

Hamas or Kadima: The True State of Terrorism

Written by

Monday, 22 May 2006 12:39 - Last Updated Monday, 22 May 2006 12:39

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William A. Cook - March held promise this year, the election of a new government in Palestine to replace the ?irrelevant? one Sharon discarded just two years ago, and the election of a new government headed by a new party in Israel on the 28th of the month. April, the interim month, served as a month of negotiations for Ehud Olmert of Kadima to form his government while behind the scenes, the US and Olmert attempted to maneuver through the US Congress and Senate the diabolical Palestine Anti-Terrorism Act that, in conjunction with Israel?s own efforts, negates the only true democratic election held in the mid-east to date and emasculates the Palestinian people?s right to choose its government by instituting heinous draconian measures against Hamas. Thus did April fulfill Eliot?s observation as ?the cruelest? month. May, the month of renewal in our cyclical calendar, should have provided promise for a resurrected peace in Palestine but instead promises to be the ugliest, meanest, most vicious and inhumane the international community has witnessed in many years.

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May 2006

□□□□□□ *?Truth will not make us free, but taking control of the production of truth will.?*
(Chalmers Johnson, Sorrows of Empire)

March held promise this year, the election of a new government in Palestine to replace the ?irrelevant? one Sharon discarded just two years ago, and the election of a new government headed by a new party in Israel on the 28th of the month. April, the interim month, served as a month of negotiations for Ehud Olmert of Kadima to form his government while behind the scenes, the US and Olmert attempted to maneuver through the US Congress and Senate the diabolical Palestine Anti-Terrorism Act that, in conjunction with Israel?s own efforts, negates the only true democratic election held in the mid-east to date and emasculates the Palestinian people?s right to choose its government by instituting heinous draconian measures against Hamas. Thus did April fulfill Eliot?s observation as ?the cruelest? month. May, the month of renewal in our cyclical calendar, should have provided promise for a resurrected peace in Palestine but instead promises to be the ugliest, meanest, most vicious and inhumane the international community has witnessed in many years.

Consider what Bush and Olmert have done and the tragic consequences it portends: political efforts to negotiate peace demolished in favor of continued instability and chaos for years to come; humanitarian concerns wantonly destroyed as poverty grows, unemployment rises to

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even greater heights, disease and malnutrition metastasize; and most horribly, the psychological torment that seeps into the spirit feeds frustration and anger, humiliation and despair, and a futility of purpose eclipses love, hope and meaning. Consider the consequences for the Palestinians who now face an imposed starvation inflicted on them by purportedly civilized democratic states in full knowledge that unemployment has reached two thirds of that population and nothing can reverse that trend because Israel has locked the prison gates that surround them.

This Act should it be passed as HR4681 and S 2370 or enforced through subterfuge as amendments to other bills is a collective and hence illegal action as determined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 33 of the Geneva Conventions. Yet it is perpetrated by the United States of America in full congress assembled and punishes a people for voting democratically in full view of the world in a monitored election.

Consider as well the consequences of this unilateral act as it impacts the people of Israel and America. Deprivation and desperation fuel hatred of the oppressor, and Bush and Olmert, having thrown fuel on the fire of vengeance and retaliation, have condemned both Jews and Americans to reap the whirlwind as the people of the world grasp the unnatural acts taken against a helpless people and cast their condemnation on the governments that act in their name. This is no way to bring peace or to end terrorism.

The US and Israel decry the growing anti-Semitism in Europe and bemoan the declamations of Ahmandinejad who castigates Israel as an interloper in Palestine, one that "should be wiped off the map," as his words are interpreted by MEMRI, a Jewish organ created to make Arabic commentary incendiary to the world that knows nothing of its duplicity. But in reality it is the other way around, it's the people of the world, in Norway, Denmark, Germany, France, England and America who decry the horrific behavior of Israel against the Palestinians with US support and the US against the people of Iraq and Afghanistan. It is the behavior of these two nations that reflects anti-Semitism ? hatred for Semitic peoples ? as they move to crush them in Palestine and Iraq, and then get upset because they have retaliated against their occupiers.

Unfortunately, it is not the people that their governments listen to, although Chirac's interest in providing some humanitarian funds for Palestinians might reflect his awareness that his people are sensitive to their plight. Still the European Union has joined Israel's infamous plea to isolate the Palestinian government because it is a terror organization that threatens the very existence of that helpless state.

Such blatant hypocrisy.

