

**OP-EDS, LETTERS, AND UNPUBLISHED ARTICLES BY FRANK MUNLEY ON  
THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN DISPUTE**

**U.S. Should Start Keeping Promises by Making Israel Keep Its**

by Frank Munley

Roanoke Times, March 3, 2002 (Horizon section, p. 5)

In his great music drama *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, Richard Wagner tells of the twilight of the ancient gods. The tragedy results in no small way from the failure of the most powerful god, Wotan, to live up to his responsibilities as guarantor of treaties. Unfortunately, our modern-day Wotan, the U.S. government, is acting true to form. Under President Bush's leadership, the U.S. is failing to honor its international commitments to treaties on nuclear and chemical arms control, nuclear testing, global warming, missile defense, and land mine removal. But the sorriest example of U.S. negligence concerns the agonizing Palestinian-Israeli dispute.

Israel was founded in 1948 when Jews, many of them refugees from Hitler's atrocities, took over 70% of the original British Mandate of Palestine and displaced most of the native Palestinians in that area. In June 1967, Israel "preemptively" attacked its Arab neighbors and established control over the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights. The Vietnam War was in full swing at the time and government credibility around the world was suspect. Many wondered whether the attack was necessary in light of Israel's lightning victory. Concerns abated less than six months later when the U.N. Security Council, including the United States, voted for Resolution 242 which requires Israel to withdraw from conquered territory. This resolution also calls on all belligerents to recognize the territory of other states, a provision that could bring Israel the security it desires.

Many expected Israel, with the strong encouragement of its main supporter the United States, to use its occupation of Arab territories as a powerful bargaining chip to achieve the goals of Resolution 242. For years, this goal was unachievable in Palestine because the displaced Palestinians, with the support of Arab states, unwisely refused to recognize the existence of Israel in its pre-1967 boundaries. But the situation changed dramatically in 1989 when the Palestinians, under the leadership of Yasir Arafat, conceded this major point, which was reaffirmed in the Oslo Accords of 1993. The stage was set for resolution, but only if Israel were willing to cash in its bargaining chip.

In recent years, Israel has shown little willingness to sincerely negotiate,

thus giving its occupation all the earmarks of a land-grab. Extremist elements in Israel talk of their right to the land that God "gave" them, a position that has been given substance by the establishment of Israeli settlements from 1967 to the present throughout the occupied territories. The settlements utilize large amounts of precious water at the expense of deprived Palestinians. They are connected by a network of "security roads" and checkpoints that effectively reduce any remaining Palestinian land to a collection of isolated areas reminiscent of the "bantustans" that South Africa's apartheid government of the recent past reserved for blacks.

The Geneva Convention on protection of civilians forbids settlement of occupied territory, but the U.S. ignores them and perversely supports the mighty Israelis in their drive to control and ultimately colonize the land of Palestinians who have lived there for millenniums. Israel's illegal settlements are the single biggest obstacle to meaningful negotiations. Let those who claim to want a negotiated settlement seriously address this crucial issue before blame is placed on Palestinians.

The Geneva Conventions also forbid collective punishment against civilians. But Israel continues to bulldoze the houses of families of people they consider to be terrorists and to destroy ancient olive groves that have great cultural as well as economic significance for Palestinians. And again, the U.S. mutters soft criticisms of Israel more designed to present a false face to the world than to remedy the problem. Is it any wonder that Palestinians carry out desperate terrorist acts, similar to those Israel's founders carried out prior to Israel's founding in 1948?

The United States gives Israel \$3 billion per year, about evenly split between civilian and military funds. Israel is dependent on this money in part because the illegal settlements are a financial drain. Clearly, the U.S. has tremendous leverage to stop Israel's illegal actions but has done next to nothing, thus violating its solemn international commitments.

Many claim that Palestinians looked a gift horse in the mouth two years ago when Israel offered to give back somewhere from 90 to 95% of the occupied territories (it's hard to say what the exact figure is—there was never a written proposal to consider). What few realize is that return of even 98% of the land area would leave many Israeli settlements and security roads in place, making a mockery of Palestinian statehood. If further proof of insincerity were needed, Israel coupled its vague proposal with a refusal to implement a number of promises it made in the 1993 Oslo Accords, e.g., to relinquish certain villages outside of Jerusalem and cease settlement activity. To date, there has been a 50% expansion of settlements since 1993.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and his U.S. backers rail on about Palestinian terrorism and blame it for preventing negotiations. There is

much hypocrisy here in light of the massacre of more than 1000 Palestinian men, women, and children carried out with Sharon's approval when Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982, and the terrorist acts carried out by Israel's founders. In the recent escalation of violence, Palestinians have suffered a three-to-one fatality rate (including many civilians) compared to the Israelis, an unemployment rate of 40% or more, and daily suffering for the several million inhabitants of occupied territories who can travel only with greatest difficulty to hospitals, work, and family. Sharon, with U.S. help, has opposed placement of UN observers in the occupied territories, presumably because he wants a free hand to carry out his punishing policies.

As Palestinians respond more forcefully to Israel's provocations, we should remember the immediate cause of recent violence: Sharon's assassination of Palestinian leaders, a policy stupidly endorsed by President Bush. How could anyone think this would not have deleterious consequences for Israel? This kind of cloud-cuckoo-land thinking has allowed the misery of millions of Palestinians to deepen and Israel to suffer terrorist attacks.

Sharon's behavior makes it impossible to believe he has any intention of reaching a fair settlement on the occupied territories. For example, he has insisted that there be an entire week of total cessation of hostilities in the latest upsurge of violence before negotiations begin. This self-serving position gives any lunatic with a gun or bomb the power to prevent talks. Last month, Sharon himself broke the lull in fighting by assassinating Palestinian leader Raed Karmi, and in a gross exhibition of his thuggish side, he publicly wished he had killed Yasir Arafat in Lebanon in the 1980s. To top it all off, Sharon and Bush blow up out of all proportion suspected Palestinian attempts to obtain a minimal amount of weapons to counter Israel's aggression, knowing full well that the Oslo agreement not to obtain weapons was premised on meaningful peace negotiations taking place. It's absurd to think the Palestinians will lie down and let Sharon roll over them.

Israel's supporters excuse its excesses because they fear it could succumb to an attack by superior Arab forces. Let us recognize a few simple facts here. First, Israel is the world's sixth largest nuclear power (after China) and its conventional forces make it a better-than-even match for any country in the region (none of which has nuclear weapons). Second, the major Arab states of Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and even Iraq have shown a tremendous tolerance, bordering on indifference, to the fate of the stateless Palestinians who bear the brunt of Israel's expansionist sentiments. This could change, of course, if Sharon is foolish enough to implement the ethnic cleansing policy some of his right-wing followers have advocated. And third, Sharon's draconian policies have decreased Israel's security, not increased it.

While Israel's supporters greatly exaggerate its vulnerability, no country is totally secure. To assuage Israeli fears, the United States should consider establishing a security treaty (to become effective after Israel pulls back to its pre-1967 boundaries and a Palestinian state is established) pledging to come to the aid of Israel or Palestine in the event of hostile actions from surrounding states. This would be a small price to pay if it prompts the Israelis to seek a fair peace.

