

How Many More Innocents Must Die Before the World Realizes that Israel is Gathering Thorns and Thistles?

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Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)
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Ravening Wolves in Sheep's Clothing:

"If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality." Bishop Desmond Tutu

In Gaza, the elephant has finally removed its foot from the mouse's tail. Much to the dismay of the mouse, the behemoth is not done with him. Not this elephant. He has decided to bring his immense weight to bear on the mouse's miniscule body, sadistically reveling at the sight of the blood oozing from the mouse's bodily orifices as it is gradually reduces it to a mass of flattened pulp.

I abandoned my neutrality long ago. My thoughts, prayers, support, and activist efforts as an essayist, small Internet publisher, and dissident against the American Empire are with the Palestinians. I am deeply sickened by fact that the United States government finances Israel's genocide against the Palestinians with my tax dollars. It enrages me that AIPAC and bellicose supporters of Israel dictate so much of our foreign policy.

Enabler of Ethnic Cleansing

The elephant has received over \$140 billion in financial support from the United States since World War II. US subsidies to the Israeli government and military average \$15 million per day. Palestinian NGO's were receiving a pitiful \$232,000 per day (for non-military use only) from the United States prior to the termination of US aid to punish Palestinians for choosing the "wrong" leaders in their democratic elections.

Thanks to America's benevolence, Israel possesses a formidable military. Israel has over 3800 tanks, 1500 large artillery pieces, 2000 aircraft (including US manufactured F-16s), and is widely believed to possess powerful nuclear capabilities.

The mouse recently had the audacity to bite the elephant's toe. Some of the more militant members of the Palestinian community, who refuse to quietly acquiesce to extermination, kidnapped an Israeli soldier, an 18 year old Jewish settler and a 62 year old Israeli man.

An Eye for an Eyelash

In the perverse logic widely employed by Americans and Israelis, three kidnappings warranted Israel unleashing hell upon Gaza. Forget that 9,800 Palestinians in Israeli prisons are routinely subjected to torture while Palestinian prisons hold one Israeli. Never mind the 23 civilian Palestinians murdered by Israeli shelling and air strikes over the last four weeks. And disregard the 4,209 Palestinians that Israel has killed (including 892 children) and the 30,122 they have injured since 9/30/00.

Note: By way of comparison, Palestinian inflicted Israeli deaths totaled 1,113 during this period.

As I compose this piece, Israel has launched a ruthless military assault on the Gaza Strip, one of the two pitifully small Palestinian enclaves. Air strikes have knocked out the power plant which provided electricity to most of the 1.3 million inhabitants of Gaza. It will take an estimated 6 months and \$20 million to make the plant operational again. The Palestinians can afford neither the time nor the money.

Israeli troops and tanks are rolling into southern Gaza as additional aerial bombardment has essentially split Gaza into northern and southern halves by taking out two key bridges. Recent reports indicate that Israel has violated Syrian air space by flying over the president's home and has launched tank attacks on northern Gaza.

Despite the lack of casualties thus far, Palestinian senior negotiator Saeb Erakat had this to say:

"I condemn in the strongest possible terms this attack on our infrastructure. We have 1.3 million people under siege in Gaza. Israel is in the process of reoccupying Gaza — not in traditional sense — but through control of water, electricity, food and medical supplies, and I don't think the international community should allow it. A chance should be given to diplomacy. I urge the United States to intervene immediately."

I shook my head in disbelief as I watched CNN (the "liberal" cable news) manage to portray this gross miscarriage of justice as if the Israeli military strike was justified in its action. It defies logic to argue that Israel was warranted in destroying infrastructure critical to the survival of over a million people and laying siege against brutally oppressed human beings in its "hostage rescue" and in its attempt to root out the perpetrators of recent Qassam rocket attacks which have resulted in zero Israeli casualties. As is often the case, Israel's actions represent blatant abuse of power and violations of human rights.

Yet why would I feel surprised? For years the corporate media has conditioned United States citizens to believe in Israel's right to savagely punish virtually defenseless Palestinian civilians using our military hard-ware. The Israelis specialize in electrocution for stealing a loaf of bread. And they don't care if those receiving the punishment are guilty or not.

The Madness of King George and Prince Ehud

Like its benefactors in Washington, Israel is ruled by Machiavellian militarists who routinely violate international law and human rights. Mainstream media propagandists have worked vigorously to maintain the perception that both nations are pillars of morality and civilization, but the façade is rapidly eroding.