A nation that fields the most technologically advanced military machine in the mid-east, the only nation in the region that possesses depleted uranium missiles, nuclear bunker buster bombs, nuclear weapons that could level any one of its neighbors, and military agreements with the most powerful nation on the planet should it be attacked, stands frightened of the David it looks down upon, the David that Israel itself acknowledges has in Hamas a militant force of maybe 1000 men (Terrorism: Q&A, Council on Foreign Relations, 2/7/2006). Yet the European Union capitulates to this power in the mid-east that is haven for .001% of the world's population. Why

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do the governments of the EU reject their own peoples' opinions and follow like sheep the voices of their shepherds, Bush and Olmert?

Why? What is the truth? Which of these governments is the true terrorist state?

Let's review the facts. Condemnation of Hamas centers on its charter of 1988 and its alleged terrorist acts committed since its founding. According to Daniel Jonah Goldhagen (Los Angeles Times, 2/5/06) the charter "reveals that Hamas" is not just dedicated (however wrongly or murderously) to the destruction of Israel. It shows Hamas to be governed by a Nazi-like genocidal orientation to Jews in general. Goldhagen cites Article 7 to prove his analogy: "Hamas has been looking forward to (implementing) Allah's promise whatever time it might take."

The prophet "said: The time will not come until Muslims will fight Jews (and kill them); until the Jews hide behind rocks and trees, which will cry: O Muslim! There is a Jew hiding behind me, come on and kill him!" "Imagine," Goldhagen continues, "if a territory or country next to the United States" were governed by a political party that had repeatedly terrorized and murdered citizens of its neighbor, and had issued a governing charter about Americans "Would people in that country (the US) accept the threatening political party as a fit partner for peace?"

Such is the fear generated by Hamas in the Israeli mind as presented by Professor Goldhagen upon the ascension of Hamas to lead the Palestinians.

Now compare if you will Sharon's government during the first years of his control. Sharon depended on "the National Religious Party headed by Effi Eitan, a self-proclaimed rabid Zionist who brazenly and shamelessly shouts that Palestinians are not ordinary people, but "uncircumcised," "little people," and "evil." The Jews, on the other hand, are "blessed." And they [the Jews] will come with "vengeance against [their] terrible evil" and "make a reckoning with them." (My comments from Counterpunch 2/14/04 with quotes taken from the Los Angeles Times).

Add to these comments the Gush Emunim rabbis words "Jews who kill Arabs should be free from all punishment "Whoever disobeys the rabbis deserves death and will be punished by being boiled in hot excrement in hell [Erubin 21b]."

Now turn to Olmert's new government, a mixture concocted from a variety of parties that constitute the Knesset including Labor, Shas, Yisrael Beytenu, United Torah Judaism, National Union (represented in Sharon's government), and Pensioners with figures like Amir Peretz of Labor, Eli Yishai of Shas and Avigdor Leiberman of Yisrael Beytenu. Note if you will the importance of rabbis in this mix.

The United Torah party is an alliance of two parties, "the Degel HaTorah that is guided by the rabbinic heads of the Lithuanian yeshivas of non-Hasidic Haredi Ashkenazi Jews. (And) the Agudat Yisrael that is guided by the followers of Hasidism in Israel, and also consisting of Ashkenazi Jews." (Wikipedia, 5/1/2006). The Shas Party was founded in 1984 under the leadership of Rabbi Ovadia Yosef with strategic help and guidance from Rabbi Elazar Shach. Its

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focus has been ?opposition to removal of religious functions and restrictions of the state.?

Now consider the platforms of the National Union Party, a composite of three parties with these stated objectives: ?it support(s) the settlement of the Land of Israel, advocated more military power in the War on terror and harsher measures against Palestinian terrorism, rejects all current Oslo-based peace efforts, ? the notion of a Palestinian state, and advocates voluntary transfer of the Palestinians.? (Wikipedia).

The National Religious Zionist party, a faction of the National Union, ?put focus on supporting the Israeli settlements, fighting terrorism ? and establish the high-status of Religious Zionism.? It actively protested the ?disengagement plan? for Gaza, and has rabbis of the Religious Zionist Movement supporting it.

The Yisrael Beytenu party is right-of-center, supported in great measure by the immigrant settlers who have the most to gain by continued occupation of the settlements in the West Bank. Avigdor Lieberman, a founder of the party and its leader, offers creative plans for map redesign that will effectively isolate Palestinians from Jews, supports hard-line negotiations with Palestinians, and a transfer program proposed in 2005 that other members of the Knesset labeled ?racist.?