As a U.S. citizen, I am disturbed by President Bush's opportunistic behavior as he championed a Palestinian state after Sept. 11 to curry favor with Arabs, and then sided with Israel as soon as victory in Afghanistan seemed assured. Let us wash our hands of this dirty business of supporting Israel's bully behavior and live up to Resolution 242, the Geneva Conventions, and our heritage of human rights. To persist in our present lawless course is to risk the fate of Wagner's gods who, as hypocritical keepers of morality and justice, lost their legitimacy and sowed the seeds of their own destruction.

Frank Munley teaches physics at Roanoke College and is a member of the Union of Concerned Scientists.

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Roanoke Times Friday, May 21, 2004

### **Criticizing Israeli hard-liners is not anti-Israel**

Roanoke Times  
Friday, May 21, 2004

Munley lives in Salem and is an associate professor of physics at [Roanoke College](#).

Benedict Goodfriend ("Opinions exposed an anti-Israeli bent," May 7 Commentary page) has presented a one-sided view of the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian dispute, characterizing one writer to this newspaper as "a well-known Israel hater" and branding The Roanoke Times as "no friend of Israel."

Goodfriend should read the Israeli press, where he will find many of the "anti-Israeli" opinions he dislikes expressed by loyal Israelis who know very well who the troublemakers are: Israeli religious fanatics wanting to annex occupied territory supposedly given to them by God thousands of years ago, and Palestinian religious fanatics wanting to drive Israelis into the sea.

Comparing numbers of deaths is a distasteful exercise but is provoked by Goodfriend's challenge to "[s]how us the Israelis who target Palestinian children or dance in the streets when children are caught in the cross-fire."

B'Tselem, the Israeli human rights group, estimates that in the last four years of intensive conflict, Israel lost 74 citizens younger than 18 years old and 20 below 10 years of age. In this

same period, Palestinians lost 460 people younger than 18 and 77 younger than 10. And with half the Israeli population, the per capita rate of Palestinian deaths below 10 years of age is almost eight times Israel's.

Does it really make any difference whether Israel does or does not "target" the children they kill? Sadly, there is documentation that some Israeli security forces have done exactly that.

Goodfriend opposes pressuring Israel to negotiate because he believes Palestinians rejected a very generous offer from Israel at Camp David in summer, 2000. But those negotiations resumed in Taba, Egypt, at the end of that year and came tantalizingly close to completion. One thing that changed between Camp David and Taba was the map offered by Israel. The Camp David version torpedoed an agreement because it cut the West Bank into an unviable collection of disconnected areas.

Goodfriend should also know why the Taba negotiations aborted: Ariel Sharon was elected Israeli prime minister.

Sharon and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat are two of a kind in many ways. But unlike Sharon, Arafat "walked the walk and talked the talk" when he agreed to the Oslo Accords of 1993 and recognized the right of Israel to exist. And unlike Sharon, Arafat and his worthy Israeli counterpart Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin did not use terrorist actions on either side as an excuse to stop the peace process. (For this, Rabin was assassinated by an Israeli extremist.)

Nonetheless, Goodfriend praises Sharon for his plan to "disengage from the Palestinians," but ignores the fact that the disengagement is mainly in the Gaza Strip and is coupled with an intent to continue occupying and eventually annexing large areas of the West Bank. This will make a viable Palestinian state impossible, as a Roanoke Times editorial of May 4 properly pointed out.

Goodfriend says the right of Palestinians to return to Israeli lands they were driven from more than 50 years ago is a deal breaker because it would be "a negation of the very founding of Israel, and would be suicide on the part of Israel to allow." He is correct, but only if this right is unrestricted.

Artful diplomacy recognizes that this deal-breaker cuts both ways, because no agreement will ever be reached without a symbolic recognition of the grievances of Palestinians driven from their homes in 1948. The Geneva Plan floated in recent months by a coalition of former Israeli and Palestinian officials proposes the return of a modest number of Palestinian refugees to their homes in Israel.

This would go far to negate the ugly characterization of pre-1948 Palestine as a "land without people for a people without land." Arafat views the plan favorably, but Sharon and members of his Likud party reject it. A limited right of return must be kept on the table to save face for Palestinians and their negotiators, who know a full-scale return is unrealistic.

The United States currently supports Israel to the tune of more than \$3 billion a year. This support carries with it an obligation of U.S. citizens to draw distinctions between hard-line right-

wingers in Israel and more moderate political elements who have shown in the past that they can successfully negotiate with Palestinians.

It is high time for Israel's supporters to resist leveling cheap "anti-Israel, anti-Semitic" charges against anyone who dares to question the ruinous policies of Israel's hard-line Likud party.

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### **Straightening the record on Israeli opinions**

Roanoke Times  
June 27, 2004

Steven Kranowski (June 17 commentary, "Arafat gave peace no chance"), attempting to support Benedict Goodfriend's commentary (May 7, "Opinions exposed an anti-Israeli bent"), said Goodfriend "astutely pointed out that the Palestinians passed up a golden opportunity for peace when they rejected Israel's extremely generous offer of territorial concessions at the 2000 summits in Camp David and Taba."

But Goodfriend never mentioned Taba. If Kranowski misrepresented someone he agrees with, it's no surprise that he completely mangled my response to Goodfriend (May 21 commentary, "Criticizing Israeli hard-liners is not anti-Israel").

Kranowski, referring to Camp David and Taba, says, "Munley's assertion that this [Palestinian rejection] was because Israel's offer 'cut the West Bank into an unviable collection of disconnected areas' is pure fiction."

I said quite the opposite, by distinguishing sharply between the maps offered by Israel at Camp David and Taba.

The Taba map, offered five months after the unacceptable July 2000 Camp David one, was never rejected by Palestinians who, together with Israel's then-Prime Minister Ehud Barak and the Clinton administration, were eager to continue talking.

Too bad Kranowski is afraid to admit what was lost when Israel's right-wing Taba-trashing Ariel Sharon was elected prime minister in February 2001.

FRANK MUNLEY  
SALEM

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## **The Israeli settlements are key**

Roanoke Times  
Sunday, June 24, 2007

Frank Munley

Munley lives in Salem and is a Roanoke College associate professor of physics.

Forty years ago, the Arab-Israeli Six-Day War ended with Israel controlling wide swaths of Arab territory. "Good move," I thought at the time, believing that control of the territories would be a great bargaining chip for Israel to win security within its 1967 borders and, in return, do justice to the people it displaced when it was founded in 1948.

But a bargaining chip is useless unless cashed in. After the war, Israel foolishly listened to Jewish extremists who claimed God gave them "Judea and Samaria," roughly today's West Bank. The "Allon Plan" to initiate settlement activity in the West Bank was unveiled two months after the war, thereby debasing the integrity of Israel's case for security with an illegal land grab.

Only the Sinai was returned in 1979 to Egypt, which had enough military power to make the bargain useful.

