

U.S. Must Embrace Truth About Gaza; Break Sykes-Picot Cycle

by Michele Steinberg

Feb. 5—Children and the elderly are still dying in Gaza from the aftermath of Israel's 23-day Operation Cast Lead attack. At every turn, statistics and reports from international agencies are showing the utter devastation against Palestinian civilians under what is called the new Israeli "doctrine of disproportionate force." The Israeli Cabinet, under outgoing Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, callously discussed this "doctrine," at last Sunday's meeting, and threatened new retaliations if there are more Palestinian rockets.

Lyndon LaRouche wrote in a statement of Feb. 1 (see below), that there is no justification for the civilian attacks by Israel, and Likudnik Benjamin Netanyahu is the chief ideological instigator of the campaign to eliminate the Palestinian people. Meanwhile, aid is trickling in, with the border crossings with Israel and Egypt still closed, and even the food required for daily consumption halted. Everything depends on emergency relief.

From the inner circles of Palestinian President Abu Mazen (Mahmoud Abbas) to supporters of Hamas's government after its victory in the January 2006 democratic elections for the Legislative Assembly, the only possibility for a peaceful resolution is a tough U.S. intervention—and President Barack Obama only has a few months, if not weeks—of trust and good will, before the region could once again blow up.

And with the Likud projecting that it will win the

Israeli elections on Feb. 10, making Netanyahu prime minister, an even bigger danger lurks—an Israeli military strike on Iran. A well-informed U.S. intelligence source told *EIR* that Israeli war plans include a submarine-launched missile attack on Iranian nuclear or other military sites. Even though this has no hope of stopping an Iranian nuclear program—and might even accelerate it—Israeli circles are talking about strategic "game-changers," i.e., military moves that create a new geopolitical reality. The attack on Gaza was such an action, which set back peace talks, and took the Arab Peace Initiative off the table. An attack on Iran would be even bigger—it would draw the United States inevitably into a war with Iran. Those are the stakes of the Gaza aftermath.

The Basis for Peace

The U.S. intervention has to be based on *justice*, rejection of all attacks on civilians, especially the "doctrine of disproportionate force," and, most importantly, breaking free of the same Sykes-Picot imperial game¹ that created the Jabotinskyite fascists in the Zionist camp, even before the creation of Israel, and still supports them today. To break out of this Sykes-Picot cycle, the United States should begin by looking at the truth, and the attack on Gaza is the place to start:

1. See *EIR*, Jan. 23, 2009.



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Benjamin Netanyahu, leader of the right-wing Likud Party, is the chief ideological instigator of the campaign to eliminate the Palestinian people. He is shown here at the Davos World Economic Forum Jan. 29.

- A report brought to the U.S. from Beirut, Lebanon, by an American who interviewed numerous witnesses to the Gaza carnage, presented the stark reality: While the Israelis claimed that they hit 1,200 Hamas military targets, that figure is, on the face of it, impossible. There were fewer than 150 “military” targets in the tiny Gaza Strip (ca. 139 sq. mi.), and these were all eliminated in the first four days of bombings. On Day 5, witnesses report, the decision was made to target civilians, and, from then on, there were incessant bombings of schools, neighborhoods, markets, mosques, apartment buildings and homes, UN facilities, and health-care buildings. It was an unending barrage of bombs, and the bodycount given on Jan. 30, compiled by Palestinian health officials, was 223 children, 442 women, 171 elderly persons, and 42 Hamas fighters killed, with the remainder still being identified and accounted for. Many international sources report that on Day 2 of the bombing campaign, 100 tons of bombs were dropped on Gaza, and the tonnage on some days exceeded that. From the Israeli side, the official government bodycount is that 13 Israeli soldiers were killed (several from “friendly fire”) and 4 Israeli civilians died in the 23 days of fighting.

