

Covering for Israel

The US media and the attack on Gaza

By Shervan Sardar*

For The Electronic Intifada

<http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article10139.shtml>

A major public relations campaign is being waged over Gaza on the pages of American newspapers. In the first three days of the Israeli offensive from 28-30 December, editorials and op-eds from the major papers overwhelmingly adopted the official US and Israeli government talking points – even where they were clearly contradicted by the legal and historical record, widely available to the public. The editorial pages erroneously adopted the view that Gaza was no longer occupied, ignored numerous Israeli violations of the cease fire, and blindly asserted Israel's right of self defense regardless of what was happening on the ground. Overall, the commentary presented a disturbingly false and misleading picture of the conflict to the American public.

In all, five newspapers—*The Washington Post*, *The Washington Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Los Angeles Times* and *The New York Times*—published six editorials and seven op-eds. The same talking points were repeated for the most part, although several opinions believed the Israeli air strikes would ultimately be counterproductive.

This study was based on the first three days of editorial and op-ed coverage, but the same pattern of misinformation continued. By 6 January, the count was 39 to 8 in favor of views supporting the official US and Israeli talking points. *The Washington Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* failed to print a single opposing viewpoint during this entire period.

Occupied Gaza

The legal status of Gaza is repeatedly misrepresented in the newspapers and US media generally. While the international consensus position is that the Gaza Strip remains occupied by Israel, the editorial and op-ed pages examined collectively refused to acknowledge this view. Instead they have

*Shervan Sardar is a Washington, DC-based lawyer. He holds a MA in International Affairs from American University and can be reached at ssardar_23@comcast.net

adopted the erroneous Israeli government position that Israel “withdrew” from Gaza in 2005 and no longer retains official responsibility there. The question of an occupation has important implications for determining accountability in the conflict, the humanitarian situation in the Strip, and even the types of military action that can be taken.

The Washington Times editorial claimed that “Israel completely withdrew from Gaza in the summer of 2005 ... Hamas responded to Israel’s unilateral pullout” with rocket fire. [1] Writing in *The Wall Street Journal*, Michael B. Oren and Yossi Klein Halevi also stated that, “As in Lebanon, Israel in 2005 unilaterally withdrew to its international border with Gaza and received, instead of security, a regime dedicated to its destruction ... thousands of rockets and mortar shells [were] subsequently fired on Israeli neighborhoods.” [2] Also writing in *The Wall Street Journal*, Bret Stevens made the same argument that Israel “defeated the second intifada in 2005 and then promptly withdrew its settlements and soldiers from Gaza,” and several paragraphs later, “the last thing Israel wants is to reoccupy Gaza.” [3]

The international consensus position was stated clearly by Human Rights Watch in 2004: “The Israeli government’s plan to remove troops and Jewish settlements from the Gaza Strip would not end Israel’s occupation of the territory. As an occupying power, Israel will retain responsibility for the welfare of Gaza’s civilian population.” Human Rights Watch adds, “the test for determining whether an occupation exists is effective control by a hostile army, not the positioning of troops.” It also states, “In addition to controlling the borders, coastline, and airspace, Israel will continue to control Gaza’s telecommunications, water, electricity and sewage networks, as well as the flow of people and goods into and out of the territory.” [4]

As former UN Special Rapporteur John Dugard also explained:

“Israel has announced that it will withdraw unilaterally from Gaza. Israel intends to portray this as the end of the military occupation of Gaza, with the result that it will no longer be subject to the Fourth Geneva Convention in respect of Gaza. In reality, however, Israel does not plan to relinquish its grasp on the Gaza Strip. It plans to retain ultimate control over Gaza by controlling its borders, territorial sea and airspace. Consequently, it will in law remain an Occupying Power still subject to obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention.” [5]

The editorial and op-ed pages also failed to acknowledge for months prior to the offensive that Israel violated international law—as well as the cease fire—by refusing to allow adequate humanitarian assistance into Gaza. This is also the international consensus view at the UN and among the international human rights organizations.