E. Cabell Brand's April 8 commentary on Jimmy Carter's book "Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid" mentioned settlements as a barrier to peace. His commentary evoked pro-Israel responses by Rabbi Kathy Cohen (May 7) and Gerald McDermott (May 20). Incredibly, both respondents avoid the crucial settlement issue.

For example, McDermott credits Israel for entering into the Oslo accords, but ignores the fact that from 1993-2001 (from the start of Oslo to the end of effective negotiations), Israel's settler population in the West Bank and Gaza more than doubled from 116,000 to 257,000. (These figures ignore East Jerusalem and neighboring areas, which push the total to 400,000).

This expansion, plus Israel's refusal to seriously implement Oslo, contributed significantly to its failure and eruption of the second Intifada.

McDermott blames the failure of talks in 2000 on the Palestinian Authority, but reality differs. Negotiations continued into 2001 in Taba, Egypt, and both Israeli and Palestinian negotiators agreed they

were on track for a final settlement. Impending elections prompted Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak to stop negotiations. Barak lost to Ariel Sharon, who "never missed an opportunity to miss an opportunity for peace" and, true to form, refused to continue negotiations upon taking office.

McDermott claims it is a myth that Israel's occupation is illegal under U.N. Resolution 242 because (1) the context for Israeli withdrawal is recognition of a right to exist and secure boundaries; and (2) the withdrawal provision refers not to "the territories," but only "territories."

On the first point, McDermott seems to imply that occupation is legal absent the achievement of secure boundaries and recognition. But Resolution 242 does not make the implementation of (1) a precondition for (2) or vice versa, an ambiguity used many times by both sides to justify their claims.

On McDermott's second point, everyone familiar with the conflict knows that a final resolution needn't conform exactly to the pre-1967 borders, because minor adjustments, as in the Taba negotiations of 2000-01, might suit both parties. That is the real significance of the missing "the."

Resolution 242 is not ambiguous on settlements, because one of its motivating principles is given as "emphasizing the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war." By ignoring illegal settlement policy, McDermott is left with only a compromised case for the legality of Israel's military occupation.

Many Israeli apologists cite the Gaza mess as proof that Palestinians cannot exercise responsible government. A self-fulfilling prophecy, because after the democratic election of the Hamas government, the U.S. and the European Union, in high hypocritical dudgeon, accused Hamas of terrorism and subverted the government by blocking international funds and ignoring Hamas's cease-fire and pledge to adhere to all previous agreements (which implies recognizing Israel's existence without saying it outright).

Recent history is replete with examples of terrorist tigers -- for example, former Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin -- changing their stripes when offered a fair bargain.

On Carter's use of the word "apartheid," McDermott says, "Discrimination should never be condoned. But neither should it be called apartheid." But apartheid, the former policy of Israel's close

ally South Africa, is much closer to the truth given Israel's network of Israeli-only roads and settlements that fragment the West Bank and immobilize its citizens.

McDermott mischaracterizes the apartheid controversy when he talks about the benefits of Arab citizenship in Israel proper, because Carter emphasized he was referring only to the occupied territories.

Israel is its own worst enemy regarding settlements. McDermott and Cohen would be genuine advocates of a just and equitable peace if they demanded that Israel dismantle all settlements without delay.

### **It's time the U.S. stood up for Palestine's rights**

#### **Roanoke Times**

Monday, January 19, 2009

"What would you do if Mexico were shooting rockets at the U.S.?" This is the kind of bumper-sticker rhetoric that passes for serious argument to justify Israel's attack on Gaza. Sad, when the counter-argument is so obvious and relevant: What would you do if all your borders and air space were totally controlled by a foreign power, preventing commercial activity and causing anemia and malnutrition?

Israel claims that Hamas' rocket fire is unprovoked. Get serious. Israel's 41-year occupation and settlement activity and its dictatorial control of Gaza's borders are extreme provocations against which Palestinians can attempt only a weak and ineffective defense.

Israel's apologists studiously avoid any mention of Israel's ever-expanding settlements, even though they undermine the Palestinian right to statehood. Then to its shame, mighty Israel wails about Hamas's refusal to recognize Israel's existence, but refuses to grant the same right of viable nationhood to Palestinians -- and the U.S. government's suckers fall for it.

The cynical Israeli-U.S. game is simple: Demonize Hamas to strengthen its extreme elements, making demonization a self-fulfilling prophecy.

It's high time the U.S. stood for Palestinian rights, for Israel's secure existence in its pre-1967 boundaries, and against Israel's theft of Palestinian land occupied since 1967.

FRANK MUNLEY  
SALEM

**NOTE:** The following article, published OpEdNew, is my answer to the unanimous US Senate resolution giving carte blanche support to Israel's December 2008-January 2009 disproportionate attack on Gaza. I have counterposed each step of the resolution with my own corrections (in italics, in square brackets). How could the resolution be so immune from the facts of the case? . The unanimous support the resolution received shows how uncritical and beholden US politicians are to Israel.

## OpEdNews

Original Content at <http://www.opednews.com/articles/Bringing-balance-to-the-U-by-Frank-Munley-090126-130.html>

**February 2, 2009**

## **Bringing balance to the U.S. Senate's resolution on Gaza**

*By Frank Munley*

The 8 January 2009 U.S. Senate Resolution on Gaza was extremely one-sided to the point that it benefits no one but just exacerbates the situation. I have interspersed my own comments to provide badly needed balance to the resolution.

### **SENATE NON-BINDING RESOLUTION ON THE RIGHT OF ISRAEL TO DEFEND ITSELF, 8 JANUARY 2009**

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111TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

Recognizing the right of Israel to defend itself against attacks from Gaza and reaffirming the United States' strong support for Israel in its battle with Hamas, and supporting the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. REID(for himself and Mr. MCCONNELL) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee \_\_\_\_\_

#### RESOLUTION

Recognizing the right of Israel to defend itself against attacks from Gaza and reaffirming the United States' strong support for Israel in its battle with Hamas, and supporting the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

*[Recognizing that this Senate resolution is extremely one-sided and detracts from the pursuit of peace between Israel and Hamas, and recognizing that the resolution fails to acknowledge the*

*need of Gazan citizens for self defense against Israel's long-standing destructive embargo and its November violations of the six-month cease fire which ended on December 19;]*

Whereas Hamas was founded with the stated goal of destroying the State of Israel;

*[Whereas Hamas, upon being elected to lead the Palestinian government, offered to negotiate a long-term cease fire and agreement with Israel based on UN Resolutions 242 and 338;]*

Whereas Hamas has been designated by the Secretary of State as a Foreign Terrorist Organization;

*[Whereas there have been many "terrorists" who ended up in negotiations with the U.S. and its allies,*

