. Hezbollah condemned the attacks as a “war crime and a genocide that requires immediate action from the international community and its institutions.”

Its statement called on Arab countries to “take a firm stand and exert its utmost efforts against the Israeli barbarism – which is (endorsed) by the US – and the international community (must) stop this ongoing massacre.”

In Damascus, thousands were in Yusif al-Azmeh square shouting slogans and displaying flags of Hamas, Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Hezbollah, Syria, Iraq and Palestine. From loudspeakers, calls were for “jihad” against Israel and for continuing the “struggle in the name of God.”

Protests across Iraq took place – in Baghdad with messages supporting Gaza, anti-Israeli slogans, and the Palestinian ambassador, Dalil al-Qasoos, saying: “Gaza will remain steadfast in the face of Americans and Zionists whatever the plots and conspiracies hatched by tyrants and arrogant enemies.”

Across Britain as well in Belfast and London where hundreds demonstrated in front of the Israeli embassy and outside the BBC.

In Washington, 5000 gathered at the State Department and marched to the White House. In San Francisco, over 10,000 protested in front of the Israeli consulate. In Los Angeles, around 5000 did the same, and in New York thousands more were at the Israeli consulate waving Palestinian flags and chanting “Free Palestine.” Similar demonstrations were held in dozens more US cities, including Chicago, Boston, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Philadelphia, Portland, Houston, Dallas, Seattle and in Hawaii in front of Obama’s vacation compound where he remains indifferent.

On January 2, the ANSWER Coalition, Muslim American Society Freedom, and National Council of Arab Americans plan a major protest at the Israeli embassy in Washington and at the Egyptian embassy as well.

Expressions of World Outrage

On December 29, a National Lawyer’s Guild (NLG) press release condemned the Israeli massacre, called for a ceasefire and urged participation in New York protests. NLG president and Thomas Jefferson School of Law professor Marjorie Cohn stated:

“The Human Rights and Security Assistance Act mandates that the United States cease all

military aid to Israel, which has engaged in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights." America, like Israel, disdains international law and has supplied Tel Aviv governments with tens of billions of aid, weapons and technology for decades, and as explained above, with special bunker-buster bombs to attack Gaza. It also partners in Israeli aggression, assists all aspects of it, and provides cover through vocal support and UN resolution vetoes for it to continue.

On December 29, the Arab Association for Human Rights (HRA) condemned Israel's Gaza attack, its slaughter of civilians and "violation of all international laws and treaties," and its crippling siege as "another crime and collective punishment against (over 1.5 million Gazans) living in an atmosphere of continued terror and intimidation."

HRA also denounced world leaders for failing to speak out or act and thus effectively give "a green light for Israel to escalate its siege, topped with the barbaric bombardment" of Gaza and its people. "The Security Council's non-binding statement (calling for "an immediate halt to all violence" and for both sides "to stop immediately all military activities") is evidence of (the UN's) incompetence (and impotence) in implementing its primary duty in maintaining world peace and security."

In his "Dachau to Gaza" article, law professor, international law expert, and former PLO legal advisor Francis Boyle compared Washington and Israel's aims to Hitler's Munich Pact for Germany to occupy and annex the Sudetenland. Today it's to seize Palestinians' land and deny them "self-determination and a real independent state of their own." As a result, he fears a "high probability that history will repeat itself" in more conflict.

In 1986, he visited the US Embassy in Tel Aviv, complained about "criminal Israeli occupation practices," its violations of international law, and that America "has an absolute obligation to use its enormous political, military and economic leverage over Israel to terminate (these) practices immediately."

Yet since Israel's establishment in 1948 and its post-1967 occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, Washington has one-sidedly supported Israel and denied Palestinians their "freedom, justice, dignity, respect and independence." One day, America must end this policy and "order Israel out of Palestine." Until then, no Middle East peace is possible and the possibility of greater conflict exists.

Like others wanting war crimes to be punished, Boyle also advocates "An International Criminal Tribunal for Israel (ICTI) as "the Only (possible) Deterrent to a Global War." He urges the General Assembly to establish one as a "subsidiary organ" under Article 22 of the UN Charter. It would be similar to those for Yugoslavia (ICTY) and Rwanda (ICTR) to:

"investigate and prosecute Israeli war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide against the People of Lebanon and Palestine." It would "provide some small degree of justice to the victims" of decades of Israeli crimes, thus far committed with impunity. "It would also have a deterrent effect" on current Israeli leaders and generals and force future ones to obey international laws or face similar prosecution.

Without legal restraints, Boyle, like others, fears possible new Middle East conflict that could "degenerate into World War III," not by intent but by accident, much like WW I developed. He urges General Assembly action to prevent it at a time attacks on Gaza persist, the Arab street is enraged, and the longer fighting continues, the greater the risk of something far

greater.

Israel is a serial aggressor. Its lawlessness can no longer be tolerated. Mass outrage and world pressure must build for a global campaign for boycott, divestment and sanctions until its human rights abuses stop, its war crimes are punished, its occupation and colonization end, Palestinian refugees have the right to return, and the people of Gaza and the West Bank achieve their long-denied self-determination rights in an internationally recognized sovereign state, free from Israeli oppression. For people of conscience, that's Resolution One for the new year.

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