

The Central Global Threat of Violence: The Axis of Aggression, the United States and Israel

Torture, Death and Devastation

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With Israel engaged once again in a major war of aggression in Lebanon, and protected once again from any effective global response by U.S. power and veto, it becomes clearer than ever that the central global problem of organized violence and lawlessness in the early 21st century lies in the aims, collaboration and power of the U.S.-Israeli axis. These partners in aggression and state terrorism reinforce one another's projections of power, the out-of-control superpower protecting its regional client's ultra-ethnic cleansing, while the Israeli lobby within the United States supports the violent projection of power by the United States, which provides further cover for Israel's escalating regional violence. What is most remarkable, however, is the feeble resistance to—and sometimes positive support of—the ATDD axis's violence by the European countries and “international community” more broadly.

Free to Aggress

Consider that the United States has carried out three wars of aggression in violation of the UN Charter just over the last seven years (Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq), and that without having digested its Iraq aggression—now universally recognized as having been based on lies and a cynical abuse of UN processes, as well as being the “supreme crime”—it has actually begun a fourth aggression, against Iran, once again under the cynical cover of the UN (see Edward S. Herman and David Peterson, “[The Fourth U.S. ‘Supreme International Crime’ in Seven Years Is Already Underway, With the Support of the Free Press and ‘International Community’](#),” Counterpunch, May 11, 2006). Furthermore, the United States was the main driver of the “sanctions of mass destruction” against Iraq throughout the 1990s which resulted in the deaths of perhaps a million Iraqi civilians, possibly the greatest genocide of the post-World War II era (with only the Congo and Rwanda serious rivals), a project also carried out by the cynical misuse of the UN.

Instead of resisting these aggressions and genocidal operations, the G-8 and international community have appeased the aggressor and genocidist, never condemning its aggressions or imposing sanctions in response to its major crimes, but even collaborating with it, and in the case of Iraq giving it ex post approval and support for the deadly occupation. The UN, created specifically to prevent “the scourge of war,” has failed to pose any serious constraining force on the serial aggressions by the United States, or those of its Israeli client. This failure, and the global crisis that it reflects, has hardly been recognized in the Western media and intellectual circles, for the same reasons that underlie the appeasement and collaboration—the military power of the superpower, fear of the economic and political

consequences of opposition to the United States' and its client's rampaging, some sense of solidarity and support for U.S. and Israeli objectives and policies on the part of global elites and media, and cowardice and lack of moral fortitude.

Israel as well as the United States has been free over several decades to aggress, ignore any UN resolutions or rulings, ignore international law governing the behavior of an occupying power, and steadily "redeem the land" of Palestine by ethnically cleansing the Palestinians. It carried out a major invasion of Lebanon back in 1982, with no penalty for this aggression, no penalty for a lengthy illegal occupation, or for periodic Iron Fist bombing and ground attacks on Lebanon, or for its lengthy maintenance of a terrorist proxy army on Lebanese soil. Its fresh major aggression in Lebanon in July and August 2006 is also being carried out without any UN or other international penalty or sanctions, again as in 1982 with the protection of the U.S. veto and U.S. power, and Israel is currently threatening Iran and Syria without any apparent U.S. or international community constraint.

Torture Centers

In addition to preeminence in aggression, the U.S.-Israel axis has long been important in sponsoring and using torture. The U.S. use of water-boarding goes back to the war against Philippine "niggers" in 1900; its use of electronic methods of torture was extensive during the Vietnam war, along with "Tiger Cages;" and this country was the principal sponsor of regimes of torture in the 1960s and 1970s as U.S. leaders struggled against nationalist-populist upheavals in the Third World. Many premier torturers learned their lessons in the School of the Americas in those years. Abu Ghraib, Bagram and the rendition gulag are not a break from the past or contrary to "American values," they are built on a solid tradition. (Chapter 2 of Chomsky and Herman, *The Washington Connection*, published back in 1979, was entitled "The Pentagon-CIA Archipelago.")