*[Whereas U.S.-designated "terrorist" tigers can and do change their stripes when the U.S. and other western allies are forced by events to abandon their narrow and unproductive ("It's a privilege for you to be allowed to talk with us") concept of their own national interests and diplomacy, examples being: the African National Congress (long considered a terrorist group by the U.S.) led by Nelson Mandela (who until July, 2008, was still classified by the U.S. as a terrorist!), Mao Zedung, Mikhail Gorbachev, Mohmmar Qadaffi, Northern Ireland's Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams, Vietnam's man in Cambodia Hun Sen, and irony of ironies, the Palestinian political faction Fatah, long reviled by the U.S. and Israel but now the darling of both Israel and the U.S., contra Hamas;]*

Whereas Hamas has refused to comply with the requirements of the Quartet (the United States, the European Union, Russia, and the United Nations) that Hamas recognize Israel's right to exist, renounce violence, and agree to accept previous agreements between Israel and the Palestinians;

*[Whereas Israel, by effectively refusing to accommodate the existence of an independent and viable Palestinian state, has made "existence" a negotiating point, especially since the Palestinians got nothing but an expansion of Israeli settlements, additional restrictive checkpoints, and non-compliance with international law following the Palestinian Liberation Organization's recognition of Israel's existence as a Jewish state in the 1993 Oslo Agreement;[1]*

*Whereas the Israelis have never even come close to renouncing violence, whether of the hard type executed by traditional weapons of war or the soft type executed by embargo, bottleneck checkpoints, and daily humiliation of Palestinians in occupied territories, all of which amount to an attempt by Israel to carry out slow-motion ethnic cleansing of occupied territories; Whereas the final border is a negotiable issue, and by UN Resolution 242 of 1967 the final border will be close to the pre-1967 boundary with adjustments agreeable to both parties, a position which Hamas has offered as a basis for negotiations and cease fire but Israel, in its own unenlightened self interest, rejected in favor of continuing to expand settlements on the West Bank;]*

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Whereas, in June 2006, Hamas crossed into Israel, attacked Israeli forces and kidnapped Corporal Gilad Shalit, whom they continue to hold today;

*[Whereas Israel continues to imprison almost ten thousand Palestinians, many innocent even under Israeli law, and continues to carry out extralegal assassinations of Hamas government officials and has imprisoned legitimately elected Hamas members of the Palestinian parliament;]*

Whereas Hamas has launched thousands of rockets and mortars since Israel dismantled settlements and withdrew from Gaza in 2005;

*[Whereas Israel withdrew ground troops but did not disengage from Gaza and continues to this day, in a most odious way, to control its seacoast, its land borders, and airspace, which by any meaningful definition is an "occupation" that brings with it by international law the responsibility to take care of those dominated by this control;]*

Whereas Hamas has increased the range of its rockets, reportedly with support from Iran and others, putting additional large numbers of Israelis in danger of rocket attacks from Gaza;

*[Whereas the U.S. has armed Israel to the teeth so it can project its military power thousands of miles compared to the 20 or so miles achievable by Hamas's notoriously inaccurate missiles; [Whereas the U.S. has accepted and most likely assisted Israel's development of nuclear weapons (acquired in 1967 or before) in violation of the U.S.'s responsibilities under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, thus making Israel a superpower towering far above anything any Palestinian group or Middle Eastern country could muster against it;]*

Whereas Hamas locates elements of its terrorist infrastructure in civilian population centers, thus using innocent civilians as human shields;

*[Whereas Israel's military infrastructure exists in the hearts of Tel Aviv and many other Israeli cities, close to civilians, which inevitably exposes Israeli civilians to attack;*

*[Whereas Israel neglected the welfare of its own citizens by encouraging the development of cities such as Sderot near contested border areas, knowing their settlement policies would ensure decades of strife with Palestinians with unavoidable danger to their near-border civilians;*

*[Whereas Hamas's civilian governmental offices are located where they must be, among the populated areas of Gaza, a region so small (about 150 square miles, twice Washington, DC's area with twice DC's population) that separation of Hamas's government facilities of any kind is*

*not practical and indeed would not be necessary if Israel were not occupying and controlling Gaza;]*

Whereas Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said in a statement on December 27, 2008, that “[w]e strongly condemn the repeated rocket and mortar attacks against Israel and hold Hamas responsible for breaking the ceasefire and for the renewal of violence there”;

*[Whereas Israel broke the June, 2008 six-month cease-fire the day it was signed by aggressing against Gaza through a continuation of its rigid control of Gaza's borders and, on November 4 (U.S. time), by executing a ground incursion into Gaza and extralegally assassinating six Hamas men, all prior to Hamas violation of the cease fire with systematic rocket attacks;]*

Whereas, on December 27, 2008, Prime Minister of Israel Ehud Olmert said, “For approximately seven years, hundreds of thousands of Israeli citizens in the south have been suffering from missiles being fired at them. . . . In such a situation we had no alternative but to respond. We do not rejoice in battle but neither will we be deterred from it. . . . The operation in the Gaza Strip is designed, first and foremost, to bring about an improvement in the security reality for the residents of the south of the country.”;

*[Whereas the people of Gaza have been suffering mightily under the Israeli embargo of humanitarian goods and services for three or more years, and have suffered for more than 41 years under Israeli military occupation, Israeli theft/settlement of their territory, and daily humiliation from Israeli restrictions on everyday movements;*

*[Whereas Gaza residents have the legitimate right of self defense against Israeli aggression;]*

Whereas, on January 2, 2009, Secretary of State Rice stated that “ Hamas has held the people of Gaza hostage ever since their illegal coup against the forces of President

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Mahmoud Abbas, the legitimate President of the Palestinian people. Hamas has used Gaza as a launching pad for rockets against Israeli cities and has contributed deeply to a very bad daily life for the Palestinian people in Gaza, and to a humanitarian situation that we have all been trying to address”;

*[Whereas Israel has held the people of Gaza prisoners ever since the Israel's departure from Gaza;*

*[Whereas the attempt of the U.S., Israel, and Palestinian President Abbas to stage a coup against Hamas in Gaza in June, 2006 backfired by prompting a preemptive countercoup by Hamas that left Hamas in power;][2]*

Whereas the humanitarian situation in Gaza, including shortages of food, water, electricity, and adequate medical care, is becoming more acute;

*[Whereas shortages of food, fuel, water, electricity, and adequate medical care are nothing new but have been produced by Israel's blockade, illegal under international law, constituting collective punishment against the people of Gaza;]*

Whereas Israel has facilitated humanitarian aid to Gaza with over 500 trucks and numerous ambulances entering the Gaza Strip since December 26, 2008;

*[Whereas the inflow of food, water, medical supplies and other necessities amounts in normal times to 700 trucks per day, and Israel violated the 19 June 2008 cease fire agreement by agreeing only to 15% of the normal cross-border traffic, resulting in acute malnutrition of Gaza's population on a scale equal to that in the poorest nations of the southern Sahara;][3]*

Whereas, on January 2, 2009, Secretary of State Rice stated that it was “Hamas that rejected the Egyptian and Arab calls for an extension of the tahadiya that Egypt had negotiated” and that the United States was “working toward a cease-fire that would not allow a reestablishment of the status quo ante where Hamas can continue to launch rockets out of Gaza. It is obvious that that cease-fire should take place as soon as possible, but we need a cease-fire that is durable and sustainable”; and