Quotes attributed to Caligula, the hedonistic and blood-thirsty Roman emperor, would roll quite naturally off the tongues of George Bush or Ehud Olmert. It is not much of a stretch to

imagine either of them quipping:

"I wish the Palestinian people had but a single neck"

or

"Let them hate, so long as they fear."

Playing With a Stacked Deck and Acting With Impunity

Consider that during its relatively short existence, the United Nations has targeted Israel with Resolutions 65 times. They have condemned Israeli attacks on neighboring Lebanon, collective punishment and repeated human rights violations against the Palestinian civilian population, theft of Palestinian land, and violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Israel's response to the condemnations? More violations of international law. Incidentally, there have been no United Nations Resolutions against the Palestinians.

From the beginning of the conflict, Israel has held distinct advantages over the Palestinians. In 1850, Palestine was inhabited by about 500,000 Palestinian Arabs, 80% of whom were Muslim. By the 1880's, the European Zionist movement had determined that Palestine was to be a Jewish homeland. Zionists started to establish Jewish settlements there. As the population of Jewish settlers rose, conflicts erupted. By 1947, the United Nations intervened and determined that 55% of Palestine would belong to a newly formed Jewish state. This was an astounding conclusion when one considers that at that time the Jewish settlers only owned 7% of the land. It seems the Zionists had friends in high places.

Harmony eluded Palestine. In 1948 a well-equipped and well-trained Jewish military force predictably crushed the smaller and much more primitive Palestinian army. Israel was born and greedily swallowed 78% of Palestine.

750,000 Palestinians became refugees. To this day Israel persists in denying the United Nations right of the refugees to return to their homes. Approximately 4 million Palestinians currently subsist in squalid conditions in refugee camps in the West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan.

After the 1967 War, Israel began a military occupation of the remaining 22% of Palestinian territory when it seized the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Under the Oslo Peace Accords of 1993, Gaza and the West Bank were eventually to form a Palestinian state. However, Israel has continued to encroach on Palestinian territory and to deny the Palestinian people sovereignty. In September of 2000 the Palestinians launched armed struggle against their oppressors with the Second Intifada. Their courageous resistance to Israeli tyranny persists as I write this article.

Former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon withdrew Israeli settlers from the Gaza Strip in September of 2005. Ostensibly Israel was fulfilling its obligation to return this region to the Palestinians. However, Israelis maintained austere control of Gaza's air space, ports and borders. The Palestinians were essentially prisoners in their own tiny territory.

When the Palestinians had the audacity to democratically elect Hamas as the majority party in their nominal government known as the Palestinian Authority, Israel responded by withholding the Palestinians' \$60 million per month in tax revenue. This has financially

crippled the Palestinian Authority and worsened the already devastating poverty in Gaza and the West Bank. Hamas' history of fighting back against their merciless colonial masters and violent rejection of Israel's genocidal agenda have earned them the label of "terrorists". However, Hamas also has a history of providing badly needed social services for many poverty-stricken Palestinians.

While Palestinians are often armed with sticks and rocks in their confrontations with the powerful Israeli military, an occasional suicide bomber or crude Qassam rocket kills Israeli civilians or military personnel. As a result, Palestinian civilians have suffered barbaric Israeli reprisals on many levels.

Israelis have demolished nearly 8,000 Palestinian homes. In one instance an Israeli driving an armored Caterpillar bulldozer intentionally crushed Rachel Corrie, a non-violent American activist who had been attempting to prevent the Israeli from demolishing a Palestinian house.

According to a UN human rights report drafted in 2004:

"Bulldozers have destroyed homes in a purposeless manner and have savagely dug up roads, including electricity, sewage and water lines."

"1,497 buildings have been demolished in Rafah, affecting over 15,000 people"

Israel has uprooted approximately 1.2 million Palestinian olive and fruit trees. Israeli border and checkpoint security has wreaked further havoc on the Palestinian economy as residents of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are subjected to lengthy and humiliating waits and searches. Transportation of goods and commuting to work are nearly impossible tasks in the Palestinian territories. 66% of Palestinians in Gaza live in poverty and unemployment exceeds 30%.