Add to the above, Olmert?s stated campaign issues that push for dismantlement of a small number of settlements in the West Bank, the enclosure of the largest settlements behind the Wall incorporated into greater Israel, and confiscation of the Jordan River Valley, and the potential for a mutual peace accord is impossible. Indeed, Olmert has made clear that he intends to create Israel?s borders unilaterally by 2010.

Two items of importance to note here: Israel does not intend to pursue peace but it does intend to force the Palestinian people to submit to an apartheid Bantustan homeland surrounded by a prison wall completely under the control of Israel, and, two, the Israeli Knesset and the new government includes parties that have as their stated goal the eradication of the Palestinian people by transfer, by incarceration or by force. The racism inherent in these party?s platforms has even been acknowledged by the Knesset in its refusal to consider Lieberman?s plan and by commentators in Israel like Gideon Levy.

Now we have the comparison; which of the new governments is the terror state? Hamas has no army, no air force, no navy, no military ordinance, and no means of bringing weaponry of any serious kind to Palestine since they do not control their air space or water access nor can they leave or enter their homeland (read occupied territory) without the permission of the IDF.

Words written in 1988 cannot destroy Israel. The only weapon the Palestinian people have to wage war against Israel is a moral one: they are the oppressed and the oppressed cannot remain oppressed forever; they are the victims of injustice, and injustice anywhere is injustice everywhere; and they had no hand in designing or implementing the ?laws? that Israel uses to incarcerate them like cattle behind Walls and fences that deny them the basic rights of all humans as stated in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Israel on the other hand uses its military might to subdue, humiliate, imprison, torture and assassinate Palestinians when it wants to, whenever it wants to, defying in the process more than 160

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UNGA Resolutions demanding that it cease and desist, and more than 30 UNSC Resolutions, not counting those vetoed by the US.

It is Israel that breaks international law with impunity not the Palestinians. It is Israel's Knesset members that include those who have as determined a desire to eradicate the Palestinians as anything stated by Hamas. Indeed, Goldhagen's reference to Nazi behavior as quoted above can be made justifiably about these right-wing Zionist parties as well as about Hamas' charter, the only difference being that they are in a position to impose their will on Palestinians not vice versa. That conclusion Americans will not hear or read about in their main stream media; that's why they must take control of the production of truth.

What justification exists for the harsh comparison made above that places Israel in the terror seat?

We'll focus on the current intifada, 2000-2006. According to B'tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the occupied territories, Israeli security forces (note even here the use of the word 'security' instead of 'armed' or 'defense' forces) killed 3377 Palestinians in the occupied territories and 58 in Israel; in addition Israeli civilians killed 41 Palestinians in the occupied territories for a total of 3418.

By contrast Palestinians killed 233 Israelis in the occupied territories and 462 in Israel; in addition 225 IDF were killed by Palestinians in the occupied territories and another 84 in Israel for a total of 1004. Looked at another way, Israel manages to kill slightly more than 47 Palestinians a month while Palestinians kill 1.4 Israelis per month, a horrible way to view slaughter of this kind.

Consider the children lost to this carnage: Israeli forces killed 692 minors in the occupied territories and 1 in Israel; Palestinians killed 39 minors in the occupied territories and 80 in Israel. B'tselem makes a point of noting that 348 Palestinians were killed as a result of Israel's assassination policy, called euphemistically 'targeted killings.'

They also note that 120 of these were innocent civilians. If we assume that Israel does not have a policy of wanton killing of children, than the number of 'accidental' deaths of minors and 'bystanders' (both terms the euphemistic replacement for more horrific words), reaches 813.

But the above statistics do not tell the whole story. Once Arafat was replaced by Mahmoud Abbas, a significant decline in Israelis killed by Palestinians can be noted: in 2003, 129 Israelis were killed, 20 of them minors under the age of 18; in 2004 the number drops to 68 killed, 4 of them minors; in 2005, 41 with 3 of them minors; and in 2006, ending April 30, 12 were killed. These numbers reflect Hamas' self-imposed moratorium. By contrast, Israeli forces killed 582 Palestinians in 2003, 119 of them minors; 819 in 2004, 178 minors; 190 in 2005 with 52 of them minors; and in the 4 months of 2006, 90 killed, 23 of them minors. Which of these states is the terror state? Why is it that Americans know so little about the facts?

Here's why.

