

Do you know that Israel is engaged in ethnic cleansing in southern Lebanon? Israel has ordered all the villagers to clear out. Israel then destroys their homes and murders the fleeing villagers. That way there is no one to come back and nothing to which to return, making it easier for Israel to grab the territory, just as Israel has been stealing Palestine from the Palestinians.

Do you know that one-third of the Lebanese civilians murdered by Israel's attacks on civilian residential districts are children? That is the report from Jan Egeland, the emergency relief coordinator for the UN. He says it is impossible for help to reach the wounded and those buried in rubble, because Israeli air strikes have blown up all the bridges and roads. Considering how often (almost always) Israel misses Hizbollah targets and hits civilian ones, one might think that Israeli fire is being guided by US satellites and US military GPS. Don't be surprised at US complicity. Why would the puppet be any less evil than the puppet master?

Does it make you a Proud American that "your" president gave Israel the green light to drop bombs on convoys of villagers fleeing from Israeli shelling, on residential neighborhoods in the capital of Beirut and throughout Lebanon, on hospitals, on power plants, on food production and storage, on ports, on civilian airports, on bridges, on roads, on every piece of infrastructure on which civilized life depends? Are you a Proud American? Or are you an Israeli puppet?

On July 20, "your" House of Representatives voted 410-8 in favor of Israel's massive war crimes in Lebanon. Not content with making every American complicit in war crimes, "your" House of Representatives, according to the Associated Press, also "condemns enemies of the Jewish state."

Who are the "enemies of the Jewish state"? They are the Palestinians whose land has been stolen by the Jewish state, whose homes and olive groves have been destroyed by the Jewish state, whose children have been shot down in the streets by the Jewish state, whose women have been abused by the Jewish state. They are Palestinians who have been walled off into ghettos, who cannot reach their farm lands or medical care or schools, who cannot drive on roads through Palestine that have been constructed for Israelis only.

The Palestinians who confront Israeli evil are called "terrorists." When Bush forced free elections on Palestine, the people voted for Hamas. Hamas is the organization that has stood up to the Jewish state. This means, of course, that Hamas is evil, anti-semitic, un-

American and terrorist. The US and Israel responded by cutting off all funds to the new government. Democracy is permitted only if it produces the results Bush and Israel want.

Another enemy of the Jewish state is Hizbollah. Hizbollah is a militia of Shia Muslims created in 1982 when Israel first invaded Lebanon. During this invasion the great moral Jewish state arranged for the murder of refugees in refugee camps. The result of Israel's atrocities was Hizbollah, which fought the Israeli army, defeated it, and drove it, with its tail between its legs, out of Lebanon. Today Hizbollah not only defends southern

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Lebanon but also provides social services such as orphanages and medical care.

To cut to the chase, the enemies of the Jewish state are any Muslim country not ruled by an American puppet friendly to Israel. Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the oil emirates have sided with Israel against their own kind, because they are dependent either on American money or on American protection from their own people. Sooner or later these totally corrupt governments that do not represent the people they rule will be overthrown. It is only a matter of time.

Indeed Bush and Israel may be hastening the process in their frantic effort to overthrow the governments of Syria and Iran. Both governments have more popular support than Bush has, but the White House Moron doesn't know this. The Moron thinks Syria and Iran will be "cake-walks" like Iraq, where ten proud divisions of the US military are tied down by a few lightly armed insurgents. If you are still a Proud American, consider that your pride is doing nothing good for Israel or for America.

The truth is that Israel created the crisis by invading a

The homes of Lebanese civilians lie in ruins following Israeli airstrikes in Baalbek in the Bekaa valley, July 22. (AFP Photo)



country with a pro-American government. The truth is that the American people do not support Israel's war crimes, as the CNN quick poll results make clear and as was made clear by callers into C-Span.

Despite the Israeli spin on news provided by US "reporting," a majority of Americans do not approve of Israeli atrocities against Lebanese civilians. Hizbollah is located in southern Lebanon. If Israel is targeting Hizbollah, why are Israeli bombs falling on northern Lebanon? Why are they falling on Beirut? Why are they falling on civilian airports? On schools and hospitals?

With hope and diplomacy dead, henceforth America and Israel have only tooth and claw. The vaunted Israeli army could not defeat a rag tag militia in southern Lebanon. The vaunted US military cannot defeat a rag tag, lightly armed, insurgency drawn from a minority of the population in Iraq, insurgents, moreover, who are mainly engaged in civil war against the Shia majority.