According to Amnesty International, “Shortages of fuel, electricity and spare parts are causing water and sanitation and other infrastructure to deteriorate a bit more every day. Eighty percent of the wells are now functioning at reduced capacity and water supply is only available for a few hours every few

days.” Amnesty concludes, “So long as the Israeli authorities and armed forces control Gaza’s land borders, airspace, and territorial waters, they have responsibilities under international law to ensure the welfare of the population. At present, Israel is not fulfilling its responsibilities.” [6]

Human Rights Watch also stated, “Under the Fourth Geneva Convention, Israel is obliged to ensure the provision of food and medical supplies to the civilian population to the fullest extent possible. We urge your government to immediately lift restrictions on the flow into Gaza of food, medicines, and other supplies essential for the well-being of the civilian population and to cease all measures that amount to collective punishment, including disruptions of supply and fuel cuts.” [7]

Even when the editorial pages misrepresent the legal status of Gaza, none of the commentary discussed what actually happened to the Gaza economy during the first 38 years of occupation—failing to provide important context for the present circumstance. In her book *Failing Peace*, Professor Sara Roy explains that:

“By the time the second intifada broke out [in September 2000], Israel’s closure policy had been in force for seven years, leading to unprecedented levels of unemployment and poverty (which would soon be surpassed). Yet the closure policy proved so destructive only because the thirty year process of integrating Gaza’s economy into Israel’s had made the local economy dependent. As a result, when the border was closed in 1993, self-sustainment was no longer possible—the means weren’t there. Decades of expropriation and de-institutionalization had long ago robbed Palestine of its potential for development, ensuring that no economic (and hence political) structure could change.” [8]

Assessing blame

All of the editorial pages and most op-eds focused blame on Hamas for the ongoing conflict. *The Los Angeles Times* editorial argued that the Bush administration was “placing blame where it belongs.” [9] Meanwhile, *The New York Times* stated: “Hamas must bear the responsibility for ending the ceasefire,” [10] *The Washington Times* claimed that “Gaza is held hostage by Hamas.” [11] *The Washington Post* maintained that Hamas “invited the conflict by ending the six month old ceasefire and launching scores of rockets and mortar shells at Israel.” [12] Similarly, *The Wall Street Journal* stated that “Hamas refused to extend the truce past December 19 ...” and “those [movement] restrictions [in Gaza] are intended to prevent suicide bombers from blowing up Israeli citizens in cafes ... If Hamas wants its people to have freer movement, it can stop sponsoring terror killings.” [13]

Writing in *The Wall Street Journal*, Oren and Halevi asserted that the rockets fired at Israel were “expressions of a genocidal intent.” [14] Also writing in *The Wall Street Journal*, Bret Stephens stated that “In the run up to the current fighting, Hamas was warned “not to renew its rocket fire.” [15] While in *The New York Times*, Benny Morris maintained, “In November and early December, Hamas stepped up the rocket attacks and then, unilaterally, formally announced the end of the truce.” [16]

Some articles did contain marginal criticism of both sides—arguing that bombing Gaza would not change the status quo and it may even serve as a “bonanza” for Hamas. [17] *The New York Times* editorial suggested, “Israel never really lived up to its commitment to ease the punishing embargo” [18] while the editorial by *The Washington Post* argued that Israel “might have avoided this fight” by relaxing the blockade. [19] Also in *The Washington Post*, Daoud Kuttub stated, “Hamas and Israel are both to blame—each had political goals, [20] while Gershom Gorenberg believed both sides were seduced by force. [21]

“Who broke the ceasefire?”

Many of the Israeli violations of the ceasefire were ignored in the editorial pages—instead they preferred to focus blame on Hamas. Within one week of the cease fire, the UN reported that Israel had violated it seven times. According to the report, “most of the offenses committed by the [Israeli army] include shots fired by soldiers at Palestinian farmers attempting to reach their land near the border security fence.” [22] In fact, Israel announced very early into the ceasefire that it intended to fire “warning shots” at Palestinians who enter an area west of the Gaza Strip border fence, extending for several hundred meters—effectively preventing Palestinian farmers from accessing their lands. [23]

Palestinian fisherman off the coast of Gaza also faced almost daily harassment and assault from the Israeli navy. [24] The situation faced by Palestinian fisherman is underscored by the fact that “three Palestinian fishermen were shot dead over the last two years ... Numerous others have been injured, had their boats confiscated, and returned with essential equipment missing. The Israeli human rights organization B’Tselem has said in a 2007 report that the Israeli navy has also humiliated and abused many of the fishermen captured.” [25]

Furthermore, not a single editorial or op-ed mentioned the raid by Israel’s army into Gaza on 4 November, which according to independent observers and human rights organizations effectively broke the ceasefire. According to Amnesty International, “The ceasefire effectively ended after six Palestinian militants were killed by Israeli forces in Gaza on 4 November and a barrage of Palestinian rockets were launched on nearby towns and villages in the south of Israel.” [26]

Even CNN’s Rick Sanchez reported the violation of the ceasefire differently from the American newspaper op-eds/editorials:

SANCHEZ: And you know what we did? I’ve checked with some of the folks here at our international desk, and I went to them and asked, what was he talking about, and do we have any information on that? Which they confirmed, two months ago—this is back in November—there was an attack. It was an Israeli raid that took out six people.