*[Whereas Hamas rejected an extension of the cease fire because Israel, in violation of international law prohibiting collective punishment, would agree to only allow 15% of the normal cross-border supply traffic if the cease fire were extended, which would have left the population continuing to struggle under conditions of extreme deprivation;][4]*

*[Whereas the United States cared not to push for a cease fire that would impose on Israel stringent sanctions should they abuse their control of Gaza's border or should they gratuitously use extralegal military force against Hamas officials and, "collaterally," against innocent Gaza citizens;]*

Whereas the ultimate goal of the United States is a sustainable resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that will allow for a viable and independent Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with the State of Israel, which will not be possible as long as Israeli civilians are under threat from within Gaza:

*[Whereas the United States under George Bush prejudiced negotiations when Bush acceded to Israel's theft of Palestinian land by claiming Israel's right to retain "large" settlements, even though West Bank settlements, all illegal under international law, are connected by a network of Israeli-only roads that break the West Bank into a collection of non-contiguous "Bantustans," thereby making a mockery of Bush's proclaimed desire for a "viable" Palestinian state;]*

Now, therefore, be it

1     *Resolved*, That the Senate—  
 2           (1) expresses vigorous support and unwavering  
 3     commitment to the welfare, security, and survival of

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1     the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state  
 2     with secure borders, and recognizes its right to act  
 3     in self-defense to protect its citizens against acts of  
 4     terrorism;

*[Now therefore be it*

*Resolved, That those truly interested in peace and justice for Palestinians and Israelis acknowledge that:*

*[(1) Israel's government, having never declared Israel's borders, a ruse by which it has rationalized its theft of land on the West Bank, Gaza, and the Golan Heights, must with all due haste dismantle all settlements in occupied territories, must carry out its responsibilities as an occupying power, must reject policies of collective punishment, and must work towards the rapid and complete end of its military occupation so that Palestinians will be left with the material conditions required for the establishment of a viable state and Israel will be left with a safe and secure state roughly in its pre-1967 boundaries;]*

5           (2) reiterate that Hamas must end the rocket  
 6     and mortar attacks against Israel, recognize Israel's  
 7     right to exist, renounce violence, and agree to accept  
 8     previous agreements between Israel and the Pal-  
 9     estinians;

*[(2) reiterate that Israel must end its aerial bombardments and missile attacks against Gaza that have killed innocent Palestinians in numbers far beyond Israel's combined civilian and military war deaths, recognize Palestine's right to exist in secure borders and airspace without threat from Israel, and recognize that Israel must live up to its agreements struck at Oslo and adhere to UN resolutions, particularly 242 and 338, and any other provisions which will bring about a viable Palestinian state outside Israel's pre-1967 borders, with adjustments agreeable to both parties;]*

10          (3) encourages the President to work actively to  
 11     support a durable, enforceable, and sustainable

12 cease-fire in Gaza, as soon as possible, that prevents  
 13 Hamas from retaining or rebuilding the capability to  
 14 launch rockets and mortars against Israel and allows  
 15 for the long term improvement of daily living condi-  
 16 tions for the ordinary people of Gaza;

*[(3) encourage President Obama to demand that Israel stop using U.S.-supplied weaponry, in violation of both U.S. law and agreements between Israel and the U.S., for the purpose of killing, oppressing, and humiliating Palestinians through occupation or attack, and to eliminate all U.S. aid to Israel if Israel refuses to immediately begin dismantling all settlements outside of its pre-1967 boundaries, which are illegal under international law;]*

17 (4) believes strongly that the lives of innocent  
 18 civilians must be protected and all appropriate meas-  
 19 ures should be taken to diminish civilian casualties  
 20 and that all involved should continue to work to ad-  
 21 dress humanitarian needs in Gaza;

*[(4) believe strongly that the U.S. government's unconditional support of extreme elements in Israel (unfortunately represented by all three of Israel's major political parties) is counter to any professed U.S. desire to address humanitarian needs in Gaza and is not in the interests of the U.S., of Israel, or of Palestinians, and that such unconditional support has contributed to Israel's disproportionate responses to Palestinian resistance, to Israel's continuous expansion of settlements in the West Bank, and to the continuation of Israel's brutal apartheid-like occupation that has worsened in recent years;]*

22 (5) supports and encourages efforts to diminish  
 23 the appeal and influence of extremists in the Pales-  
 24 tinian territories and to strengthen moderate Pal-  
 5

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1 estinians who are committed to a secure and lasting  
 2 peace with Israel; and

*[(5) support and encourage not just moderate elements in the Palestinian territories and in Hamas, but also moderate forces in Israeli politics, by opposing Israel's militaristic and illegal attacks and its humiliating occupation policies against Palestinians, and opposing also any military actions of Hamas and other Palestinian parties against Israel that can be proved to go beyond the legitimate right of self defense; and]*

3 (6) reiterates its strong support for United  
 4 States Government efforts to promote a just resolu-  
 5 tion of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a seri-  
 6 ous and sustained peace process that leads to the  
 7 creation of a viable and independent Palestinian  
 8 state living in peace alongside a secure State of

## 9 Israel

*[(6) reiterate their strong support for United States Government efforts to promote a just resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a serious and sustained peace process with the full realization that the creation of a viable and independent Palestinian state living in peace with Israel requires that Israel be prepared to abjure all intent to occupy land taken over in the 1967 and to immediately begin to dismantle all settlements on that land.]*

[1] *As the great Israeli journalist and patriot Uri Avnery put it in 2006 shortly after Hamas won election and the U.S. and Israel made recognition of existence a sine qua non, "When a state 'recognizes' another state, it is a formal recognition, the acknowledgement of an existing fact. It does not imply approval. The Soviet Union was not required to recognize the existence of the USA as a capitalist state. On the contrary, Nikita Khrushchev promised in 1956 to "bury" it. The US certainly did not dream of recognizing at any time the right of the Soviet Union to exist as a communist state."*

[2] *See David Rose, "The Gaza Bombshell," Vanity Fair, April, 2008, available at [click here](#) Rose carefully documents how plans for a coup agasint Hamas went awry.*

[3] *See Jimmy Carter, "An Unnecessary War," Washington Post, 8 January, 2008, available at [click here](#)*

[4] *See Carter, ibid.)*

Author's Bio: I am a retired physics professor. I have been concerned about the Palestinian-Israeli situation for years and have authored a number of op ed pieces on the subject, often in response to other pieces giving a distorted picture of the Middle East. As a citizen of the USA, I am concerned that my government is totally one-sided on the issue. I am also concerned specifically about global warming, and more generally about the foreign policy implications of continuing to use fossil fuels.

### **Response to a Roanoke College colleague**

September 9, 2006

You state in your recent letter: "Then we have Lebanon. I part with liberals in that I think Israel's short-term survival depends upon their overreaction to Islamic threats." Quite the contrary. It is Israel's disproportionate responses, one example being the brutalizing of Palestinians, that have earned it the enmity of surrounding populations if not governments. Israel has nukes, but surely you agree that using them against Lebanon would have been disproportionate. Proportionality is a real issue deserving serious consideration, especially since one element of it was Olmert and Peretz's attempt to show their toughness despite their non-military experience.