What will the US and its puppet master do? Both are too full of hubris and paranoia to admit their terrible mistakes. Israel and the US will either destroy from the air

the civilian infrastructure of Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, and Iran so that civilized life becomes impossible for Muslims, or the US and Israel will use nuclear weapons to intimidate Muslims into acquiescence to Israel's desires.

Muslim genocide in one form or another is the proffered goal of the neoconservatives who have total control over the Bush administration. Neocon godfather Norman Podhoretz has called for World War IV (in neocon thinking WW III was the cold war) to overthrow Islam in the Middle East, deracinate the Islamic religion and turn it into a formalized, secular ritual.

Neocon David Horowitz says that by slaughtering Palestinian and Lebanese civilians, "Israel is doing the work of the rest of the civilized world," thus equating war criminals with civilized men.

The complicity of the American public in these heinous crimes will damn America for all time in history.

Paul Craig Roberts, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury in the Reagan administration
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News Bias in AP

A new study conducted at Sonoma State University shows widespread bias in Associated Press (AP) news reports favoring US government positions.

On October 25, 2005 the American Civil Liberties (ACLU) posted to their website 44 autopsy reports, acquired from American military sources, covering the deaths of civilians who died while in US military prisons in Iraq and Afghanistan in 2002-2004. The autopsy reports provided proof of widespread torture by US forces. A press release by ACLU announcing the deaths was immediately picked up by AP wire service making the story available to US corporate media nationwide.

A thorough check of Nexis-Lexis and Proquest library data bases showed that at least 98 percent of the daily papers in the US did not to pick up the story, nor did AP ever conduct follow up coverage on the issue.

The Associated Press is a non-profit cooperative news wire service. The AP with 3,700 employees has 242 bureaus worldwide that deliver news reports 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to 121 countries in 5 languages including English, German, Dutch, French, and Spanish. In the US alone, AP reaches 1,700 daily, weekly, non-English, college newspapers, and 5,000 radio and television stations. AP reaches over a billion people every day via print, radio, or television.

Alison Weir, Joy Ellison, and Peter Weir of the organization If Americans Knew recently conducted research on the AP's reporting of the Israel-Palestine conflict. The

study was a statistical analysis of the AP newswire in the year 2004, looking comparatively at the numbers of Israeli and Palestinian deaths reported. In 2004 there were 141 reports of Israeli deaths in AP headlines and lead paragraphs, while in reality there were only 108 Israeli deaths.

During this same period, 543 Palestinian deaths were reported by AP, while 821 Palestinians had actually been killed. The ratio of actual number of Israeli conflict deaths to Palestinian deaths in 2004 was 1:7, yet AP reported deaths of Israelis to Palestinians at a 2:1 ratio.

On February 29, 2004 AP widely reported that President Aristide was ousted by Haitian rebels and that the United States provided an escort to take him out of the country to a safe asylum. Within 24 hours an entirely different story emerged through independent radio.

Instead of the US being the supportive facilitator of Aristide's safety, Pacifica Radio News reported that Aristide was actually kidnapped by US forces. AP quickly changed their story. On March 1, 2004 an AP report by Deb Riechman said, "White House officials said Aristide left willingly and that the United States aided his safe departure. But in a telephone interview with the Associated Press, Aristide said: "No. I was forced to leave."

The last AP report of Aristide's claiming that he had been kidnapped by the US in a State Department coup was on June 27, 2004. Since then there have been 60 news articles by AP including Aristide's name. Of these stories none mentioned

Aristide's claim that he was kidnapped by the United States military. None mention the US backing of the coup, AP's bias in favor of the State Department's version of the Aristide's removal seems to be a deliberate case of AP-sanctioned forgetting.

AP is a massive institutionalized bureaucracy that feeds news stories to nearly every newspaper and radio/TV station in the United States. They are so large that top-down control of single news stories is practically impossible.

However, research clearly indicates a built-in bias favoring official US government positions. The American people absorb political decisions on skewed understandings. Without media systems that provide fair, critical and accurate reporting, democracy faces a dismal future.

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Trying to Build Bridges

Pope Benedict XVI is making his mark as a towering personality on the world stage. Last April was the first Easter that the new pontiff presided in his capacity as the head of the Roman Catholic Church.