Now, let me refer you—it's not just us. We've checked in other periodicals. ... Here we go:

"The six-month ceasefire started coming apart at the beginning of November after Israeli commandos killed a team of Hamas fighters during a raid on a tunnel they suspected was being dug for kidnapping of Israeli soldiers. That raid set off more Palestinian rocketing." That's *US News and World Report*.

I got another one for you, I believe, here. OK, this is *The Guardian*—questionable, but nonetheless: "A four-month ceasefire between Israel and Palestinian militants in Gaza was in jeopardy today"—this was actually reported when it happened—"after Israeli troops killed six gunmen in a raid in the territory." That's important to report.

And here we go, as well, from the *Economist.com*, and the point of contention here is this one. ... "The last straw came in November, when Israelis killed six gunmen it said were digging tunnels to launch a raid onto Israel, spurring Hamas to respond with a barrage of rockets." [27]

The op-ed pages also failed to mention a report by Johann Hari in *The Independent* (UK) and others which stated that Hamas was interested in seeing the ceasefire continue with several basic terms: "According to the Israeli press, Yuval Diskin, the current head of the Israeli security service Shin Bet, 'told the Israeli cabinet [on 23 December] that Hamas is interested in continuing the truce, but wants to improve its terms.' Diskin explained that Hamas was requesting two things: an end to the blockade, and an Israeli ceasefire on the West Bank. The cabinet—high with election fever and eager to appear tough—rejected these terms." [28]

Rocket fire

The editorial and op-ed pages often cite Palestinian rockets fired at Israel as a justification for Israel's bombardment of Gaza. *The Washington Times* editorial claims "Hamas responded to Israel's unilateral pullout by firing more than 6,300 mortars and rockets into Israel ..." [29] *The Wall Street Journal* editorial cites the exact same figures. However, none of the media outlets examined Israeli fire on Palestinians in Gaza. A 2007 Human Rights Watch report entitled "Indiscriminate Fire" documented that Israel has fired five to six times more missiles into occupied Gaza than the number of rockets Palestinian resistance groups launched into Israel: "From September 2005 through May 2007... the [Israeli army] fired 14,617 artillery shells into Gaza compared to 2,700 fired into Israel by Palestinian armed groups." [30]

The same Human Rights Watch report added that:

“When investigating incidents, HRW found that [Israeli army] shelling with 155mm howitzers often caused unnecessary loss of civilian life and property in violation of international humanitarian law. In one serious case, artillery was used indiscriminately, in a manner that could not properly discriminate between civilians and combatants. Other times, the evidence suggested that the attacks were disproportionate, causing expected civilian loss that was excessive compared to any anticipated military gain. The repeated use of such methods of attack, combined with the evident failure of the [Israeli army] adequately to investigate harm caused to civilians, demonstrated a failure to take all steps feasible to minimize civilian loss, in violation of [international humanitarian law].”

Intra-Palestinian violence

Hamas is also solely blamed for the violent confrontation in Gaza with Fatah and widely reported to be in control of Gaza in spite of the continuing Israeli occupation. *The Wall Street Journal* editorial asserted, “ Hamas won its internal power struggle with Mr. Abbas’s Fatah organization to control Gaza in 2006.” [31] *The Washington Times* editorial also declared that Hamas staged “a grisly June 2007 putsch against the opposition Fatah organization.” [32] Dauod Kuttab also states, “ Hamas violently seized control of Gaza.” [33]

The op-eds and editorials make no mention of the US or Israeli role in the factional fighting, including elements of Fatah which initiated a coup to remove Hamas from power which had been acquired from the Palestinian elections. The US involvement in the violence between Fatah and Hamas has been widely reported in the press— by *The Electronic Intifada* as well as *Vanity Fair* among others. [34]

Prior to the Fatah-Hamas violence, Hamas had agreed to a Saudi-brokered unity government with Fatah—which the US and Israel adamantly opposed—the details of which were discussed by Alvaro de Soto’s End of Mission report to the United Nations. [35] Notwithstanding the reports, in their respective op-eds both Gershon Gorenberg and Dauod Kuttab suggest that Hamas acceptance of a unity government would be a signal that it wanted the siege of Gaza to end.