Here's the context. Hamas (not the only resistance group in the occupied territories, I hasten to add) suspended actions against Israel about a year or more ago. Weeks before the June 25 kidnapping of the Israeli soldier in Gaza, Israel resurrected its rotten policy of extralegal assassinations (and in the process killed a number of innocents, including a party of 8 on a Gaza beach). And just a day before the Gaza kidnapping, Israel kidnapped (oh sorry, "captured") two

civilians. How the kidnapping of two soldiers (more justifiable than kidnapping civilians), which has happened in the past, could translate into an attack on Lebanon that resulted in ten times as many Lebanese fatalities compared to Israeli, staggers me, especially when Israel has 9,000 Palestinian prisoners, a smaller but significant number of Lebanese prisoners, and denies these prisoners procedures of due process violated by no other democratic industrialized country except the US which has taken its example from Israel. Remember that earlier kidnappings of Israeli soldiers lead to prisoner (or military corpse) exchanges, not over-the-top outbursts of violence by Israel.

Is Israel's existence threatened? Hardly. It is the predominant conventional military power in the region, the sole nuclear power, and has the world's biggest and most powerful nuclear power behind it. Israel has peaceful relations with a number of Arab countries including, most importantly, Egypt and Jordan. I don't know of anyone (including my Palestinian acquaintances) who doesn't accept (if only *de facto*) Israel's existence in its pre-1967 boundary. And this is the real issue. Israel has poisoned the waters of diplomacy by its colonialist land-grab policies in the occupied territories, policies now endorsed for the first time by an American administration. It won't seriously negotiate back to the 1967 borders because it believes it has a right to the occupied territories (God-given for Israeli and American wackos). Colonialism is dead, but Israel doesn't realize it. (On this point, see the excellent article, "The country that wouldn't grow up" by Tony Judt (a Jew himself) in the 5 April 2006 issue of the Israeli newspaper Haaretz).

I don't blame Iran for wanting to develop nuclear power (and with it, of course, the possibility of nuclear weapons). Iran is correct that it has the right to develop nuclear technology under the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The US and Israel have railed against Iran for years, and Bush is calling explicitly for regime change. It's all power politics. The US does not want anyone else to have true influence in the Middle East. As for Ahmadinejad, big deal that he wants to exterminate Israel. Didn't Khrushchev say "We will bury you"? Weren't the Chinese our mortal enemy for years? Didn't the PLO want to exterminate Israel? Iran, flanked by US forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, has legitimate security concerns. As Joseph Cirincione said on the radio last night, it's all about nationalism (as was Vietnam), not expansionism or Islamic fascism, but the US and Israel are too stupid to realize it. Bluster and threats won't work. Once the powerful parties agree to real negotiations, tensions ease and progress can be made.

Israel by its "overreactions" is its own worst enemy. Where is Yitzhak Rabin now that we need him?

## **The Roanoke Times, June 18, 2010**

### **Israel is imposing punishment**

Poor Israel. Its moderates are in political obscurity, while a right-wing nuclear-armed party controls the fate of the country and leads it to ruin. Israel (enabled by foolish U.S. Zionists) perpetrated Operation Cast Lead in 2008-09 that killed 1,400 Palestinians in Gaza. Cast Lead was roundly criticized for human rights violations by the head of the U.N. investigative

commission, eminent South African jurist Richard Goldstone, a professed lover of Israel.

Israel's right-wingers recently inflicted a self-defeating attack on a flotilla whose mission was to heighten international awareness of Israel's brutal blockade of Gaza (no chocolate, no coriander, no notebooks, etc.).

A recently leaked Israeli document proves that the purpose of the blockade is not, as it claims, to prevent weapons shipments to Gaza's Palestinian rulers, the legitimately elected Islamist political group Hamas, but to discredit Hamas by collectively punishing the Gazan population in violation of Geneva Conventions for occupying powers.

New York Sen. Chuck Schumer parrots Israeli apologists who are selling the Big Lie that Gazans deserve the blockade because they elected Hamas. Hamas was elected throughout the occupied Palestinian territories. But don't tell Schumer and friends -- they might encourage Israel to blockade Palestine's West Bank.

FRANK MUNLEY  
SALEM

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## **The Roanoke Times**

**Monday, August 2, 2010**

### **Israel is not a secular state**

Frank Munley  
*Munley taught physics and lives in Salem.*

Jerome Schleifer has attempted to shed some much-needed light on the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian dispute ("Going 'home' is not an option; so now what?" July 24 commentary). Unfortunately, he stumbles on the fallacy that there is even a semblance of symmetry between the two sides ("both sides are right and both wrong," he says).

Worse, he worries that Israel "accedes to Palestinian demands" as if the danger facing Israel comes from the stateless and occupied Palestinians rather than its true source -- Israel's own religious and nationalist extremists. Schleifer seems oblivious to the fact that Israel is a nuclear-armed military powerhouse and enjoys the uncritical support of the U.S. government that cowers before Israel's bully propagandists.

Schleifer's centerpiece in his case is the convenient foil of journalist Helen Thomas' ill advice for Jews to clear out of Israel/Palestine. He wonders if she has worldwide support when, in fact, Palestinians, even the ever-villainized Hamas, have made it clear they can live with Israel in its pre-1967 boundaries if a viable sovereign Palestinian state is recognized.

Among Schleifer's many errors, he says "apparently Israel is a secular nation." This is manifestly untrue. Israel was founded in 1948 as a Jewish state, which is one reason why Albert Einstein -- Jew, Zionist and scientist extraordinaire -- presciently refused to accept the new

country's presidency.

To the Jewish state's shame, it blatantly discriminates against its non-Jewish citizens, Muslim and Christian alike. In recent months, Israel's religious extremists, ever-ascendant in political power, succeeded in legally convicting an Arab citizen of Israel for deceit rape because he supposedly told an Israeli woman he was Jewish.

Even Israel's Jewish citizens are not immune from abuses of religious zealotry. Civil marriages are prohibited; women are ritually impure and prohibited from officiating at ceremonies at the Wailing Wall; there are intolerant efforts (mimicking Muslim extremists) to control female dress on Israel's beaches; a law is being pushed in the Knesset (Israel's parliament) forbidding certain converted Jews from Israeli citizenship. It doesn't sound like secularism to me.

Like most pro-Israel sympathizers, Schleifer ignores the most contentious issue in the dispute: Israel's land-grab settlement policies in conquered Palestinian territory, declared illegal again and again by the U.N. on the basis of the long-standing Geneva Conventions governing occupying powers.

Zealots dominate the policy and justify the theft with the nonsensical claim that "God promised it to us." But Schleifer says, incorrectly, that Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat backed out of the 1993 Oslo Agreement, even though it was Israel that mocked the agreement by doubling its settlements in occupied Palestinian territory from 1993 to 2001.