He prayed for an end to violence in Iraq and an independent state for Palestinians.

This marks a major departure not only from the positions of his predecessor, Pope John Paul II, who died approximately this time last year, but also from his own past.

When the present Pope used to be the head of the Doctrinal branch of the Vatican, known then as Cardinal Ratzinger, he was not particularly known, to put it mildly, for his accommodating attitude toward Muslims.

In an interview to the French paper La Figaro in 2004, the pontiff had called against allowing Turkey membership of the European Union which, he

argued, was and must remain a Christian bloc. He said that Turkey must look toward the Middle East for alliances with other Muslim nations.

But since assuming this serious responsibility, he has been much more conciliatory toward other religions, and has tried to play a role in building bridges and promoting peace and love among the various peoples.

The Muslim population in Italy, though, is unsure about his attitude toward Islam. His failure to condemn ridiculing caricatures of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) by several European papers has left them skeptical about his attitude toward Muslims.

The Pope has been quietly, politely, and gradually extending a hand of goodwill to the Muslims.

Pope Benedict has assumed papacy at a time that is marked by increased indifference of the public toward religions. The Pope wants people to return to the original teachings of Christianity.

Feeling the pulse of changing times, he became the first pope to accept "erotic love" as a reality. While giving a sermon on love as a social value, he turned his emphasis from plutonic to erotic love, stating that even the latter could be "purified" to fulfill man's "highest calling."

While the standards of morality continue their drift away from Christian teachings, the Pope is trying to use the church's influence to eradicate the most deviant of social practices while bringing acceptable or condonable ones within the church's guidance.

Michael Beurleigh in his recent book Clash of Religion and Politics in Europe has this to say about present day Europe, especially the most Catholic countries of Spain and Italy:

"People are anti-clerical, blasphemous to the Christian religion but intensely protective of their Christian heritage." And since the office of pope is part of the Christian her-

itage, the position commands immense reverence and respect even when most of the teachings go unheeded.

This was so much more visible during the last days of Pope John Paul II than it is now; any Christian statesman who would have undertaken 200 official visits abroad on public money could never have survived simply by taking a plea that he was doing so to promote peace, but Pope John Paul got away with it.

Nobody could accuse the pope of seeking personal publicity. But the present Pope Benedict is a down-to-earth man, not fond of television coverage or of foreign jaunts at the expense of the church. He wants to restore the image of the church across the board.

He has seen the damage made to the reputation of the church, justified or otherwise, and appears to be genuinely motivated to make Christ and the church relevant in European life.

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Afghan Future

Karzai is now seen by many Afghans and Western diplomats as betraying the reform and nation building agenda set out by the Bonn agreement in 2001 and reverting back to rule by fiat on tribal and ethnic lines.

Since the May 29 riots that shook Kabul, he has ordered two corrupt former governors in the south, both linked to the drug trade, to rearm their illegal militias in order to fight the Taliban.

Karzai has charged that the US and the West have failed to provide enough resources and soldiers much earlier on when they were needed. "The unhappiness between us and the international community" is because, "we did not get the assistance and cooperation that is necessary for a strategy for counterterrorism," Karzai said at a June 22 press conference.

Karzai has also accused the West of ignoring the sanctuary provided to the Taliban by Pakistan, while officials say the militias are needed to beef up the beleaguered police force in the south. "There are 40 policemen to protect 80,000 people in Uruzgan, what do you want us to do?" asked a senior Afghan intelligence official.

A senior US official admitted that the police training program is three years behind schedule, but stated that by December Washington will provide \$1.2 billion to equip 60,000 police nationwide with vehicles, radios and

weapons. Afghan officers are also furious that the US will now only train and arm a 50,000-man Afghan army compared to the 70,000 soldiers first promised. Moreover, from this year, the Americans are making the cash-strapped Kabul government pay soldiers' salaries—hardly a way to win hearts and minds.

Karzai is certainly right about the West's failings. With much hoopla just four months ago, the government of British Prime Minister Tony Blair orchestrated the Afghanistan Compact, which promised a five-year, \$10.5 billion development program for Afghanistan, but which conveniently ignored the failures and false promises made by the West since 2001.

It is clear that the slow delivery of Western aid has wrecked the political will in the government, demoralized Afghans and given fuel to Taliban propaganda. Predicted one European ambassador: "The next few months will be critical."

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