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?In 2004, there were 141 reports in AP headlines or first paragraphs of Israeli deaths. During that time, there had actually been 108 Israelis killed (the discrepancy is due to the fact that a number of Israeli deaths were reported multiple times). During the same period, 543 Palestinian deaths were reported in headlines or first paragraphs. During this time 821 Palestinians had actually been killed. In other words, 131% of Israeli deaths and 66% of Palestinian deaths were reported in AP headlines or first paragraphs.

That is, AP reported prominently on Israeli deaths at a rate 2.0 times greater than Palestinian deaths. In reality, 7.6 times more Palestinians were killed than Israelis in 2004. (ifamericaknew.org, 5/1/2006). Now let's consider how the deaths of children were reported. ?9 Israeli children's deaths were reported in the headlines or first paragraphs of AP articles on the Israel/Palestine conflict in 2004, when 8 had actually occurred. During the same period only 27 out of 179 Palestinian children's deaths were reported. ? Additionally, Palestinian children made up a disproportionately large number of Palestinian deaths in general. Children's deaths accounted for 21.8% of the Palestinians killed, while children's deaths accounted for only 7.4% of Israelis killed during this period. ? (ifamericaknew).

Such reporting is not confined to AP news reports. Alison Weir's research at www.ifamericaknew.org shows that all major newspapers in the US carried similar reports. A six-month study of the San Francisco Chronicle showed a 30:1 differential of Israeli deaths to Palestinian children's deaths reported and another study of The Oregonian showed headlines at a ratio of 44:1. What do these statistics tell us? They confirm what Mearsheimer and Walt concluded in their recent study, that Israeli interests dominate US news coverage at a rate that is, to be polite, discriminatory and, to be caustic, racist. That's why Americans must take control of the production of truth if we are to know the true state of terrorism.

Numbers, however, do not bleed nor cry nor scream in pain; they stare dumbly from the page with no human voice, a cold recounting of human mayhem and slaughter. April 17, 2006, two and a half weeks ?since the last suicide bombing, Israeli forces killed at least 26 Palestinians, at least 5 of them children, and injured 161 Palestinian men, women and children. A college student lost her right eye today after being shot by an Israeli sniper last week. ? (Justice Freedom, report from If Americans Knew, 4/17/06).

Israel launched 369 raids into the West Bank during these two weeks; continued its sustained shelling into Gaza, continued its lockdown of the gates in Gaza, and continued the shortage of food stuffs and medical supplies. According to UN reports 2300 artillery and tank shells and 34 missiles were launched into Gaza between March 30 and April 12. Remember, the people living in this strip of land reside in the most congested piece of real estate on the planet. They have no army, no security, no forewarning of the impending devastation that comes out of the clouds and scatters their family's body parts as readily as the stones that once made their homes. That happened to the family of Mohammed Rabe'eya Ghaban in Beit Lahiya on Monday April 10, 2006 when six artillery shells fell on his house and shrapnel pierced the skull of his eight year old daughter Hadeel and injured eight other children including Hadeel's brothers and sisters aged 1 to 17.

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What justifies this carnage? Why does the third or fourth greatest military in the world wreck havoc on a defenseless, immobile, imprisoned people? Which is the true state of terrorism?

Consider the day to day reality that the people in the West Bank and Gaza endure. 90% of two year olds have witnessed soldiers bursting through the door of their home, rifles pointed at their mother or father, pushed against walls, beaten perhaps, shouted at certainly, cursed we might assume, and left in fear knowing another raid is imminent. What torture is here? This is intentional, calculated, psychological torture?? (Cook, 1/7-8/06, Counterpunch)

The Defense for Children International published this report: "The process of arrest and detention of Palestinian children is a process of systematic abuse and mistreatment which flouts international legal standards and denies the basic human rights of detainees first as children and secondly as prisoners. [children are] handcuffed and blindfolded, humiliated and threatened and often beaten and kicked from the moment they are arrested up to and often throughout their interrogation and detention. They are deprived of sleep, food and access to the bathroom until so-called confessions are coerced out of them?? These are the children prisoners; there are 9,400 Palestinians in Israeli prisons, most detained without charge, without counsel, without rights to trial by jury and many of them tortured according to human rights reports. What is this but systematic, universal, collective punishment? indiscriminate, illegal, and inhumane. And it is done in my name through this administration that allows such terrorism to exist in a state we ironically term democratic and in sync with American values.

Which is the true state of terrorism?