Israel's politics took another turn to the right in February 2001 with the election of militarist Ariel Sharon, earlier found complicit by an Israeli court in the massacre of a thousand or so innocent Palestinians in Lebanon in 1982. Sharon, not Arafat, immediately broke off negotiations upon his election. Since then, Israel has swung even farther to the right, prompting respected Israeli commentators, such as Uri Avnery, Neve Gordon and Gideon Levy, to worry that Israel is on the verge of fascism.

Israel's only hope for long-term survival is a two-state solution along the lines of U.N. Resolution 242. The alternative, a one-state solution, means the end of Israel, as its previous prime minister Ehud Olmert and many others recognize. Schleifer contributes nothing to Israel's survival with his well-meaning but poorly-researched presentation that culminates in his pitiful moan: "who's to bless and who's to blame?" He would do well to educate himself about the situation by reading Israeli news sources like Ha'aretz and reports from Israeli human rights organization like B'Tselem and Gush Shalom and the American Jewish newsweekly The Forward.

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<http://www.roanoke.com/editorials/commentary/wb/318475>

## **The Roanoke Times**

**Monday, December 31, 2012**

# **Might does not make right -- or bring peace**

**By Frank Munley**

Munley is a retired physics professor and lives in Salem.

Famed linguist and political commentator Noam Chomsky recently recounted the story of an old man in Gaza holding a placard that said: "You take my water, burn my olive trees, destroy my house, take my job, steal my land, imprison my father, kill my mother, bombard my country, starve us all, humiliate us all, but I am to blame: I shot a rocket back."

Focusing on rockets while ignoring Israel's repression of Palestinians is a serious error of omission. But Rabbi Kathy Cohen ("Israel: the Important Ally," December 9) measures up to the charge in her response to Robert Boyd's "Israel: the Ungrateful Ally" (December 2),

Cohen's excuse for Israel's abuses is that others have done the same, and asks of United States: "Did we take land from the Native Americans and settle it? On the simple fear that American-Japanese citizens could be enemy spies during World War II, did we round up all Japanese and place them in detention camps? Did we decimate parts of Afghanistan, killing not only our enemies but innocent civilians as well? Did we start a war in Iraq to find the weapons of mass destruction that don't seem to have existed?" "Yes," she answers, and adds for good measure: "In general, all countries act in ways that they believe is in their best interest for survival. Israel does and so do we," as if the US actions she mentions were necessary for survival and not gratuitous land theft and dominance.

Such amoral relativism would be shocking from anyone, but all the more from a religious leader. I am surprised Cohen didn't excuse Iraq's takeover of Kuwait in 1990. Wasn't it in Iraq's "best interest"? But Iraq's aggression violated an imperative stricture of international law: the prohibition of acquiring land by force, which Cohen disregards proving she is either ignorant of international law or contemptuous of it.

Cohen's whitewashed recount of US land thefts and violations of human rights are designed to justify an Israeli policy she avoids mentioning: the settlement of occupied Palestinian territories, based on a "might makes right" policy long discredited by western democracies. Many Israelis and Jews worldwide correctly judge Israel's colonialist efforts as a grave threat to its Jewish and democratic state and the greatest obstacle to resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. Israel can have a Jewish state and be democratic, but not both if 2.5 million Palestinian non-Jews with a higher birth rate are added to Israel's current one million non-Jewish citizens by illegal annexation. (Actually, Israel's non-Jewish citizens are subject to a democracy more akin to that experienced by African Americans under Jim Crow.)

If Cohen took the civilizing goal of international law seriously, she would embrace UN Resolution 242 that calls for resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict based on the pre-1967 boundaries with *minor* border adjustments. Implementation of 242 would eliminate the vast majority of Israel's illegal settlements in the West Bank. And make no mistake: the settlements are illegal, which has been standing US policy since 1967. To the US's great shame, it has soft-pedaled opposition to settlements and caved in to Israel's right wing bullies who, with America's Christian Zionist fanatics, run a powerful fifth column of lobbyists and propagandists who are quick to brand Israel's critics as "anti Semitic" and in the process corrupt our foreign policy. And as Boyd points out, the US gives massive foreign aid to Israel, a wealthy society that has no need of it.

Boyd mentioned a recent poll in Israel showing a majority of Israelis supporting an apartheid regime in Israel if the West Bank is annexed. Cohen says Boyd is wrong, but ignores the poll and the annexation question it was based on. She then claims that peace requires direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. But the leaked Palestine Papers prove that negotiations failed despite unprecedented Palestinian concessions. In fact, Israel has insisted on negotiations only to stall and buy time for its policy of slow-motion ethnic cleansing policy via incessant settlement expansion, manifested by Israel's recent decision to build 3,000 additional housing units in a sensitive area of the West Bank.

Rabbi Cohen professes great love for Israel. That is understandable, because Israel, like all nations, embodies cultural and moral dimensions which supercede the power politics of its government and the politicians that control it. But she would be a better friend to Israel if she openly opposed their brutal and self-defeating settlement policy.

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[http://www.roanoke.com/opinion/munley-griffith-wrong-about-israel-and-gaza/article\\_e6c35bfd-abc6-5880-8f43-a25bd760fd0b.html](http://www.roanoke.com/opinion/munley-griffith-wrong-about-israel-and-gaza/article_e6c35bfd-abc6-5880-8f43-a25bd760fd0b.html)

**Munley: Griffith wrong about Israel and Gaza**

**Frank Munley Munley, a retired physics professor, lives in Salem. | Posted: Sunday, August 31, 2014 2:00 am**

By Frank Munley

Munley, a retired physics professor, lives in Salem.

I have often disagreed with U.S. Rep. Morgan Griffith, but conceded his command of detail on issues when he served in the Virginia House of Delegates. Now, holding national office, he pontificates on a complex international issue he knows little about, the recent military conflict between Israel and Gaza.

He thinks he knows, because he went on a junket he describes as a "fact-finding seminar in Israel," but it was paid for by the Israel lobby. It would take a full page of newsprint to answer the numerous errors and distortions Griffith packs into one-page letters to constituents, so I'll limit myself to a choice few.

### **‘Who Started It?’**

It is rarely useful to play “Who Started It?” when a historically complex decades-old conflict flares up, but Griffith tries when he says Israel’s attack on Gaza commenced “after Palestinian terrorists kidnapped and murdered three Israeli teens.” Others would say it “started” a few weeks earlier when Israeli soldiers in the occupied West Bank killed two Palestinian youths, one of them shot in the back, neither involved in protests and football fields from Israeli shooters. Or maybe it “started” in early May, when the U.S.-sponsored negotiations collapsed; or a bit later when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ranted and raged against reconciliation between Palestinians’ two main parties, Hamas and Fatah, and U.S. willingness to work with the two; or with Netanyahu’s rampage in the West Bank following the teens’ murders, which resulted in the deaths of four innocent Palestinians.

