

The Blame Game in Gaza: Covering for Israel, Concealing War Crimes

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Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)

In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

In his January 8 article, "Gaza Under Fire," John Pilger quotes the Soviet dissident Yevgeny Yevtushenko saying: "When the truth is replaced by silence, the silence is a lie." America's dominant media suppress facts, sacrifice accuracy, and conceal the greater lie that:

- all Israeli aggression is collaboratively planned months in advance with Washington;
- American aid makes it possible – billions of dollars annually, the latest weapons and technology, and Security Council vetoes to assure no anti-Israeli resolutions with teeth are passed;
- six months of preparation preceded Israel's terror bombings followed by invasion, occupation, and repeated war crimes on the ground;
- Hamas "rockets" were pretext (not cause) to abet Israel's overall strategy – with initial measures planned years ago and implemented in steps; Gaza 2008 – 09 is the latest with much more to come unless stopped;
- grievous international law violations are being willfully committed;
- innocent men, women and children are slaughtered;
- civilians and legitimate resistance are called "terrorists;"
- basic infrastructure unrelated to defense is destroyed – government buildings, police stations, schools, mosques, private dwellings, TV stations, commercial structures, water mains, power facilities, fishing boats, vehicles, ambulances, medical facilities, UN relief ones, and visible civilian targets, even young children coming from and going to school;
- refugee camps, women, doctors and journalists are attacked;
- terror bombing and shelling continues round-the-clock; from 50 to 100 or more sorties a day but fire from naval vessels, tanks, and troops on the ground;
- illegal terror weapons are used;
- as of January 14, around 5500 have been killed or wounded; hundreds still alive are "clinically dead," according to medical officials; a handful of Israelis have died; small numbers have been injured as well unknown true numbers of military casualties since Israel controls the reporting; Hamas claims over 30;

— Gaza remains under siege; beyond token amounts, no outside aid gets in; electricity, fuel, medical supplies and clean water are nearly exhausted; medical workers can't reach the wounded; foreign journalists can't report on the scene; volunteer doctors can't enter through Rafah; no remnants of normal life exist; Gaza is totally dysfunctional; and

— world leaders, the White House, and both Houses of Congress sanction Israel's genocide; its "final solution" destruction as a legitimate society; its right to a sovereign state; a government of its choosing; normality for the people; and defense of their rights by a world community that cares – it doesn't.

Instead, Israel plans to remove a legitimate leadership; eliminate or neutralize the Hamas government; displace Palestinians from their land; confine them to isolated cantons, make them a hellish, ghoulish dystopia, and according to Israeli foreign minister Tzipi Livni on January 13 to an American Jewish Committee delegation:

"Israel's campaign against Hamas (is in the) interest of the 'moderate' Palestinian people." And, of course, "War is Peace, Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength," and Israel kills to save lives.

Media reports echo this, suppress truths, and maintain the lie of silence. None show pictures of vast destruction; dismembered bodies; children with lost arms and legs; head wounds so severe they'll die; blood, bones, and limbs everywhere; entire families wantonly massacred; human desperation and need so great it rivals anything in memory.

No brave reporters condemn these crimes and support the victims. None say Palestinians deserve the same rights as Jews; that laws of war and occupation protect everyone; that illegal acts must cease and perpetrators be punished.

None report the American Jewish Alliance for Justice & Peace (Brit Tzedek v'Shalom) condemning Israel's attack and demanding that Barack Obama "call for an immediate ceasefire (and assure the prompt) delivery of (urgently needed) humanitarian aid to Gaza."

None cite the rule of law. None report accurately, and on matters of truth, distortion and "silence" are their chosen options.

Samples of their work are below – daily in major broadsheets, publications, and on radio and TV. It's why America is the most ill-informed society anywhere in spite of every opportunity to know vital truths and react. Bread and circus distractions take precedence so wanton killing continues below the radar – and not just in Gaza.