Consider just three days in April, that cruelest of months: the 19th, tear gas grenades fired at school children, suicide bomber's parents house demolished, Israeli troops hold mothers of occupation resisters, Israeli troops beat up and hospitalize man at work on his land, Israeli troops desecrate mosque, 3 children injured during Israeli incursions, journalist beaten up and hospitalized by occupation troops, 322 shells hit northern Gaza in 24-hour day and night blitz, Israeli shelling wounds child and 2 adults?; the 18th, boy aged 14 killed in Israeli shelling, 1 air raid, 18 attacks, 36 raids, 26 wounded, schoolboy injured and school principal beaten up, village school and homes occupied by Israeli army, many homes invaded and 10 occupied by Israeli military, Jenin 10 children and 10 adults wounded in Israeli incursion, settlers beat up shepherd and steal 20 sheep, refugee girl (6) and another child wounded in Israeli raid, man beaten up and hospitalized during Israeli incursion?; the 17th, 9 killed in Tel Aviv bombing, Israeli army invades Gaza, Nablus, Jenin, Qalqilya,

Israeli aircraft fires missile at Gaza, continued military operations conducted by Israel in the northern Gaza Strip-many casualties, Palestinian child killed and two injured by artillery shell near a playground in Beit Lahia, artillery shells fired at Sheikh Zayed town, Gaza near a playground, Mamdouh Obaid, died on the way to a hospital, wounded, Mohammed Abu Tabaq, 14, and Ammar al-Kas, 15. (Palestine Commission for Human Rights, 4/26/06). Recall, if you will, the comments made by Professor Goldhagen at the beginning of this article: "Imagine if a territory next to the United States were governed by a political party that had repeatedly terrorized and murdered citizens of its neighbor would people in that country accept the threatening political party as a fit partner for peace?? How ironic in light of the truth

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that prevails in Palestine.

Which is the true state of terrorism?

Hammas has been condemned because it will not renounce violence against Israel, yet no one seems to ask Israel to renounce its violence against the Palestinians. Certainly it's obvious from the recounting above that Israel covers Palestine day in and day out with violence, violence that is indiscriminate, illegal and inhumane. Any violence perpetrated by Hammas pales in comparison, horrific as it is. Why does the international community permit this carnage to continue?

But the violence above does not tell the whole story. The international community needs to visit the West Bank and Gaza. The world's eyes need to see what Israel's occupation has wrought on the Palestinians. Drive through the checkpoint that isolates East Jerusalem from West Jerusalem; witness the contrast between the rubble that surrounds the weathered broken homes of the indigenous people from the spanking new town homes surrounded by green shrubbery and trees of the immigrant settlers who live in the West Bank on stolen land.

Crawl along potholed and scared roadways that cut between houses stacked like firewood on slopes of stone and rock while settlers move swiftly past on highways built solely for them, highways that run on land confiscated by Israel. Look to the right and the left and see the remains of demolished homes, 104 in 2004 in East Jerusalem, 94 in 2005 evicting the families that lived in them onto the streets, 594 people in all, mothers, fathers, sons and daughters. Israel demolishes these houses in order to construct the roads settlers need, to keep houses away from the entombment wall they've constructed to imprison the Palestinians, for collective punishment despite its illegality under the Geneva Conventions, and to ensure more land for expansion of illegal settlements. (B'tselem, 5/1/2006).

Drive through the poverty riddled towns that lie in crevices between sand hills and olive groves that are stacked one above the other; stop in Hebron's old city as the residents hide in their homes under curfew unable to go to the store or school or work unless an 18 year old IDF soldier gives them permission or shoots them should they disobey the lockdown. Walk along the dirty streets of the old city beneath the chicken wire stretched above your head to prevent the garbage and waste tossed from above by the illegal settlers from falling on your clothes. Taste the humiliation; watch the settlers stop school children and mock them as inferior beings. Listen to the racism that spews from their mouths reflecting the attitude of Effi Eitem or Avigdor Lieberman in the Knesset.

Israel's restrictions on the movement of workers and merchandise in the Occupied Territories are generally sweeping and unlimited in time, leading to great consequences suffered by the local population. Israel's policy violates a number of rights that Israel is obligated to respect pursuant to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These include the right to an opportunity to gain a living, the right to an adequate standard of living, the right to adequate food, clothing and housing, and the right to enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. (B'tselem, 5/1/2006).

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Why, if this Jewish run organization, housed in Jerusalem, can see the devastation caused by Israel's illegal occupation of another people's land, can't the European Union leaders, the US Congress, and the Senate see what crimes they share in letting this terrorist state act with impunity against Palestine?