International legitimacy

One of the issues consistently raised by the US mainstream media are the three conditions placed on Hamas for “international legitimacy.” Hamas is regularly asked to simply recognize Israel, renounce violence, and agree to past agreements. *The Los Angeles Times* editorial asserted that “Until Hamas explicitly recognizes Israel and renounces terrorism, it cannot be Israel’s partner in negotiations on a permanent solution” [36] while *The New York Times* editorial argued that “There can be no justification for Hamas’s attacks or its virulent rejectionism.” [37]

However, what the editorial pages do not say is that Israel itself fails the very same test. No mainstream Israeli official has ever actually recognized a Palestinian state or even the Palestinian right to self-determination. Even today the official Israeli maps are labeled Judea and Samaria—and they contain hundreds of illegal settlements. Israel never followed past international agreements either—certainly not UN Security Council Resolutions or even the UN Charter, which does not allow the acquisition of territory through the use of force. In addition, Israel never renounced violence against Palestinian civilians—the Israeli army has consistently and repeatedly used a host of tactics illegal under international law while claiming the right of “self-defense,” including: torture, home demolitions, sonic booms, collective punishment. None of these policies, which have been in effect since the West Bank and Gaza were occupied by Israel in 1967, were discussed in the editorials and op-ed pieces published by major US newspapers.

The Los Angeles Times contemplated the evolution of Hamas and wondered if they would sign on to the Saudi Peace Plan adopted by the Arab League in 2002 and reintroduced in 2007—which calls for a full recognition and acceptance of Israel by all Arab states and the broader Muslim world in exchange for a withdrawal to the 1967 borders and a just resolution for the Palestinian refugees. [38] However, the editorial failed to acknowledge that Israel and the US have rejected the proposal.

The proclamation of self-defense

While the editorial pages failed to acknowledge the legal status of Gaza, Israel’s failure to carry out its obligations as an occupying power in creating a severe humanitarian crisis, ignored Israel’s violations of the ceasefire for the most part and details from the ceasefire negotiations—all of the newspaper editorials immediately proclaimed their support for Israel’s right of self-defense in the first three days of the Israeli bombing offensive.

The New York Times editorial stated: “Israel must defend itself. And Hamas must bear responsibility for ending a six month ceasefire this month with a barrage of rocket attacks.” [39] *The Los Angeles Times* editorial asserted: “Israel has exercised its right of self defense.” [40] *The Washington Times* agreed: “Israel is defending itself. Damascus-based Hamas has taken Gaza’s population hostage, while staging repeated cross border attacks targeting Israeli soldiers.” [41]

The Washington Post maintained: “Israel could justifiably describe its action as one of self-defense.” [42] *The Wall Street Journal* editorial quoted US President-elect Barack Obama: “If somebody was sending rockets into my house where my two daughters sleep at night, I would do everything to stop that, and would expect Israel to do the same thing.” [43]

The op-eds were fairly similar. In the pages of *The New York Times*, Israeli historian Benny Morris argued: “Israel’s sense of the walls closing in on it has this past week led to one violent reaction.” [44] Similarly, Thomas Pruden maintained, “the Israelis finally get enough of the constant rain of rockets on

their border towns and villages, fired by Hamas ... and strike back to stop it." [45]

The proclamation that Israel has a right of self-defense did not seem to have any relationship to what was happening on the ground. In spite of Benny Morris's claim that Israel's air assault was "highly efficient," [46] Israel dropped at least 100 tons of bombs on one of the most densely packed areas in the world—killing more than 200 Palestinians and injuring several hundred in the first day of the attacks on an already decimated society. The bombardment hit Palestinian schools, homes, mosques, private businesses, government buildings, apartment buildings, and universities. [47]

Writing in *The Nation*, United Nations Special Rapporteur Richard Falk explained that much of what was happening in Gaza could not credibly be called self-defense:

The airstrikes have not only destroyed every police and security office of Gaza's elected government, but have killed and injured hundreds of civilians; at least one strike reportedly hit groups of students attempting to find transportation home from the university.