As one might expect, fresh water is a relatively scarce resource in Palestine. Not surprisingly, Israelis control most of it. In the West Bank, Palestinians are denied access to water from the Jordan River. Palestinians consume only 17% of the water from West Bank aquifers while Israelis consume 73%. Per capita, West Bank Israeli settlers enjoy four times as much water as Palestinians. Israel prohibits Palestinians from drilling new wells and limits the amount of water they can extract from existing wells. Israeli water companies often make grossly inflated profits on water they extract from Palestinian aquifers when they sell it back to Palestinian consumers. Israel is withdrawing groundwater from Gaza so rapidly that saltwater from the Mediterranean is replacing the freshwater. One would think that an adequate supply of potable water would be a basic human right, but it is not for Palestinians.

Adding insult to numerous injuries, Israel is defying a decree by the International Court of Justice that it is violating international law as it continues to build its Apartheid Wall. In yet another example of collective punishment of innocent civilians, Israel is constructing a 620 kilometer barrier through the West Bank which encroaches on Palestinian territory by as much as 10 miles in some places. One purpose of the encroachment is that it will enable Israel to annex and control vital water access points. In building the Apartheid Wall, Israel has uprooted over 100,000 Palestinian olive and citrus trees, confiscated over 4,000 acres of their land, and demolished 75 acres of their greenhouses.

Victim Turned Oppressor

It is sadly ironic that the United States, a nation whose founding fathers overcame tremendous odds to escape the shackles of an imperial power, would support Israel's cruel colonization and extermination of the Palestinians. Perhaps more ironic is the fact that Israel, a nation formed as a homeland for a group which was a principal target of Hitler's genocidal policies, would commit such horrendous humanitarian crimes against the Palestinians.

What Would Jesus Do?

In the very region where the Prince of Peace, who championed the cause of the poor and oppressed against the rich and powerful and was crucified for his idealistic crusade, Israeli hard-liners will not rest until they have crushed those with whom Jesus would be standing were he alive today. While it is true that there are defiant, violent Palestinians who refuse to turn the other cheek, Israel has consistently responded by brutally punishing the 80% of Palestinians who want peace. And many Americans who call themselves Christians are cheering on these barbaric acts of injustice.

Doubt His Resolve?

If there was a doubt about Ehud Olmert's determination to continue the genocide of the Palestinians, he has erased it by deepening their plight with his military incursion into Gaza. Olmert has said to expect "an extended campaign against the Palestinian Authority" and that "all targets" would be considered for possible action. This does not bode well for innocent Palestinian men, women and children who are already suffering from the significant infrastructural damage Israeli forces have inflicted in the early stages of their "extended campaign".

Piercing the Veil of Propaganda

As my family and I started our evening walk yesterday, I found myself on the verge of tears as sorrow and rage sparred with one another to become my predominant emotion. Ominous storm clouds were just beginning to skirt the horizon. Throughout our brief trek, blue sky and sunshine gradually gave way to a dark, foreboding wave of cumulonimbi. Seeing the storm clouds triggered mental images of the acrid-looking jet black smoke pouring from the bombed-out Palestinian power plant I had witnessed on CNN. I found myself imagining what I might feel if I were a Palestinian. With the power unique to raw human emotion, sorrow and rage surged through my being.

While I believe in non-violent solutions, I also embrace an individual's or group's right to self-defense. Corporate propagandists (who are well paid to do our thinking for us) have deluded many Americans into thinking that economic and military actions by the United States and its allies that result in civilian deaths are moral and legal. Concurrently, they have programmed us to believe that if members of populations which have limited organized militaries respond to our oppressive imperialism with violence, they are committing "acts of terrorism". I reject this illusion. I denounce violence by either side, but I recognize that in some instances, it is necessary for victims of US (or Israeli) militaristic aggression to resort to violence to defend themselves.

Partners in Crime

Through its history, the United States has slaughtered and enslaved millions while waging genocidal campaigns against the Native Americans and the Iraqis. Its noble cause? Global economic and military hegemony driven by the twisted notions of American Exceptionalism and Manifest Destiny.

Israel has engaged in a long-term, multi-faceted effort to ensure the extinction of the Palestinians. Its patron and benefactor, the United States, shares equal culpability for their egregious crimes against humanity.

Since the United States and Israel are rogue nations with powerful militaries, the response of the international community has been anemic. The Palestinian people have essentially been on their own in their valiant resistance to genocide. Hamas, the PLO, and similar "terrorist" organizations are ultimately enforcers of the universal human right of self defense.

Leaders of Israel and the United States would be wise to heed the words of Pope Paul IV:

If you want peace, work for justice.

As long as Israelis are committing ethnic cleansing, Palestinians will continue to fight for their survival.

And what sane and honest human being can truly blame them?

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