

Media Cover for Israeli Crimes

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)

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The pattern playing out in Gaza is one Israel followed many times before. Provocations target adversaries. Multiple ones usually occur before targets respond.

Blame the victim follows. Israeli aggression is called self-defense. Legitimate defense is called terrorism. Mainstream media supports Israel in lockstep. It plays out the same way every time.

Facts on the ground are ignored, sanitized, suppressed, and/or distorted. Readers and viewers get manipulated managed news misinformation.

Days ago, Hamas and other Palestinian resistance groups responded to multiple Israeli provocations. Intense bombing and shelling followed. It continues.

Cast Lead began the same way. Hamas didn't provoke it. Israel did. Premeditated aggression was planned. The same scenario is playing out again now.

Cast Lead 2.0 looms. Israel threatens more intense conflict than 2008-09. It remains to be seen what follows. It's clear how the media will cover it.

Palestinians won't even get short shrift. They'll be condemned for defending themselves against naked Israeli aggression.

Instead of covering events on the ground accurately, [Haaretz](#) contributor Amir Oren endorsed bombing and shelling Gaza and more.

Headlining "For Netanyahu, Gaza escalation could pave the way to Iran strike," saying:

Netanyahu and Defense Minister Ehud Barak both want to attack Iran. In other words, they plan more war crimes on top of ones committed repeatedly on Gazans.

So far, Netanyahu's record as prime minister excludes war. Apparently he wants to make up for lost time. He "crossed a private red line by daring to authorize the undertaking of a large military operation."

It's not war, he says. Sustained bombing and shelling perhaps followed by ground invasion is full-scale war. Operation Pillar of Cloud solidifies the Netanyahu/Barak partnership. Other Israeli hardliners wholeheartedly approve. Most others say little or nothing.

Opposition party leaders dare not criticize. With January's election in mind, they fully support what they should condemn. Whatever their personal views, they're in lockstep publicly with Netanyahu.

Oren believes Israel will use its show of strength in Gaza “as leverage in the Iranian context.” Tehran leaders aren’t fool enough to buy it.

They’re firm in saying any Israeli attack will be met by a comparable response. Iran’s military capability is strong enough to back its rhetoric with policy. Israel would be foolish to doubt it.

Gaza is a “practical test,” says Oren. Not a word about lawless aggression and war crimes. Instead he says IDF chief General Benny Gantz has a chance to prove his mettle.

Once Gaza operations end, Hamas and other resistance groups will unify more for what’s ahead. Hezbollah’s Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah won’t be silent or refuse to defend Lebanon aggressively if attacked.

All the more reason for “an Iranian operation,” says Oren, especially while “Syria is stuck politically and militarily.”

Netanyahu is single-minded on two issues: removing its main regional rival, Iran, and maintaining US support. “Should Operation Pillar of Defense attain the limited goals set for it in Gaza, that will be very good.” Who cares how many Palestinians die?

What follows could prove dangerous, adds Oren. At the same time, he failed to denounce Netanyahu’s lawless aggression.

He also didn’t say attacking Iran or other nonbelligerent country is illegal under international law. Failure to explain both constitutes support.

Journalists and editors should think twice about endorsing lawlessness. It happens with disturbing regularity. Two Jerusalem Post editorials were one-sided. One headlined “[State of Gaza](#),” saying:

“Israel’s current policy is to react to each new barrage from Gaza by identifying and singling out the specific terrorist organization that fired at our civilians, targeting rocket-launching crews and arms caches.”

The Post urges more robust tactics. “Israel should view the ‘state of Gaza’ and its Hamas government as directly responsible for any act of aggression emanating from the territory under its control. Israel’s response to such attacks would, therefore, be directed against the territory of Gaza as a whole.”

The editorial endorsed war as the best way to maintain “quiet on our southern border.” Its other editorial headlined “[Explaining Gaza](#),” saying:

“Gaza-based terrorists....triggered the latest round of escalation in the South.” Doing so was an “unprovoked attack.”

“This is not the first time terrorists in Hamas-controlled Gaza have launched attacks purposely targeting Israeli civilians.”

Senior Netanyahu officials and IDF commanders believe “Israel must restore deterrence by ratcheting up its response to Palestinian belligerence.”

Israel “has a moral obligation to protect its citizens from terrorist aggression.”

Ignored, of course, are facts on the ground. Palestinians are victims, not aggressors. Self-defense when attacked is inviolable. Editorial writers know but won't say. They defend the indefensible.

On November 16, Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting's ([FAIR](#)) Peter Hart headlined “Who Started Gaza Conflict? Well, the US Says....”

CNN's Fred Pleitgen's embarrassed himself saying:

On the one hand, it' “almost obsolete is to try to lay blame on anyone or to say who actually started any of this.”