Wall Street Journal Op-Ed Page Pro-Israeli Zealots

They appear daily in editorials and guest op-eds but never as easy reading. A January 5 editorial says "Israel can't afford to lose its second war in two years." It echoes poor Israel, surrounded "by enemies on all sides (so it) needs to maintain an aura of invincibility if it is to have any chance for peaceful co-existence."

Task one – "eliminat(ing) Hamas rule in Gaza (and) its military threat." Then on to "the broader Middle East issue....expansion of Iranian influence and terror. Hamas has become part of Tehran's bid for regional hegemony (like Hezbollah in Lebanon and Sadrist 'special groups' in Iraq)."

Bush is on board for their elimination. It's now up to Obama. He must show Israel and Iran "that the new president understands the US stake in the success of Israel's Gaza" offensive and assure no efforts are made to halt it.

On January 5 hawkish Max Boot was back with an "Israel's Tragic Gaza Dilemma" op-ed. Again, poor Israel:

"There is little doubt that Israel is morally justified in its offensive against Hamas. No nation can sit by and allow its territory to be rocketed with impunity." As for "accusations of (IDF) brutality, (Israel's) conduct has been exemplary by historical standards. They have shown far less propensity for indiscriminate killing or torture (than other nations) confronting insurgencies. The only comparable example of restraint is the conduct of the US armed forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. The United States, too, earns worldwide opprobrium for alleged brutality rather than approbation for its humanity."

Millions of dead Iraqis and Afghans might disagree. Thousands of others incarcerated, tortured, and brutalized. Palestinians also after six brutal decades of occupation and repeated war crimes committed with impunity. "Restraint (and) humanity" indeed.

Never mind, Boot voices concern, not over mass slaughter but "on how the offensive turns out." It's not likely "they will be able to defeat the terrorist organization on their southern border." That requires a much greater and prolonged effort. A better choice is to depose the Hamas government and for Israel to administer the Territory itself. If Israel's troops leave, "Hamas will rebuild its infrastructure, forcing Israelis to go back to the future."

Boot calls it a "quagmire," but "Israel has no choice. It cannot simply pack its bags and go home....Israel is one battle away from destruction....If (it's) to continue to exist, it will have to continue to wage low-intensity war for a long time to come – definitely years, probably decades, possibly centuries." In other words, permanent war instead of the alternative – "annihilation." Off the table is the obvious solution. Never mind the simplest and most righteous: A just peace, Palestinian self-determination, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and stop attacking them so they'll have no need to respond in self-defense.

A Bret Stephens January 6 "Endgame for Israel" op-ed says: "If Israel is going to achieve a strategic victory in this war, it will have to stand firm against (the) global wave of hypocrisy and cant. (It) will have to practice a more consistent policy of deterrence than it has so far done. One option: For every rocket that falls randomly on Israeli soil, an Israeli missile will hit a carefully selected target in Gaza." Stephens calls this "proportionality (and) the endgame that Israel needs."

Not explained is that Hamas responds only in self-defense to Israeli preemptive attacks and killings. No Journal contributors say this or provide fair and accurate commentary.

On January 7, former CIA officer Reuel Gerecht shared op-ed space with Benjamin Netanyahu's "Militant Islam Threatens Us All" in which he equated Hamas rockets to "the same terror goal as Hitler's blitz." The old Hitler analogy again.

Gerecht addressed "Iran's Hamas Strategy" and accused "Tehran (of) aiding Hamas for years with the aim of radicalizing politics across the entire Arab Middle East." Hamas gives Iran "an important ally. Through Hamas, Tehran can possibly reach the ultimate prize, the Egyptian faithful....With Gaza and Egypt conceivably within Tehran's grasp, the clerical

regime will be patient and try to keep Gaza boiling....In 30 years, they have not seen a better constellation of forces (with Gaza in conflict and the prospect of their being) “nuclear-armed....just around the corner.”

That said despite the unanimous conclusion of 16 US intelligence agencies that Iran stopped pursuing a nuclear weapons program in 2003 even though no proof shows it ever had one.