Israel has used torture on a systematic basis against Palestinians for decades, the *New York Times* noting matter-of-factly in 1993 that Israel's torture victims were running to 400-500 per month, but that Israel was "rethinking" the merits of its "interrogation" practices (Joel Greenberg, "Israel Rethinks Interrogation of Arabs," Aug. 14, 1993). If this was being done to Jews on a systematic basis in some country, the outcry would be deafening, but here also an Israeli practice condemned everywhere as barbaric is treated in very low key and brings about no negative policy responses from the United States or international community. This has permitted Israel to thrive, to command massive international aid, and to be given regular accolades as a model democracy, despite its long record of being "the only state in the world to effectively legalize the use of methods which constitute torture or ill-treatment" (Amnesty International, "The Israeli government should implement the High Court decision making torture illegal," Sept. 6, 1999). (This statement was made prior to the coming into power of the "moral values" regime of George Bush, Dick Cheney and Albert Gonzales.)

Killing Machines—The Killing Business is Good

The United States and Israel are also major dispensers of death to peoples who stand in their way. Both are highly militarized, the United States now the dominant military power on earth, Israel toweringly superior in military strength to any of its neighbors. Both have increasingly displayed the arrogance of power and a readiness to use their superior arms in lieu of peaceable means of settling disputes. Both have gravitated to the use of high tech weaponry that has devastating effects on civilians, but which reduces the need for land

troops and aggressor casualties. As noted, their violent proclivities are now mutually reinforcing.

The U.S. use of atomic weapons against civilian populations in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, with hundreds of thousands of civilian casualties in what was a demonstration and warning performance, stands alone in the annals of violence, and the United States has a long-standing tradition of brandishing and threatening to use these ever more lethal monstrosities. Israel also has a sizable nuclear weapons arsenal, and has long posed a threat of first use, reinforced by the absence of any nuclear retaliatory power by its nearby rivals. The Iran “threat” of acquiring nuclear weapons is the threat of potential self-defense, which would rob Israel of one important element that allows it regularly to use force against its neighbors.

During the Vietnam War, in which the United States deployed its ferocious weaponry lavishly against a resistant peasant society, it killed several million people. To this we may add hundreds of thousands killed in Cambodia and Laos. Many thousands have continued to die in Indochina from the millions of unexploded bombs that litter the soil and that the United States has made no effort to clean up or even provide supportive map guidance or technical aid. As one sign read over a U.S. military camp in Vietnam, “Killing is our business, and business is good.”

Much of U.S. death-dealing has been via sponsorship. It sponsored and long had a special relationship with the Suharto dictatorship, aiding its initial genocidal burst in 1965-1966 with possibly a million or more civilian deaths by massacre, and supporting its invasion-occupation of East Timor and some 200,000 further deaths there. It sponsored the rise of National Security States in Latin America, with death squads flourishing and U.S.-trained counter-insurgency cadres establishing a state terrorism “infinitely worse than the terrorism they were combating” (an Argentine post-junta truth commission). The U.S.-sponsored wars in Central America in the 1970s and 1980s took a heavy civilian toll, with genocidal attacks on the Guatemalan Mayan Indians, among other large-scale state murder operations. The U.S.-sponsored killings in Latin America in those years run into the hundreds of thousands (the “disappeared” alone were estimated to be 90,000 back in 1981). The U.S. “constructive engagement” with apartheid South Africa and support of “freedom fighter” Savimbi in Angola contributed many hundreds of thousands of deaths in that area in the 1970s and 1980s.