The Director of operations of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Pierre Krahenbuhl, visited the Palestinian territories in April, noted the increased violence and deteriorating humanitarian situation and called for a concerted effort on both sides to prevent an impending crisis. The US and Israel responded by preventing the Palestinian government from securing international funds owed to it so that its people could be paid, including its own taxes collected by Israel. Why such barbaric behavior? How can the international community swallow the lie that Hamas can destroy Israel? How can that community continue to allow a rogue state to defy international law? How can it remain silent when such inhumane treatment is inflicted on a helpless people?

Today peace is possible in Palestine; not because Israel has offered a peace plan, not because Israel has responded to the "road map," dead as it is, by removing its illegal settlements in the West Bank or by removing its occupying forces from Palestine, but because Mahmoud Abbas and Hamas have made possible avenues to peace, one in a speech to the Nobel Institute in Oslo earlier this month and the other by speaking openly about its study of the Saudi 2002 peace plan. Has the Bush administration or our representatives in Congress or the Senate jumped at these overtures? No. Has Olmert suggested that his demands -- to have Israel recognized by Palestine's new government, to have the violence brought to an end, to have agreements made in the halls of the United Nations accepted -- are within reach by calling together the international community at a conference to work out the details of a peace in Palestine as recommended by Abbas? No. Have the American people even been informed about these overtures? No. Has the "liberal" media rushed to interview Abbas or Hanyieh to seek further explanation of their proposals? No.

Why?

If Hamas is so evil, if its record of slaughter and terror is so great by contrast with that of Israel, how does the world explain the reality described above? Israel under Sharon defied International Law as determined by United Nations Resolutions, the International Court of Justice and the Geneva Conventions where applicable to genocide and occupation, and, based on the explosive cocktail that is Olmert's new government, Israel will continue to defy the international community.

Mark the obvious. Israel illegally occupies Palestinian land; Palestinians are prisoners in their own land. Israel illegally confiscates and annexes more and more of that land; Palestinians have become a displaced people under constant curfew in their homes, surviving in refugee camps, or spread throughout the world unable to return. Israel illegally constructs its accursed Wall that entombs the Palestinian people behind cement and chain link fence stealing in the process even more land including the Jordan Valley; Palestinians are helpless to prevent the construction despite the action of the International Court of Justice that declared it not just illegal but inhumane.

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Israel illegally confiscates Palestinian aquifers, than rations its distribution to the people who legally own it while dispensing it in abundance to immigrant settlers who live on stolen land; Palestinians can do nothing but witness the racism that allows such behavior to exist. Israel illegally prevents the Palestinians from getting to their fields and crops, demolishes olive groves and homes, constructs road barriers to prevent freedom of movement, denies building permits and creates illegal laws that determine property rights for the indigenous population that has no say in their design or implementation; Palestinians suffer the indignation of such treatment as they fall deeper and deeper into debt and poverty.

Israel illegally incarcerates thousands of Palestinians denying them right of counsel or trial by jury; Palestinians are forced to submit to this barbarous behavior since they are forced to exist under Israeli law. Israel illegally assassinates individuals in extra-judicial executions contrary to behavior expected of humane, civilized societies; Palestinians are damned for striking back at the occupiers by a world that sees their action as terror while it euphemistically accepts Israel's as 'security' for its population.

Israel illegally defies international agreements that call upon nation states to forego development of weapons of mass destruction, biological, chemical and nuclear; Palestinians become potential innocent victims of a nation that can and has occupied neighbor states, used its vast military arsenal against its neighbors (Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq), and could become engaged in war as a consequence. And this represents only some of the illegal behavior that has guided Israel under Sharon and will continue to guide Olmert's government unless the international community takes command of the crisis in Palestine and demands equitable and just treatment for the Palestinians.

Now is the time to bring peace to Palestine by unmasking the true state of terrorism; the international community must take control of the production of truth. Truth is not the province of those with the most to gain at the expense of those with the most to lose. The UN must force open the prison gates in Israel's Wall; it must let the international community see the unnatural conditions imposed on the Palestinians under Israeli occupation.

Let this spring fulfill its promise of renewal. Bring in the UN Peace Keepers; let them stand between these warring factions to ensure that both receive just and equitable treatment. Create conditions that enable compassion, comfort, respect and dignity to prevail and the need for violence driven by vengeance will evaporate. The mid-east is a cauldron simmering in the heat of fanatical vitriol and contempt; cool minds must take control, minds open to peaceful accord, justice, and respect for human rights.