At the same time, “the United States is saying that all of this is square on the shoulders of Hamas, because of the escalations that have been happening from Gaza, especially the rocket attacks, but also attacks with anti-tank weapons on Israeli patrols in the past couple of weeks that have been ratcheted up.”

In other words, what Washington says is right. Government spokesmen say the same things. Journalists are supposed to report, not regurgitate official policy positions.

Print and broadcast ones dutifully support political Washington. They support Israel the same way.

CNN's Fareed Zakaria said Israel is “justified in doing something when all these rockets are being fired at them. So there's no question that it's justified.”

There are plenty, but Zakaria avoids asking tough ones. Rockets were launched in response to repeated Israeli attacks and incursions.

On November 8, the current conflict began. Israel maliciously killed a 12-year old boy. He threatened no one.

Gaza's Popular Resistance Committees responded with what they called a “revenge invoice.”

On January 4, 2009, Zakaria devoted his entire CNN program to Cast Lead. Israel attacked provocatively and preemptively. Doing so was naked aggression.

Nonetheless, his opening comments set the tone, saying:

“I start from the premise that Israel had ample justification for its actions. If our cities, your cities, were subject to repeated rocket attacks, you would also believe that it was provocation enough to respond. So, it's justifiable.”

In other words, when Israel attacks, it's self-defense. When adversaries respond defensively, it's aggression or terrorism. American and other Western viewers and readers get these views ad nauseam.

On November 15, [Hart](#) asked, “When Does Israel/Palestine Violence Start?”

“The conventional corporate media timelines usually stress, whatever the facts, that Israel is

responding to violent attacks by Palestinians.”

FAIR documented this numerous times over the past decade. The New York Times and other mainstream media claim Israel only responds after “persistent Palestinian rocket fire.”

On November 14, NBC’s Martin Fletcher lied like he’s told to do. He told viewers “Israel says it had no choice after Palestinians in Gaza fired at least 100 rockets at Israel in the last five days.”

National Public Radio (NPR) is called National Pentagon Radio for good reason. On November 14, Audie Cornish said “the strikes were in retaliation for the launching of more than 100 rockets at Israel in recent days.”

Facts on the ground are clear and unequivocal. They’re mirror opposite what these reports claim. Israel acts aggressively and provocatively. It plays out the same way every time.

Killing a 12-year old boy enraged Gazans. In response, they attacked an Israeli military jeep. Four soldiers were injured. Three days of Israeli belligerence followed.

Reporters pick a “starting point” for good reason, said Hart. Doing so omits what viewers and readers most need to know.

A November 15 [New York Times](#) editorial was no better, saying:

“No country should have to endure the rocket attacks that Israel has endured from militants in Gaza.”

Concern only about risks for Israel’s long-term interests were raised. Rule of law principles, illegal aggression, and other relevant issues weren’t discussed.

It’s always the same way. Readers and viewers get manipulated managed news misinformation. Truth and full disclosure are verboten. Supporting imperial lawlessness is policy.

On November 15, a [Washington Post](#) editorial headlined “Heading off full-blown war in the Gaza strip,” saying:

“THE IMMEDIATE cause of the exploding conflict between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip was a series of attacks by Palestinian militants, including a missile fired at a jeep carrying Israeli soldiers inside Israel, and a rain of rockets against Israeli towns — more than 180 in the course of a few days.”

“Israel could not but respond, and when it did, it chose to deliver a strategic blow: the assassination of Hamas’s military commander, Ahmed Jabari, and (scores of) airstrikes.”

As explained above and in previous articles, what’s happening on the ground is mirror opposite this commentary and others like it.

At the same time, said the Post, war “imposes heavy diplomatic costs (and doesn’t) solve underlying political or security problems.”

In other words, slaughtering over 1,400 Palestinians and injuring another 5,300 generated justifiable worldwide condemnation. Regional relationships weren’t helped.

The Post has no concern for Palestinian lives. It advocates avoiding a repeat of Cast Lead's aftermath. "A quick cease-fire would benefit all sides," it says. "The alternative is awful to contemplate."

Saying so reflects concern about diplomatic and popular fallout. How many Palestinians die matters little.

Numerous other media reports express one-sided bias for Israel. Expect lots more ahead. Facts are sanitized and suppressed.

Israel's worst crimes are endorsed. Palestinians are isolated on their own. It's been that way for over 64 years. Long denied liberation and justice remain elusive. Maybe next time. Not now.

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago and can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net.

His new book is titled "How Wall Street Fleeces America: Privatized Banking, Government Collusion and Class War"

<http://www.claritypress.com/Lendman.html>

Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com and listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network Thursdays at 10AM US Central time and Saturdays and Sundays at noon. All programs are archived for easy listening.

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Articles by: [Stephen Lendman](#)

About the author:

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html> Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com. Listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio

Network. It airs three times weekly: live on Sundays at 1PM Central time plus two prerecorded archived programs.

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