Israel’s killings have been on a smaller scale, but still notable in light of their claims of being victims of terrorism and merely retaliating to the actions of their weaker neighbors and the Palestinian resistance to their occupation and ethnic cleansing. Israel’s supposed “retaliation” to Palestinian “terrorism” featured a ratio of Palestinian to Israeli deaths of 20 or 25 to 1 until the second intifada, when the ratio fell to 3 or 4 to 1, though with a higher injury ratio (the figure of 25-1 is given by James Bennett in the *New York Times*, March 12, 2002). The killings at Sabra and Shatila, mainly of women, children and old people, has been estimated to run between 1,500 and 3,000, which is far greater than the Israeli police estimate of PLO killings of Israelis for the entire period 1968-1981 (282). The total of Israeli killings in Palestine are hard to estimate but run to tens of thousands. The Israeli killings of Lebanese in the 1982 invasion has been estimated at 17-20,000, and the numbers killed in Lebanon before and after that date surely run into many thousands.

Devastation

The United States has used its advanced weapons technology and wealth not only to kill large numbers in countries that stand in its way, but also to destroy their infrastructure and means of livelihood, thereby teaching them and others a lesson in the costs of opposition, setting back their capacity for development, and taking vengeance. Vietnam's forests were bulldozed and destroyed by chemical warfare, its lands were widely ruined by chemicals and millions of bomb craters, a large fraction of its most competent and productive males were killed, mainly in bomb strikes, vast numbers were wounded and traumatized and hundreds of thousands of children suffered birth deformities by chemical poisoning. Vietnam could no longer pose a threat of a working alternative model. Neither could Nicaragua pose a "threat of a good example" after a decade of U.S.-sponsored terrorist and economic warfare that reduced incomes by half and played a key role in ousting the reformist Sandinista government. El Salvador, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Afghanistan, the Congo and Angola are other states that have not recovered from U.S. direct or sponsored attacks.

Iraq was devastated in the Persian Gulf War of 1990-1991 and was then not permitted to recover, even to restore its badly damaged water and sanitary facilities, let alone to feed its people. The 2003-2006 invasion-occupation took a further heavy toll of Iraq's already devastated infrastructure, and was also notable for the invader's severe damage done or permitted to be done to Iraq's libraries, museums, and other important historical monuments. Iraq is a shattered society, with serial blows administered by the United States and mainly Britain, with UN connivance.

Israel ravaged Lebanon time and again from 1978 onward, with exceptionally heavy destruction of infrastructure in 1982 and now again in 2006. In 2002 Israel began a systematic destruction of the infrastructure of Palestine, destroying public buildings, records, medical facilities, libraries, among other facilities. In its recent 2006 assault on Gaza, nominally to help free a single captive Israeli soldier, its first target was the electric power station that serves 700,000 Palestinian civilians. Further targets included rooftop water tanks and mains, bridges, roads and medical facilities. At no time has Israel been penalized or punished by the EU, let alone its patron superpower, for these multiple open, blatant and illegal attacks on civilian facilities.

Conclusion

This is an age of escalating violence, led by a militarized superpower with an enormous capacity to kill, closely linked with an expansionist and militarized client that sees benefits to its "Greater Israel" and ethnic cleansing program in chaos and warfare. This is a continuation of long-standing policies of this Axis of ATDD, but rendered more dangerous by the death of the Soviet Union (and the ending of real "containment") and the coming to power in the United States of an exceptionally irresponsible, stupid and weak administration. The weak, stupid and amoral frequently do stupid and horrendous things to compensate for their mistakes, and once again in the Middle East they have unleashed large-scale violence and the threat of an even wider war..

The Axis of ATDD is setting the tone across the globe. It preaches that those resisting it only understand force, but the world recognizes that this is straight out of Orwell and that in truth it is the axis duo that only responds to force or its threat. Thus the Axis leadership provokes a responsive militarization and violence across the globe, and the huge problems facing the peoples of the world (poverty, disease, environmental threats, inequality, racism, democratic deficits) are unaddressed and become steadily more serious.

These problems are not going to be dealt with until the world's publics become sufficiently aroused to throw out the rascally leaderships of the Axis and/or to force the non-Axis powers to resist Axis violence with actions that bite and cannot be ignored.

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