On January 9, military strategist Edward Luttwak’s op-ed headlined: “Yes, Israel Can Win in Gaza.” He downplays Hezbollah’s impressive 2006 performance saying it was “thoroughly shocked by the Israeli bombing campaign (in spite of Israel’s) inconclusive ground actions.”

In fact, Lebanon was shocked, not Hezbollah. According to researcher Andrew Exum of Kings College, London: “Hezbollah, far from being weakened in the 2006 war or subsequent (Beirut) political battles, is stronger than ever.”

Israel can do to Hamas what it did to Hezbollah, says Luttwak – weaken it with further ground operations “that cannot be attacked by the air – typically because they are in the basements of crowded apartment buildings – and by engaging Hamas gunmen in direct combat. Hamas will claim a win no matter what happens, but then so did Hezbollah in 2006....yet (it remains) immobile. If Israel can achieve the same with Hamas in Gaza, it would be a significant victory.”

Luttwak forgets how Hezbollah outfoxed and embarrassed the “vaunted” IDF that hasn’t fought a comparable adversary in 35 years, forgot how, and only outperforms against civilian men, women and children, much like America in Iraq and Afghanistan. Of course, Luttwak wouldn’t get op-ed space if he admitted that.

On January 8, Rabbi Marvin Hier’s Journal op-ed appeared titled: “The Jews Face a Double Standard” and asked – “Why doesn’t Israel have the same right to self-defense as other nations?” Hier may know scripture, but clearly not international law or fundamental morality.

He condemns worldwide protests as “so full of hatred that they leave me with the terrible feeling that (they’re unrelated to) so-called disproportionality....a great many people....can’t bear the Jewish state having the same rights they so readily grant to other nations....because they don’t believe Israel should exist in the first place.”

Hier cites isolated incidents indicative of world sentiment in his judgment. He ignores growing public opinion before and after his article:

- many hundreds of thousands protesting in cities globally;
- many thousands of outraged Jews as well, including in Israel;
- Haaretz reporting “tens of thousands (in) the streets in European capitals;”
- 100,000 in London alone (on January 10), including 20,000 outside the Israeli Embassy;
- at least 30,000 in Paris; 90,000 or more in over 120 other French cities and towns;
- tens of thousands more in Berlin and across Germany;

— Rome as well and across Italy;

— the same in Athens, Oslo, Stockholm, Budapest, Sarajevo, Madrid, Istanbul, Belfast, Edinburgh, Bern, Moscow, and dozens more European cities;

— globally across America, Asia, Latin America, Africa, the Arab street expressing outrage over mass slaughter.

Poor Israel, according to Hier; an “insidious bias against the Jewish state” he claims; a “double-standard;” a humanitarian crisis? “There have been hundreds of articles and reports....falsely accusing Israel of blocking humanitarian supplies from reaching beleaguered Palestinians in Gaza.”

Blame Hamas for the conflict - “the same terrorist group that brought disaster to the Palestinians in the first place....the real lessons of World War II have yet to be learned.”

This from a man of God getting prominent Journal space for his hateful, disturbing, and grossly inaccurate commentary.

Pro-Israeli Washington Post Columnists

Many appear, these two as regulars. On January 9, Charles Krauthammer contributed an “Endgame in Gaza” op-ed. In August 2006, Steve Benen said this about him in the Washington Monthly:

“About three years ago, I saw Krauthammer flip out in synagogue on Yom Kippur (the most solemn of Jewish high-holidays). The rabbi offered some timid endorsement of peace (on Israel’s terms) but peace anyway. Krauthammer went nuts. He actually started bellowing at the rabbi from his wheel chair in the aisle. People tried to ‘shush’ him. (He) kept howling until the rabbi apologized. The man is as arrogant as he is thuggish. Who screams at the rabbi at services? For advocating peace? Those neocon hawks are such a charming bunch, aren’t they?

Krauthammer contributes weekly to the Washington Post and is syndicated in 200 newspapers. He’s also a Fox News regular where he’s welcome among like-minded friends.