Palestinian leaders are concluding that the real aim of the thousands of Israeli attacks since 2001, proven by the latest in Gaza, is nothing less than the extermination of the Palestinian national movement, and an end to all discussion of an “independent Palestinian state.”

Autonomy, possibly, but *no* state.

- Samer Badawi, executive director of the United Palestinian Appeal, confirmed many aspects of the Beirut report, at a Capitol Hill briefing on Feb. 5: Of the 1.5 million people living in Gaza (1.0 million of them refugees), 80% have no access to electricity; 50% have no access to water; 70% have no housing. He told the packed hearing room, at the event sponsored by Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio), that the “first question” should not be whether people “are terrorists or not,” but what can be done for the people of Gaza. He corrected a statement by Kucinich about when the Israeli “siege” of Gaza began: Israel has locked down Gaza since June 2007, stopping the imports of food, medicine, water, machinery needed to purify water, etc., and creating a situation that few people can survive. Badawi described the difficulty of getting money into Gaza—his own organization, the UPA, just to get a \$5,000 grant to support an orphanage, had to dedicate two and a half people out of his four-person staff for an entire day, to read through a 300-page list of names and institutions that are on the U.S. “terrorist” list. Terrorist “associates,” including relatives, even if they are infants in an orphanage, cannot receive UPA aid. The UPA, to deliver a grant to feed 780 people for two weeks, has to check every person, every board member, every staff member, of every institution that might feed the hungry, against this U.S. terrorist list. If there is any connection, however remote, the aid is stopped.

- Reports from the United Nations are damaging Israel far beyond what the Israeli institutions thought would happen. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon’s own fact-finding visit to the UN Works and Relief Agency (UNWRA) facility in Gaza, which had been hit with phosphorous bombs during the Israeli assault, has led him to take steps toward creating a commission to investigate war crimes committed in Gaza, and the Israeli bombing attacks on numerous UN facilities, including a UN-run school. The UN Development Programme reports that there are 600,000 pounds of rubble, contaminated with toxic substances, and still-live bombs and munitions that need to be carefully removed. There is no equipment to do this. UNDP says that 14,000 homes of Gazan civilians, 68 government buildings (in-

cluding schools), and 31 sites of non-governmental agencies, were destroyed or damaged.

‘The Lies of Gaza’

On Feb. 5, *EIR*’s Jeffrey Steinberg tore through the tissue of lies about Gaza, by asking a simple question at the Kucinich forum. Steinberg referenced the Jan. 29 article in the *London Review of Books*, “Israel’s Lies,” by Henry Siegman, the prominent rabbi, U.S. military chaplain, and former president of the American Jewish

Congress. Given what what Siegman documented, said Steinberg, viz., that it was Israel which violated the June-December 2008 ceasefire more than 150 times, provoking retaliatory rocket fire from Hamas in November, after several cold-blooded assassinations of Palestinians, would Congress investigate what lies they were told to get them to pass the resolution fully supporting Israel’s attack on Gaza? Not unexpectedly, due to the group-think and fear of media attacks, *EIR*’s question was ruled out of order in the scope of the forum.

‘Justice After Gaza Atrocity Demands Netanyahu’s Defeat’

Feb. 1 (LaRouche PAC)—Lyndon LaRouche today declared that, if there is to be any justice after the Israeli atrocities against the people of Gaza, Benjamin Netanyahu must be defeated in his bid for the Israeli prime-ministership.

“Based on eyewitness reports that I have received in the past several days,” LaRouche explained, “it is clear that the Israeli invasion of Gaza constituted a war crime that cannot be overlooked by the civilized world. If there is to be justice for the crimes carried out against the Palestinian people of Gaza, a very steep price must be imposed on Israel. Benjamin Netanyahu is, today, the leading representative of the outright fascist current in Israeli political life—the pro-Mussolini Revisionist movement of Sykes-Picot agent Vladimir Jabotinsky.