Another rather interesting “starting point” would be the 2006 U.S.-Israeli call for Palestinian elections, when Hamas came in from the cold to go the peaceful electoral route and won. Hamas’s win was followed, with U.S. blessing, by Israeli land, air and seacoast blockades of Gaza cruelly described by an Israeli official as “putting the Gazans on a diet.”

This collective punishment, under international law illegal and a *casus belli*, follows a common U.S.-Israeli strategy: Cut the legs out from the opposition’s moderate factions to strengthen its extremists, who are then easier to demonize. Is Griffith aware that this blockade has caused mass malnutrition in Gaza?

### **Citizenship in a ‘Jewish state’**

Griffith says “Israel is a democratic country in which all citizens alike participate in government and civic life,” as if citizenship by itself ensures equal treatment under the law. The woeful discrimination right here against African-American citizens and other minorities over the decades puts the lie to that nonsense.

Anyone with an ounce of knowledge about Israel knows it is not a state for all its citizens, but a self-proclaimed Jewish state with all the discrimination brought to life by that religious identification. This is exactly the kind of self-inflicted moral blindness that allows Griffith to excoriate Hamas’s terrorism against Israel without ever mentioning the much greater daily suffering of West Bank Palestinians under Israel’s 47-year occupation, and the even greater deprivation in the open-air prison Israel has created in Gaza.

### **Phony warnings**

Griffith whitewashes Israel’s Gazan massacre, saying it warns Gazans where it is going to bomb. So what, if Israel doesn’t tell them where in that tiny area to go that is safe? After leaflets warned northern Gazans of impending bombardment, they fled their homes to seek refuge in a U.N. school. Griffith’s “fact-finding” ignores that the U.N. informed Israeli forces about the school’s exact location in Gaza City 17 times before Israel bombed it, killing 19 innocents and wounding scores. Numbers aren’t everything, but they shouldn’t be ignored either: Israel, with its phony warnings, has killed more than 2,000 Gazans in the recent conflict, mostly civilians; Hamas, with its inaccurate missiles, does wreak terror on Israeli citizens, but only six Israeli civilians and 64 Israeli soldiers have died as a result.

As the saying goes, “One man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter. If the “T-word” is used for Hamas’s pitifully ineffective rocket fire, admit that Israel is guilty of state terrorism on a far more massive level.

### **Finding facts**

Griffith’s claim to be on a fact-finding mission in Israel rivals his specious claim that “clean” coal is Southwest Virginia’s future. His “facts” are harming the future of our planet and prospects for Middle East peace. For facts, constituents should note campaign contributions and junkets giving rise to his views.

[http://www.roanoke.com/opinion/munley-whitewashing-israel-s-history/article\\_af57d512-b518-5eb9-893f-577febb2211a.html](http://www.roanoke.com/opinion/munley-whitewashing-israel-s-history/article_af57d512-b518-5eb9-893f-577febb2211a.html)

## **Munley: Whitewashing Israel's history**

Posted: Thursday, November 20, 2014 2:00 am

Frank Munley

Munley is a retired college professor living in Salem.

Roanoke College theologian Gerald McDermott has attempted to correct “Myths about Israel and Zionism” (Oct. 22 commentary), but only perpetuated several of his own. Relevant to his argument is Britain’s decision during World War I to facilitate a Jewish “national home” in Palestine. Britain and its ally France, not to be trusted, broke WWI agreements with Arab powers to the consternation of T.E. Lawrence (“Of Arabia”). In exercising raw power, the two imperialists slapped borders around regions, giving to some and taking from others what was never theirs.

The national home originated from the 68-word Balfour Declaration of 1917. It supposedly puts a legal sheen on the establishment of a Jewish state. But a national home is not a state, and preceding the 1948 war founding Israel, Britain repeatedly said that it did not support a Jewish state. It wanted a bi-national state or something equivalent.

McDermott says Zionists ended up with only 17.5 percent of their “originally designated” land because they were denied Transjordan (today’s Jordan). A brief review is needed to analyze this claim, contrived to undercut the real Palestinian claim today that the West Bank and Gaza acceptable for a Palestinian state is about 25 percent of Palestine.

The League of Nations mandate for Palestine did not include or exclude Transjordan, because its 1920 San Remo Conference left Palestine’s borders undetermined. For a short time Britain, an imperialist schemer, included Transjordan in its Palestine mandate for geostrategic interest and dropped it when it wasn’t needed. What the imperialist giveth, it taketh away. In September 1923, when Arabs comprised 93 percent of the population, the League’s mandate plan was finally implemented, and Palestine’s boundaries were fixed where they are today. As one Middle

East expert pointed out, why would Zionists even want Transjordan, the land of “Gad, Reuben, and Manasseh”? Zionists were never denied something the ruling powers had no intention of giving them, something Zionists didn’t even want.

Another attempt to put a legal sheen on the Jewish state focuses on Israel’s acceptance and Arab rejection of the ill-conceived U.N. General Assembly’s 1947 partition plan. This crazy-quilt scheme, which violated the high principle of self-determination and was opposed by many U.S. security experts, provided three barely contiguous areas for each side, an isolated Arab enclave (Jaffa), and an internationally supervised Jerusalem. Although Palestinian Arabs were two-thirds of the population, less than 50 percent of the land was allocated to them. Despite Israel’s formal acceptance of partition, Israel’s “George Washington,” David Ben Gurion, and other Zionist leaders clearly stated they had no intention to honor it. League mandates and U.N. partition plan notwithstanding, Israel is no more a legally founded state than the great majority of other states (like the U.S.) founded through raw force of arms and terrorist acts such as were carried out by several infamous Zionist groups one of whose leaders, Menachem Begin, later became prime minister of Israel. Israel’s persistent refusal to declare its borders proves contempt for a two-state partition that is the only real hope for peace, though it would return to Palestinians only a small part of Palestine.

The dismal 66-year Israeli-Palestinian conflict now centers on Israel’s territorial occupation and settlement activity, started after the 1967 Six-Day War. These provocative acts violate U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 and other resolutions that carry legal force, a problem McDermott ignores.

Before the 1967 war, Israel was on a clear trajectory that would have brought it right to where it is today without illegal expansion: a powerful nuclear-armed economically and technically modern nation-state. The only impetus for Israel’s colonialist expansion is not economic or military security, but satisfaction of extremists who believe God or Britain gave them the land. Israel’s brutal 47-year occupation accompanying its settlement enterprise amounts to a policy of slow-motion ethnic cleansing, cruel and unworthy of a state that claims to be democratic. Israel’s current president, Reuven Rivlin, lamented recently that Israel has become a “sick society” whose citizens “have forgotten how to be decent.” How sad that Israel’s enablers in the U.S. Congress and the Israel lobby that dominates it contribute to repeated war and continued suffering, undermining Israel’s (and the U.S.’s) security. The anecdotal history McDermott offers in whitewashing Israel’s 1948 expulsion of Palestinians and its recent attack on Gaza (that resulted in 200 times as many Palestinian as Israeli civilian deaths) encourages continued resistance to a negotiated settlement that would provide a viable Palestinian state.