In his latest column, he’s on the warpath against “an increasingly wobbly US State Department” and Ehud Olmert for “hinting that (he’s) receptive to a French-Egyptian cease-fire plan....That would be a terrible mistake....It would have the same elements as the phony peace in Lebanon (abjuring the) use of force, a (weak) arms embargo (letting lots of them) flood in, and a cessation of hostilities until the terrorist side is rearmed and ready to initiate the next round of hostilities.”

“The ‘international community’ (now wants) a replay of (the Lebanon) charade....Weapons will continue to be smuggled. Deeper and more secure fortifications will be built....Mosques, schools and hospitals will again be used for weapons storage and terrorist safe havens. Such a deal would buy Israel maybe a couple of years - with Hamas rockets then killing civilians in Tel Aviv (and maybe hitting) Israel’s nuclear reactor in Dimona.”

“Which is why the only acceptable outcome (is the total) disintegration of Hamas rule....The fall of Hamas is within reach (as long as) Israel does not cave in to pressure to stop now.

(It's) disintegration....would be a devastating blow to Palestinian rejectionists....to Iran as patron of radical Islamic movements (and Sadrists) in Iraq." A Bush State Department "premature (ceasefire) imposition....would not just be self-defeating but shameful."

Why would any rabbi accept this man in his congregation even if he kept quiet and didn't shout.

Post columnist Richard Cohen is hardly better, and it shows in his January 6 op-ed: "A Conflict Hamas Caused....It takes real stupidity to blame it on Israel. As the leaders of Hamas understand, the war in Gaza is about Israel's incessant fight to be a normal country...so (Jewish) kids can swim in a lake."

How can they when "Hamas has vowed to destroy Israel....Anyone could have seen this war coming. As always, though, it's a lot harder to see how it ends." Cohen hints that destroying Hamas is the way. Some call Cohen liberal because he's pro-choice and pro-gay. He's also pro-war and zealously pro-Israel, even though occasionally critical. He has a "strong emotional attachment" to the country...."whose survival is not only important for the Jewish people but for the rest of mankind as well." So if mass slaughter assures it, so be it.

The New York Times "Incursion Into Gaza" Editorial

On January 5, The Times called Israel's "ground incursion (a gamble) that it can finally silence the Hamas rockets that have terrorized its people for years." No mention of:

- unilateral Hamas ceasefires;
- that Israel never observed them;
- that the IDF killed over two dozen Gazans during the one ending November 4;
- that no Israelis were killed or injured during the period;
- that Israel, not Hamas, ended it; and
- that Hamas responds only in self-defense as international law allows.

Instead The Times cites "no justification for Hamas' attacks or its virulent rejectionism." Of what? It repeatedly offers peace, is willing to recognize a Jewish state provided Israel reciprocates, stops killing Arabs, and grants Palestinians their own state inside pre-1967 borders - a mere 22% of their original homeland.

The Times also worries that the longer the conflict continues, the more casualties mount, the more likely "moderate" Arab states will become alienated, that "more regional instability (will be) fueled, and the harder it will be for Obama to be a peacemaker after January 20.

"Israel, aided by the United States, Europe and 'moderate' Arab states, must try to end this conflict as soon as possible (and) ensur(e) at a minimum that Hamas - a proxy of Iran - is not seen as gaining from the war, that rocket fire is halted permanently, and that the 'terrorist' group can no longer restock its arsenal with more deadly weapons" from across Egypt's border.

"There is little chance of restraining Hamas without dealing with its patrons in Syria and Iran....Palestinians (want a) way out of their misery (but) Hamas and its rockets are not the answer."

As always, The Times' distortion and silence speak louder than its comments. Peace? Hamas rockets? Its patrons? Neither Israel or Washington wants peace. Conflict serves their interests. Hamas rockets are for defense, not offense. They're weak and ineffective compared to Israel's awesome power. Its weapons are for offense and come from its Washington patron. Peace depends on not using them so Hamas will have no reason to respond. These facts aren't in The Times' editorial or other material in its pages.