“While some will argue that Netanyahu was not part of the Olmert government that waged the war of annihilation against the Palestinian population of Gaza, no one will dispute the fact that Netanyahu is the candidate who stakes his entire career on denying the Palestinian people their rightful state. To do justice for the war crimes committed by the Israelis, a very large scalp must be taken, and that is Mr. Netanyahu.”

LaRouche also endorsed the call, published on Jan. 31, by one of Israel’s leading peace activists, Uri Avnery, demanding that Israel convene a war crimes tribunal, to prosecute those who were guilty of crimes during the Gaza invasion. Avnery’s call covered both

the Israeli Defense Forces personnel, and top Israeli politicians. LaRouche declared, “Uri Avnery is right. If there is to be any hope for a just peace, Israel must clean its own slate, by conducting a thorough investigation, leading to prosecutions of those who carried out these atrocities. Peace requires clean hands, and the best course of action is for Israel, itself, to clean out those responsible for these crimes.”

LaRouche cited reports received in recent days, that the 23-day Israeli invasion of Gaza was not, contrary to Israeli government claims, simply aimed at Hamas. The goal was the extermination of the Palestinian population in Gaza. “Israel had no justification for launching a war of extermination against the Palestinian people in Gaza. There is no excuse, no explanation that can justify the actions taken by the Israeli forces against the people of Gaza. After the first four days of the attacks, any and all so-called ‘military’ targets were thoroughly destroyed. After that, the ground invasion and subsequent bombing by the Israeli forces aimed at nothing less than the elimination of civil society in Gaza. The death toll of women, children and elderly, the total destruction of the basic infrastructure of Gaza, tells the story, in terms that cannot be denied.”

LaRouche added, “This was an act of weakness. The attempt at the mass extermination of the residents of Gaza—to ostensibly prevent some future attack on Israel—is no excuse. There can be no toleration for the Israeli claims that ‘We had to do it.’ If the reports I have received are accurate—and there is no reason at this time to dispute them—then there must be a steep penalty. And I believe that the first step must be the defeat of Netanyahu in the Feb. 10 elections.”

If Congress needs Israeli allies for peace, there are plenty, but Israeli voices of peace never seem to clear U.S. air space, and make it into the news media, nevermind the *Congressional Record*. Such is the case of recent column by Uri Avnery, former Israeli soldier, and founder of Gush Shalom (Israeli Peace bloc) (see [zope.gush-shalom.org/home/en/channels/avnery](http://gush-shalom.org/home/en/channels/avnery)).



Uri Avnery

“I do not object to trials abroad,” Avnery wrote. “The main thing is that war criminals, like pirates, should be brought to justice. It is not so important where they are caught. (This rule was applied by the State of Israel when it abducted Adolf Eichmann in Argentina and hanged him in Israel for heinous crimes committed outside the territory of Israel and, indeed, before the state even existed.)

“But as an Israeli patriot, I would prefer suspected Israeli war criminals to be put on trial in Israel. That is necessary for the country, for all decent officers and soldiers of the Israeli army, for the education of future generations of citizens and soldiers.

“There is no need to rely on international law alone. There are Israeli laws against war crimes. Enough to mention the immortal phrase coined by Justice Binyamin Halevy, serving as a military judge, in the trial of the border policemen who were responsible for the 1956 massacre in Kafr Kassem, when dozens of children, women and men were mown down for violating a curfew which they did not even know about.

“The judge announced that even in wartime, there are orders over which flies the black flag of illegality. These are orders which are manifestly illegal, that is to say, orders which every normal person can tell are illegal, without having to consult a lawyer.

“War criminals dishonor the army whose uniform they wear whether they are generals or common soldiers. As a combat soldier on the day the Israeli Defense Army was officially created, I am ashamed of them and demand that they be cast out and be put on trial in Israel.

“My list of suspects includes politicians, soldiers, rabbis and lawyers....”

Marjorie Mazel Hecht and Rochelle Ascher contributed research for this article.