Earlier Israeli actions, specifically the complete sealing off of entry and exit to and from the Gaza Strip, have led to severe shortages of medicine and fuel (as well as food), resulting in an inability of ambulances to respond to the injured, the inability of hospitals to adequately provide medicine or necessary equipment for the injured, and the inability of Gaza's besieged doctors and other medical workers to sufficiently treat the victims.

Certainly the rocket attacks against civilian targets in Israel are unlawful. But that illegality does not give rise to any Israeli right, neither as an occupying power nor as a sovereign state, to violate international law. [48]

In some cases, the killing of Palestinian civilians and bombing of civilian infrastructure were already covered by the talking points. According to *The Wall Street Journal* editorial, "Israel's air assault has resulted in more Palestinian casualties, but that is in part because Hamas deliberately locates its security forces in residential neighborhoods." [49] Wesley Pruden made the same point in *The Washington Times*, stating that: "The Palestinians typically station their missile launching sites in residential neighborhoods, close to schools and hospitals, counting on the Israelis to avoid them." [50]

This same argument was repeatedly made in the 2006 Lebanon war—and for the most part proven false by human rights organizations. [51] Furthermore, none of the editorials/op-eds mentioned that the Israeli army is widely known to have used Palestinians civilians as human shields even well after being prohibited by the Israeli high court. [52]

Human rights organizations are not being asked to evaluate the claims of the parties to the conflict and they are being completely shut out of the major op-ed pages. The point seemed to be, as long as you say Israel has a right of self-defense or that they should “make every effort to limit harm to civilians,” it makes absolutely no difference what actually happens—and no one bothers to look.

The editorial pages also failed to seriously consider alternative motivations behind the offensive. Several opinions mentioned the upcoming Israeli elections were a factor. Oren and Halevi argued that Israel needed to restore its “deterrent power” that it had lost in Lebanon. [53] One report from an Israeli newspaper explained that Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak “instructed the Israeli Defense Forces to prepare for the operation over six months ago, even as Israel was beginning to negotiate a ceasefire agreement with Hamas. Barak maintained that although the lull would allow Hamas to prepare for a showdown with Israel, the Israeli army needed time to prepare as well.” [54] None of the opinions considered even the possibility of whether Israel itself had planned for a major confrontation with Hamas all along—using the various means at its disposal: the occupation, blockade, raids, provocation in the West Bank and false diplomacy—with a major assault timed for the waning days of the Bush Administration.

Furthermore, no one in the op-ed pages cited the 2004 International Court of Justice (ICJ) advisory opinion, which explained that Israel has a right to protect its citizens but does not have an Article 51 right of self-defense against Palestinians in occupied Gaza. [55] An occupying power is responsible for the welfare of the people under its occupation and there is no Article 51 right of self-defense in a territory that is occupied militarily.

Camp David

Another myth consistently repeated by the Washington foreign policy establishment and the mainstream media is of former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak’s “generous offer” to the late Palestinian President Yasser Arafat at the Camp David summit talks in 2000. Writing in *The Washington Post*, Jackson Diehl repeated this claim adding that “sources say he [Olmert] went well beyond what Israel agreed to at the Camp David talks of 2000, previously the closest approach to a deal” but “Abbas, like Yasser Arafat at Camp David, refused to sign on to a compromise that the world would have hailed.” [56] According to Oren and Halevi, the Oslo peace process ... ended in the fall of 2000 with Israel’s acceptance of President Bill Clinton’s proposal for near-total withdrawal from East Jerusalem and the territories.” [57]

However, Barak’s own words seem to recall it differently. He stated that “Here’s the truth: Barak did not give away a thing. I did not give away a thing. I made it clear and I am proud of it, that in exchange for an end to the conflict and giving up the right of return, 80 percent of the settlers under Israeli sovereignty, recognition of the security needs of Israel and Israel’s affinity to the holy places, we will be ready for painful, defined concessions that lead to a Palestinian state.” [58]

Interestingly enough, Barak's "generous offer" would have looked a lot like the 2005 Gaza "withdrawal" with Israel controlling the airspace, water, power, and electromagnetic sphere in the West Bank. The only difference is that more than 80 percent of the Israeli settlers would remain in complete violation of UN Security Council resolutions.