Nor in columnist Tom Friedman's commentaries. His January 6 op-ed is titled: "The Mideast's Ground Zero." He addresses the ongoing struggle. Who'll end up the "regional superpower - Egypt? Saudi Arabia? Iran? Should there be a Jewish state....and, if so, on what Palestinian terms? And (who'll) dominate Arab society - Islamists who are intolerant of other faiths and want to choke off modernity or modernists who want to embrace the future, with an Arab-Muslim face?"

Friedman is a neoliberal hawk, a supporter of the Afghan and Iraq wars, zealously pro-Israel, very hardline against Muslims, unsupportive of Palestinian issues, and he earlier called the Second Intifada "idiotic, braindead, insane (and) a reckless, pointless, foolish adventure."

He espouses Camp David mythology - that Ehud Barak made a generous offer but Arafat preferred "to play the victim rather than statesman. (He sought to) provoke the Israelis into brutalizing the Palestinians again." Friedman to Arafat: "Please don't tell me you can't control your own people. You've sold us that carpet one too many times." He accuses Palestinians of "adopt(ing) suicide bombing as a strategic choice, not out of desperation." These provocations and others "triggered (justifiable) Israeli retaliation...."

Friedman's analysis is one-sided, extremist, and immoral. He distorts facts, makes assertions with no evidence, lets emotion and intellectual dishonesty trump good commentary, and on everything Israel, Jewish interests matter. Arab ones don't. Now there's a winning formula for regional peace and stability.

From Jerusalem on January 10, Times columnist Steven Erlanger headlined: "A Gaza War Full of Traps and Trickery" - a one-sided article full of bias and misinformation. With Iranian and Hezbollah help, Erlanger states:

Hamas "used the last two years to turn Gaza into a deadly maze of tunnels, booby traps and sophisticated roadside bombs. Weapons are hidden in mosques, schoolyards and civilian houses, and the leadership's war room is a bunker beneath Gaza's largest hospital, Israeli intelligence officials say."

If they said it, Erlanger reports it, and it once got journalist Robert Fisk to say that The New York Times should be renamed "US Officials Say," Government spokesmen say, unnamed sources say, or in this case "Israeli officials say."

Erlanger: "Israeli officials say that they are obeying the rules of war and trying hard not to hurt noncombatants but that Hamas is using civilians as human shields....Israeli press officers call the tactics of Hamas cynical, illegal and inhumane; even Israel's critics agree that Hamas' regular use of rockets to fire at civilians in Israel, and its use of civilians as

shields in Gaza, are also violations of the rules of war.”

Erlanger cites “Israeli military men and analysts” claiming these tactics “come from the Iranian Army’s tactical training and the lesson of the 2006 war between Israel and Iranian-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon.”

Erlanger is in Jerusalem, not Gaza, nor will “Israeli officials” let him go there. His sources are them alone. His point of view is theirs. He ignores conditions in Occupied Gaza and is Israel’s man at The New York Times. His article is “full of traps and trickery,” instead of accurate, unbiased reporting. So is “All the News That’s Fit to Print” that reveals the true record of the “Paper of Record.”

The Hawkish Right-Wing Jerusalem Post

On January 9, its editor-in-chief David Horovitz’s article headlined: “Time running out for an escalation Israel’s leaders don’t really want.” Neither Israeli air power or its ground operation has broken Hamas’ will to resist, and that concerns Horovitz. “Its main fighting force is largely intact (and) as of (January 8), it was plainly not crying out for a cease-fire, confident that the international diplomatic clock” is on its side.

“Israel’s dilemma....is whether or not to proceed to an intensified ground operation – involving thousands (more) troops, penetrating far more deeply into Gaza’s most dense urban areas.” Doing so would greatly increase casualties on both sides, and there’s “every indication that Hamas is braced (and thinking) it can inflict heavy damage on incoming forces, and thus bolster its standing and capacity to impose its terms on any cease-fire arrangements.”

Operation Cast Lead “appear(s) in some kind of pause.” Perhaps on the ground when he wrote this but not now nor in dozens of round-the-clock sorties inflicting wanton slaughter fast approaching 1000 confirmed deaths and well over four times that number of injuries, many serious.

