

# The Persecution of the Palestinians

“Why do they hate us?” So stunned Americans asked, after 9/11, when we learned that across the Arab world, many were saying, “The Americans had it coming.”

For a textbook example of why we are hated, consider Gaza and the West Bank. There, a brutal Israeli/U.S.-led cutoff in aid has been imposed on the Palestinians for voting the wrong way in a free election.

Immediately after Hamas’s victory, Israel halted the \$55 million a month the Palestinian Authority received as its share of tax and customs revenue. Israel demanded Europe and the U.S. also end all aid to the PA until Hamas renounces terror, recognizes Israel, and disarms.

President Bush, though he was conducting a worldwide crusade for democracy and had urged that the Palestinian elections be held and Hamas participate, obediently complied. For months now, U.S. and European aid to the PA, half its budget, has been halted.

The early returns are in. “Surgeons at Gaza’s biggest hospital,” says the *Financial Times*, “have suspended non-essential surgery for lack of sutures, laboratory kits and anesthetics.” Environmental protection agency workers have no money for petrol to monitor sewage and industrial waste entering the water supply. Some 150,000 civil servants, 60,000 of them armed security personnel, have gone unpaid for months.

Supermarkets have to extend credit to customers who have no money for food. The *Washington Post* relates an incident that gives a flavor of what is happening.

“In Gaza’s gold market Monday, Nahed al-Zayim stared at the wedding ring her husband, a Palestinian police officer, gave her six years ago. She had placed it on a glass counter offering it

for sale, joining several other wives of public employees who had not been paid in two months...

“Her head covered by a black veil, Zayim said she needed the proceeds from her ring to buy diapers and milk supplements for her three children, including Hazem, 4, who tugged at her tunic in the afternoon bustle. ‘This is the last one, we have no more,’ Zayim, 28, said of her ring.”

Woodrow Wilson called sanctions “the silent, deadly remedy.” Its victims are always the sick, the elderly, the women, and the children.

In March, the World Bank predicted the aid cutoff would lead to a 30 percent fall in average personal incomes among the Palestinians. The bank now considers that prediction “too rosy” and expects “the worst year in the West Bank and Gaza’s recent dismal economic history.”

Already, violent clashes have broken out between Hamas and Fatah. There is a danger of collapse of the Palestinian Authority, chaos, and a need for the Israeli army to intervene anew to restore order. Finally, May 9, under European pressure, the U.S. relented and a trickle of aid began to flow.

Query: who, besides al-Qaeda and recruiters of suicide bombers, can conceivably benefit from persecuting the Palestinian people like this? Does President Bush or Condi Rice think the Palestinians will respect an America that did this to their children, after we urged this election, called for Hamas to participate, and preached our devotion to democracy?

“The aid cut-off appears to be increasing anti-U.S. sentiment here,” writes the

*Post’s* Scott Wilson, quoting 33-year-old pharmacist Mustafa Hasoona: “The problem is the West, not us. ... If they don’t respect democracy, they shouldn’t call for it. ... We are with this government we elected. I voted for it.”

According to the *Financial Times*, Hamas is winning converts for refusing to buckle. Said Khalil Abu Leila, a Hamas leader, “They have misunderstood the Arab mentality. As long as the pressure increases on Hamas, the more popular it will become.”

The White House says we don’t negotiate with terrorists. But when we had to, we did. FDR and Truman summited with Stalin at Yalta and Potsdam. Nixon met with Mao in Beijing. Kissinger negotiated with the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese at Paris. Bush I allied with Assad in the Gulf War. Clinton had Arafat to the White House too many times to count.

Rabin and Peres shared a Nobel Prize with Arafat. Netanyahu gave him Hebron. Barak offered him 95 percent of the West Bank.

Bush’s agents negotiated with the architect of the Lockerbie massacre to persuade Colonel Khadafi to give up his WMD. In 2004, Bush’s men called it a victory for Bush diplomacy. Khadafi’s regime had been at the top of the State Department’s list of state sponsors of terror.

The purpose of U.S.-Israeli policy today is to punish the Palestinians for how they voted and to force Hamas to yield or to collapse its government. How does such a policy win hearts and minds for America?

Terrorism has been described as waging war on innocents to break their political leaders. Is that not a fair description of what we are doing to the Palestinians? No wonder they hate us. ■

[around the world in 8 years]

# Out of Iraq, Into Darfur?

When it comes to military intervention unrelated to the national interest, the globalist Left is no better than the neocon Right.

By Justin Raimondo

“OUT OF IRAQ, INTO DARFUR”—a picture is worth a thousand words, and in the case of the Associated Press photographer who captured an image of the recent “Save Darfur” demonstration in Washington, perhaps two or three thousand. These words on a neatly printed sign, held aloft by one Laura Cacho, an employee of Working Assets, the liberal do-gooder investment outfit, say about all there is to say about the moral confusion and contradiction that underlies the recent campaign to bamboozle the U.S. into intervening in Sudan. In view of the complex realities on the ground in that tortured land, one may as well say “Out of the frying pan, into the fire.”

It’s a scenario familiar enough to induce a frisson of *deja-vu*: a humanitarian disaster is declared in a far-off land, a country that few ordinary Americans have ever heard of and even fewer know anything about. We are told that we must intervene or be cast in the role of selfish Western isolationists. And we don’t have much time to think about it, we are informed, because this is an emergency: we must act now or lose our souls.

This is moral blackmail. We are supposed to accept unthinkingly the premise that of course we have to help victims of genocide—we are morally obliged to drop everything and come to

the aid of our fellow human beings, without knowing too much about the specifics of the case. And you’ll notice that, amid all the self-righteous bombast and posturing by pundits and politicians over Darfur, we hear very little in the way of specifics.

We are told that as many as 300,000 may have been killed and that the country is in the throes of a bloody civil war, but we aren’t told much about the various combatants, except that the dreaded Janjaweed militia—and, standing behind them, the Sudanese government—are the bad guys. As for the good guys—the rebels in the south—they are for all intents and purposes invisible, as far as the American media is concerned. Also practically invisible: the causes of the decades-long civil war, really two civil conflicts, the first stretching from 1955-1972, the second commencing in 1983 and continuing to the present day.

In southern Sudan, where people live on a subsistence level, many of the deaths are the result of the conflict’s ancillary effects: the lack of investment, the collapse of the minimal infrastructure, and famine. Did the deep poverty of the people contribute to or even cause the civil war, or is it the other way around? While the ongoing civil strife has certainly added to the death toll, the idea that the country would be livable

even in the absence of the warring parties seems like wishful thinking. And if the root cause of the civil war is the country’s lack of development, then military intervention by the West will not solve the problem—and is more likely to exacerbate it.

If the foreign policy of the United States is to be predicated on a simple morality tale of good guys versus bad guys rather than an objective determination of the national interest, then we have to ask: who are the good guys in this story? The answer has to be that there aren’t any.

In one corner, we have the Sudanese government, headed by President Omar el-Bashir and dominated by Arab-speaking northerners: the ruling National Congress Party has its roots in the Muslim Brotherhood, founded in Egypt in the 1940s. There is no real political opposition allowed, and the various factions of the National Congress disagree only over how and to what extent *sharia* law should be imposed. They have ruthlessly suppressed regional separatist movements, such as the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) in the west (Darfur) and the Anya Nya movement in the south. From 1990-1996, they played host to Osama bin Laden, whose friend and associate Dr. Hassan ‘Abd Allah al-Turabi, at the time a top official in Sudan’s