With respect to Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, the UN Security Council Resolution 465 clearly states that "all measures taken by Israel to change the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure or status of the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem ... have no legal validity and that Israel's policy and practices of settling parts of its population and new immigrants in those territories constitute a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention." [59] No mainstream US media outlet reports the UN Security Council resolutions pertaining to Israel (aside from Resolutions 242 and 338, which call for Israel's withdrawal from occupied territory in exchange for peace), the substantive findings of the ICJ decision or would dare to question US officials on the same.

Iran and the Arab world

A second *Washington Post* editorial entitled "Divided on Gaza" noted that Israel's offensive in Gaza provided Iran and its allies in Lebanon and Syria—a way to pressure Egypt, Jordan and Arab "moderates"—since the bloodshed in Gaza "will strengthen the Iranian camp at the expense of secular and Sunni forces." [60] Several articles published by mainstream US newspapers echoed this notion that "moderate" Arab states (i.e., those with leadership under US patronage) will have to play a moderating role with Hamas to accept a ceasefire. However, some of the harshest criticism from the op-ed pages focused on Iran's alleged influence with regard to Hamas.

There are repeated references to Hamas being a proxy of Iran, supported by Iran financially, and Iran as a threat to Israel. *The Washington Times* even shamefully referred to Palestinians in Gaza as "Tehran's cannon fodder." [61] Claiming that "Hamas operatives have received training from the Iranian Revolutionary Guards," this same editorial began by claiming Hamas was based in Syria—and ended by concluding that Israel is defending itself against "Iranian terrorist proxies." Meanwhile, *The Washington Post* also maintained that Iran was "Hamas's principal sponsor" and suggested the conflict in Gaza "is a distraction from the most serious threat [Israel] faces." [62]

The editorial and op-ed pages did not state that Hamas is an indigenous Palestinian Islamic movement with its roots going back more than 20 years—receiving foreign aid or training does not make it a proxy organization. This issue may be related to the same reluctance from the media to acknowledge Israel's present status as an occupying power in Gaza and West Bank, including East Jerusalem—and that the much of the conflict stems from the relationship between an illegal occupation and an occupied population.

Newspapers repeatedly assert that Palestinians are driven by proxies and that Iran seeks to destabilize the “peace process” through its influence. However, no newspaper asked the same question about US aid to Israel, which effectively underwrites the Israeli occupation to the tune of billions each year. The US aid also comes with the assurance of no international accountability before the UN—even with 200 illegal settlements and 450,000 settlers in the West Bank, violating many existing UN Security Council Resolutions.

Conclusion

Both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* ultimately apologized for their coverage of the months leading up to the Iraq war—where they followed in lockstep behind the Bush public relations machine, repeatedly failed to ask probing questions of US policies or goals, and excluded anti-war views from the debate. The implications of this failure have been staggering: the war has now seen over a million people killed, untold destruction, 5 million Iraqis displaced and greatly damaged US credibility abroad.

Yet, here we are again, as the Israeli bombs are dropping on occupied Gaza—and where there are clear reasons to challenge the legality, wisdom, and morality of such brutal attacks with widely available public information, the editorial and op-ed pages of America’s major newspapers know exactly what to do—fall in line behind official US foreign policy talking points, with an erroneous and one sided picture, avoiding serious debate at all cost.

Appendix I: Editorial/Op-ed Pages as of 6 January 2009

1. *The Washington Post*

Editorials, columns, and op-ed articles in Support of US and Israeli policies:

Editorial, "Israel Strikes," 28 December 2008.

Jackson Diehl, "Olmert's Final Failure," 29 December 2008.

Editorial, "Divided on Gaza," 30 December 2008.

Robert J. Lieber, "Hard Truths About the Conflict," 1 January 2009.

Ephraim Sneh, "Why Israel Is Bombing Gaza," 1 January 2009.

Charles Krauthammer, "Moral Clarity in Gaza," 2 January 2009.

Michael Gerson, "Defining Victory for Israel," 2 January 2009.

David Ignatius, "For Obama, a Tough Page to Turn," 4 January 2009.

Jim Hoagland, "Countering Iran in Gaza and Beyond," 4 January 2009.

Yossi Klein Halevi, "As My Son Goes to War, I Am Fully Israeli At Last," 4 January 2009.

Editorial, "Escalation in Gaza," January 4, 2009

John R. Bolton, "The Three State Option," January 5, 2009.

Anne Applebaum, "It's a War Process," January 6, 2009.

Roger Cohen, "A Conflict Hamas Caused," January 6, 2009.