Horovitz: “This pause cannot last long. The IDF is most vulnerable when....static. (It must decide) whether it is moving forward or pulling back.” The key leadership agrees that “Hamas is hurt but not beaten....No mechanism is in place to ensure it cannot quickly rearm.”

Hamas remains “cocky, (is) playing down its losses, and (is) anything but troubled by the deaths of Palestinians.” If it “remains intransigent (and won’t agree to Israel’s terms), a reluctant political echelon (will order in) many thousands to confront (it) as never before....a full-scale invasion to overthrow Hamas and reoccupy” Gaza.

As usual, Horovitz, twists facts and invents myths. Hamas worries greatly for its people and continues struggling for them. Why else would it resist a three-year embargo, the arrest of its officials, killing others, a crippling 18 month siege, and three weeks of Israeli savagery to wage guerrilla battles against an overpowering foe.

Israel offers its terms alone – deposing Hamas’ leadership, surrender of its weapons, continuation of Palestine’s colonization, and ending any hope for a just and lasting peace or Palestinian self-determination in a sovereign independent state inside pre-1967 borders. Hamas spent the last 21 years fighting for them. They won’t likely stop now, nor will Palestinians. As a result, continued bloodshed may continue if Israeli extremists prevail.

Horowitz seems unconcerned that most casualties will be civilian men, women and children, or that UN and human rights organizations accuse Israel of willfully targeting them. No concern either that UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, John Holmes, says Gaza's crisis is "worsening day by day," refuting Israel's claim that none exists. The situation is so extreme that he and others no longer can be silent.

Even the Vatican's Cardinal Renato Martino, head of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, compared Gaza to a "concentration camp," reminiscent of Nazi-era atrocities. That kind of criticism has impact, yet Israel's mass slaughter continues.

The independent Al Haq human rights organization estimates 80% of Palestinian deaths are civilians, including many women and children. The IDF follows so-called "Dahiyah Doctrine" tactics reflecting official change in Israel's National Security Concept. It calls for:

"wield(ing) disproportionate power against every village from which shots are fired on Israel, and cause immense damage and destruction. From our perspective, these are military bases. This is not a suggestion. This is a plan that has already been authorized."

Tel Aviv University's Institute for National Security Colonel Gabriel Siboni believes responses should "disproportion(ately) strike at the heart of the enemy's weak spot, in which efforts to hurt (rocket) launch capability are secondary."

It's why Israel calls civilian areas "legitimate military targets" in gross violation of international laws. Mosques, medical facilities, private dwellings, fishing boats, and food markets pose no strategic threats. Attacking them is terrorism. Those involved are war criminals. No Dahiyah doctrines change that. Nor do high-level wrongdoing denials. Israel is a serial offender.

For international law expert Francis Boyle, justice awaits an International Criminal Tribunal for Israel (ICTI) as "the Only (possible) Deterrent" to all out war, to put an end to these crimes of war and against humanity, and to let other Israeli leaders and generals know that committing these crimes will be punished. He urges the General Assembly to act before Arab anger erupts into something far greater than conflict in Gaza.

He advocates other needed actions as well:

- "immediately move for the de facto suspension of Israel throughout the entirety of the United Nations System, including the General Assembly and all UN subsidiary organs and bodies;"
- carry out all further talks with Israel "under principles of public international law (Geneva Convention 1949 and Hague Regulations 1907);"
- "abandon the fiction and fraud that the US government is an 'honest broker;'"
- "move to have the UN General Assembly impose economic, diplomatic, and travel sanctions upon Israel pursuant to the terms of the (General Assembly) Uniting for Peace Resolution (1950);" and
- "the Provisional Government of the State of Palestine must sue Israel before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Hague for inflicting acts of genocide against the Palestinian people in violation of the 1948 Genocide Convention."

Boyle accuses “the United States (of) Promot(ing) Israeli Genocide Against the Palestinians. Although the United States is a founding sponsor of, and a contracting party to, both the Nuremberg Charter and the Genocide Convention, as well as the United Nations Charter, these legal facts have never made any difference to (US officials from either party) when it comes to (their) blank-check support for Israel and their joint and severable criminal mistreatment of the Palestinians – truly the wretched of the earth!”

“The world has not yet heard even one word uttered by the United States and its NATO allies in favor of ‘humanitarian intervention’ against Israel in order to protect the Palestinian people, let alone a ‘responsibility to protect’ (them) from Zionist/Israeli(American) genocide.”

“Rather than rein in the Israelis, the United States government (and) Congress” feed its war machine.” Boyle calls this “humanitarian extermination” through a joint US – Israeli partnership. He expects no policy change under the new Obama administration.

Alternative Voices for Sanity and Peace

On January 8, Jimmy Carter in a Washington Post op-ed headlined: “An Unnecessary War.” A few quotes:

— “ Hamas wanted a comprehensive cease-fire in both the West Bank and Gaza, and the Israelis refused to discuss anything other than Gaza;”

— “We knew that 1.5 million inhabitants of Gaza were being starved....acute malnutrition (is evident) on the same scale as in the poorest nations in southern Sahara, with more than half of all Palestinian families eating only one meal a day” – and a very inadequate one for proper nutrition;

— “The top Hamas leaders in Damascus....agreed to a cease-fire, provided Israel would not attack Gaza and would permit normal humanitarian supplies to be delivered to Palestinian citizens;” they also agreed “to accept any peace agreement....provided....a majority vote of Palestinians” approved it; yet

— Israel remains unwilling to negotiate with Hamas for peace or on other issues.

Comments like these from a former US president are important despite falling woefully short. The war isn’t “unnecessary,” it’s illegal. Those responsible are war criminals. Justice demands they be punished. Israel should be isolated, embargoed, and boycotted until they are and hostilities and the Gaza siege end. Carter nonetheless deserves praise for going this far and refusing to be silent.

Haaretz columnist Gideon Levy, like his colleague Amira Hass, as well. In his January 9 “time of the righteous” commentary he refers to:

— Israel’s “unbridled aggression and brutality,”

— about 100 Palestinians killed for every Israeli;

— is Palestinian blood “worth one hundred times less than ours...;”

— “all the disasters now occurring in Gaza are manmade – by us;”

— “Anyone who preaches for this war and believes in the justness of mass killing....has no right....to speak about morality and humaneness;”

— “Anyone who justifies this war also justifies all its crimes. Anyone who sees it as a defensive war must bear the moral responsibility for its consequences. Anyone who now encourages the politicians and the army to continue will also have to bear the mark of Cain that will be branded on his forehead after the war. All those who support the war also support the horror.”

David Cromwell and Edwards edit the Media Lens UK-based media watch project to provide “authoritative criticism of mainstream media bias, censorship” and much more. Their January 12 alert is titled: “An Eye for an Eyelash: The Gaza Massacre – Part I.

They quote Tony Blair making an emotional March 24, 1999 appeal to the House of Commons and British people saying:

“We must act to save thousands of innocent men, women and children from humanitarian catastrophe.”

He referred to the Balkans ahead of the 78 day 1999 blitzkrieg – what Harold Pinter called “another blatant and brutal assertion of US power using NATO as its missile (to cut) children to pieces from 15,000 feet.”

Blair is now the Quartet’s Middle East envoy representing the UN, EU, Russia but mostly America and, of course, Israel. He blames the victims and supports the aggressor unlike his sister-in-law Lauren Booth saying his notion of a ceasefire would condemn Palestinians “to a slow agonising death.”

Try finding those comments in the Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, Washington Post, or any other major US newspaper or publication. Try hearing them from guests, pundits or reporters on CNN, CBS, NBC, ABC, Fox News, NPR, PBS, or BBC.

Try expecting world leaders (except Hugo Chavez, Ecuador’s Raphael Correa, the Cuban government, and Iran’s President Ahmadinejad) to express these views and much more.

Imagine Israel ending hostilities if they did. It’s defiant with Ehud Olmert saying he won’t bow to “outside influence....(Israel) has a right to protect its citizens....(the IDF will) continue to change the security situation in the south (meaning attacks will continue, and no outside body can challenge our) right to defend (our) security.”