Dissenting Opinions:

Daoud Kuttab, "Has Israel Revived Hamas?" 30 December 2008.

Julia Chaitin, "Darkness in Qassam-Land," 31 December 2008.

Eyad El-Sarraj, "As the Troops Enter, We Fear the Worst," 4 January 2009.

2. *The New York Times*

Editorials, columns, and op-ed articles in support of US and Israeli policies:

Editorial, "War Over Gaza," 30 December 2008.

Benny Morris, "Why Israel Feels Threatened," 30 December 2008.

"Why Israel Fights," Bill Kristol, January 5, 2009.

Editorial, "Incursion into Gaza" January 6, 2009.

David Brooks, "The Confidence War," January 6, 2009.

Dissenting opinions:

David Grossman, "Fight Fire With a Cease-Fire," 31 December 2008.

3. *The Washington Times*

Editorials, columns, and op-ed articles in support of US and Israeli policies:

Editorial, "Tehran's cannon fodder," 30 December 2008.

Wesley Pruden, "It's time once more to blame the Jews," 30 December 2008.

Paul Greenberg, "No peace in Gaza," 1 January 2009.

R. Emmett Tyrrell, "Responding to missiles," 2 January 2009.

Cal Thomas, "Gaza Nazis," 2 January 2009.

Jack Kelly, "Rocket Reckonings," 3 January 2009.

Clifford May, "Quest of Hamas," 4 January 2009.

Victor Davis Hanson, "The Gaza rules," 4 January 2009.

Editorial, "The Gaza Ceasefire Fraud" January 5, 2009.

Walid Phares "Why Tehran stokes violence in Gaza," January 5, 2009.

Dissenting opinions:

None

4. *The Wall Street Journal*

Editorials, columns, and op-ed articles in support of US and Israeli policies:

Editorial, "Israel's Gaza Defense," 29 December 2008.

Michael B. Oren and Yossi Klein Halevi, "Palestinians Need Israel to Win," 29 December 2008.

Alan Dershowitz, "Israel's Policy Is Perfectly 'Proportionate,'" 2 January 2009.

Bret Stephens, " Hamas Knows One Big Thing," 30 December 2009.

Natan Sharansky, "How the UN Perpetuates the Refugee Problem," January 5, 2009.

Brett Stephens, "An Endgame for Israel," January 6, 2009.

Dissenting opinions:

None

5. *The Los Angeles Times*

Editorials, columns, and op-ed articles in support of US and Israeli policies:

Editorial, "Israel's options in Gaza," 30 December 2008.

Jonah Goldberg, "Who're the real Nazis? The Los Angeles Times, January 6, 2009.

Dissenting opinions:

Gershon Gorenberg, "Israel, Hamas and the seduction of blind force," 30 December 2008.

Rosa Brooks, "Israel can't bomb its way to peace," 1 January 2009.

Editorial, "Broker a Cease-fire now," The Los Angeles Times, January 6, 2009.

Mousa Abu Marzook, "Hamas speaks," The Los Angeles Times, January 6, 2009.

Endnotes

- [1] Editorial, *The Washington Times*.
- [2] Michael B. Oren and Yossi Klein Halevi, "Palestinians Need Israel to Win," *The Wall Street Journal*, 29 December 2008.
- [3] Bret Stephens, " Hamas Knows One Big Thing," *The Wall Street Journal*, 30 December 2008.
- [4] Policy Brief: "Legal Aspects of Israel's Disengagement Plan Under International Humanitarian Law," Harvard Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research, 12 April 2005; Darryl Li and Lance Lattig, "Disengagement Will Change Little for Gaza," Human Rights Watch, 1 November 2004; "Israel: 'Disengagement' Will Not End Gaza Occupation," Human Rights Watch, 28 October 2004.
- [5] United Nations Human Rights Commission, "UN Special Rapporteur: Israel Will Remain Occupier After Disengagement," 29 January 2005.
- [6] Amnesty International "Gaza reduced to bare survival," 5 December 2008.
- [7] Human Rights Watch, "Letter to Olmert: Stop the Blockade of Gaza," 20 November 2008.
- [8] Sara Roy, *Failing Peace: Gaza and the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict*. London: Pluto Press, 2007: 313.
- [9] Editorial, *The Los Angeles Times*.
- [10] Editorial, *The New York Times*.
- [11] Editorial, *The Washington Times*.
- [12] Editorial, *The Washington Post*.
- [13] Editorial, *The Wall Street Journal*.
- [14] Michael B. Oren and Yossi Klein Halevi.
- [15] Bret Stephens.
- [16] Benny Morris.
- [17] Daoud Kuttab, "Has Israel Revived Hamas?" *The Washington Post*, 30 December 2008.
- [18] Editorial, *The New York Times*.
- [19] Editorial, *The Washington Post*.
- [20] Daoud Kuttab.
- [21] Gershom Gorenberg, "Israel, Hamas and the seduction of blind force," *The Los Angeles Times*, 30 December 2008.
- [22] Roi Mandel, "UN: Israel violated the truce seven times in one week," Ynet news.com, 27 June 2008.
- [23] Amos Harel, "Palestinians who approach Gaza fence will be shot, says IDF," *Haaretz*, 1 July 2008.
- [24] The Free Gaza Movement, "Gaza Fishing Boats Report, 22 October," 23 October 2008.
- [25] Mel Frykberg, "Israel besieges Gaza's fishing industry," *The Electronic Intifada*, 8 December 2008.
- [26] Amnesty International, "Civilians Must Be Protected in Gaza and Israel," 28 December 2008.
- [27] CNN Newsroom, 31 December 2008.
- [28] Johann Hari, "The true story behind this war is not the one Israel is telling," *The Independent*, 29 December 2008.