A Final Comment

The Gaza-based Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) states:

“Israeli Occupation Forces have continued to wage the bloodiest and most brutal war against the Gaza Strip since its (1967) occupation, under an international and Arab conspiracy of silence. It cites:

— the deplorable humanitarian conditions; Gaza is totally dysfunctional; its society is in total breakdown;

— continued air raids have created confusion, fear and horror;

— “according to (PCHR) investigations, at least 90% of the Palestinians killed....are civilians, many of whom are children; the Mezan Center for Human Rights estimates 85%; UN officials continue to cite 25% to suppress the full horror; its relief agencies say 100% of Gazans need humanitarian aid.

Deaths are now around 1000. Injuries exceed 4500. No resolution is in sight. Laila Al-Haddad reports there’s “nowhere to hide from (the) bombing. You don’t know who is alive....who is a target....where to? Where can I go seek refuge to?”

Your house shakes. The windows break. There’s fear everywhere. Children are traumatized. The Saminu clan lost 70 members of their extended family. Professor Said Abdelwahed (in the Strip) emails about a typical Gaza night – “bloody;” air and ground attacks lasting all night to 6:45AM; “hellish; I do not believe that there was someone in Gaza who could sleep last night!;” no casualty reports yet; “situation is horrible.”

Half the population has no water. On January 11, Gaza’s Water Authority said it’s near totally disabled and no longer can provide any. Israel attacked a major water pipe in central Gaza. Salty water from wells is all that’s available. Raw sewage is running through streets. Officials warn of a “massive sewage flood throughout the Strip. One million Gazans have no electricity. Hospitals can’t function. Their supplies are near-exhausted. Hundreds more will die as a result.

A modern-day Holocaust is unfolding. The hypocrisy of “Never again” repeated in full world view. Bil’in, West Bank residents marched in protest, joined by Israeli and international activists. Protesters carried Palestinian and Venezuelan flags. They wore clothes like those given Jews in Nazi concentration camps featuring yellow Stars of David.

Meanwhile, reports from Gaza are of entire neighborhood forced evacuations, but where to go! Schools are bombed, shelters and mosques attacked, everything and everyone in Gaza is a “legitimate” target. Images coming out are horrifying. It’s why the US media suppress them.

In a January 10 Newsweek interview, Tzipi Livni talked tough and called the term “ceasefire” unacceptable because “it looks like an agreement between two legitimate sides....this is not a conflict between two states but a fight against terror. We will continue to fight,” and blame Iran for being behind it all.

On January 8, the Senate (by voice vote) agreed to a non-binding resolution affirming support for Israel’s aggression. On January 9, the House followed suit overwhelmingly in approving a similar non-binding resolution (390 – 5) calling for a Gaza ceasefire – on Israel’s terms.

On January 9, Reuters reported that the Pentagon plans “to deliver hundreds of tons of (new) arms (and munitions) to Israel from Greece later this month.” Indications are that “hazardous material” is involved, including explosive substances and detonators.

Weapons and munitions shipments generally signal future, not ongoing conflicts. This one, and perhaps others, may be for a larger-scale regional war, but it’s too early to conclude it. Yet threats continue to be made against Iran, Syria and Hezbollah so planning for more confrontation is very possible.

On January 13, Haaretz reported:

"A US military plan to ship munitions from a Greek port to a US stockpile in Israel has been cancelled due to the conflict in the Gaza Strip," Pentagon officials said. Take it with a grain of salt, and follow-up comments indicated a delay, not cancellation, and "EUCOM (the US European Command) is developing an appropriate course of action to deliver the items to the US stockpile in Israel. (No information will be provided) on timelines or possible routes for obvious reasons of operations security."

Life in Occupied Gaza. No end of conflict is in sight. Mass slaughter continues unabated. World leaders are silent on halting it. Blame the victims. Back aggression, but people globally say otherwise: In solidarity, we're all Gazans. We're all Palestinians.

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