- [29] Editorial, *The Washington Times*.
- [30] Human Rights Watch, "Indiscriminate Fire: Palestinian Rocket Attacks on Israel and Israeli Artillery Shelling in The Gaza Strip," July 2007.
- [31] Editorial, *The Wall Street Journal*.
- [32] Editorial, *The Washington Times*.
- [33] Daoud Kuttab.
- [34] Ali Abunimah, "A setback for the Bush doctrine in Gaza," *The Electronic Intifada*, 14 June 2007; David Rose, "The Gaza Bombshell: Politics and Power," *Vanity Fair*, April 2008.
- [35] Alvaro de Soto, Alvaro, "End of Mission Report," United Nations Confidential Report, May 2007.
- [36] Editorial, *The Los Angeles Times*.
- [37] Editorial, *The New York Times*.
- [38] Editorial, *The Los Angeles Times*.
- [39] Editorial, "War Over Gaza," *The New York Times*, 30 December 2008.
- [40] Editorial, "Israel's options in Gaza," *The Los Angeles Times*, 30 December 2008.
- [41] Editorial, "Tehran's cannon fodder," *The Washington Times*, 30 December 2008.
- [42] Editorial, "Israel Strikes," *The Washington Post*, 28 December 2008.
- [43] Editorial, "Israel's Gaza Defense," *The Wall Street Journal*, 29 December 2008.
- [44] Benny Morris, "Why Israel feels threatened," *The New York Times*, 30 December 2008.
- [45] Wesley Pruden, "It's time once more to blame the Jews," *The Washington Times*, 30 December 2008.
- [46] Benny Morris.
- [47] Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, "The civilian targets of Israel's bombing," published on *The Electronic Intifada* on 31 December 2008.
- [48] Richard Falk, "Israel's War Crimes," *The Nation*, 29 December 2008.
- [49] Editorial, *The Wall Street Journal*.
- [50] Editorial, *The Washington Times*.
- [51] Human Rights Watch, "Israeli Indiscriminate Attacks Killed Most Civilians," 5 September 2007.
- [52] Human Rights Watch, "Israel: Stop Forcing Civilians to Assist Military Operations, Report," 15 March 2007.
- [53] Michael B. Oren and Yossi Klein Halevi.
- [54] "Disinformation, secrecy and lies: How the Gaza offensive came about," Ravid, Barak, *Haaretz*, 30 December 2008.
- [55] International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion, "Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory," 9 July 2004, paragraph 139.
- [56] Jackson Diehl, "Olmert's Final Failure," *The Washington Post*, 29 December 2008.
- [57] Michael B. Oren and Yossi Klein Halevi.
- [58] Ehud Barak on Camp David: "I Did Not Give Away a Thing," *Journal of Palestinian Studies*, Fall 2003.
- [59] United Nations Security Council Resolution 465 (1980).
- [60] Editorial, "Divided on Gaza," *The Washington Post*, 30 December 2008.
- [61] Editorial, *The Washington Times*.
- [62] Editorial, "Israel Strikes," *The Washington Post*, 28 December 2008