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Yemeni and Palestinian Children

It seems that much of the civilized world is outraged by the recent U.S.-financed, Saudi bombing of a school bus in Yemen. While U.S. spokespeople have hemmed and hawed and not condemned this atrocity, few outside of the U.S. have been so hesitant.

How anyone can countenance the bombing of a clearly marked school bus (they are rather unique looking, for a reason), carrying dozens of young children, is beyond the comprehension of this writer. Many U.S. politicians have said that they will never apologize for the U.S. regardless of circumstances, and this is a clear example of that philosophy.

Surprisingly, the corporate-owned press has broadcast this atrocity widely, even showing a video of the children, taken by one of the victims about an hour before the slaughter. Viewers see young boys, ages 6 – 11, laughing, chatting, showing great excitement about the field trip they were on. Moments later, all that remained was a mangled bus, forty dead children, and several more, bloody, maimed, writhing and screaming in pain. Scenes of grief-stricken parents soon followed.

It is vitally important that people around the world, but especially in the violent and war-mongering and war-waging United States, see these scenes. It is crucial that they know how their tax dollars are being spent.

However, if one were to only consider what one sees on the ‘mainstream’ press, one might think that this was an anomaly, a horrible mistake or miscalculation, one that, although inexcusable, was never intended.

One, however, would be mistaken. While the world mourns for the innocent young victims of the Yemeni bus massacre, for the U.S., this is business as usual. While this avoidable tragedy is making international headlines, there was hardly a peep from the U.S. media when Israel, in 2014, massacred over 500 children, including infants, in Gaza, using U.S.-provided bombs. There was hardly a mention when, in a lull in that genocidal attack, four young boys playing on a beach were shot and killed by Israeli soldiers. Palestinian children who are intentionally hit and run over by autos driven by settlers living illegally on Palestinian land are never discussed; no one ever demands to know what U.S. spokespeople have to say about these murders.

Let's look at a few such situations in a bit more detail.

In May of 2014, Nadeem Nawara, 17, and Mohammad Salameh, 16, were shot both in the chest while walking, unarmed, near Israeli soldiers. They both died from their wounds. Both of them were between 200 and 250 meters (656 – 820 feet) from the soldiers. Both boys were shot with live ammunition. Neither was throwing stones, which, for Palestinians, can be a capital offense, since under Israel regulations, live rounds can be used if stone-throwers pose an imminent threat to life. Take some time to consider how someone throwing a stone at a heavily armed and armored soldier can “pose an imminent threat” to his or her life.

Additionally, these two murders were captured on video, by the security camera on a nearby store.

While the death toll was certainly less than that of the Yemeni school bus attack, is this not worth some discussion? Should not U.S. officials question their blank-cheque financing of everything Israel does, based on this? Are not these two cold-blooded murders at least worth some attention?

Eight-year-old Aseel Abu Oun was run over in a car driven by a settler living illegally on Palestinian land. She and a friend were leaving a supermarket when the attack occurred. After a brief investigation, Israeli police declared that it was simply a road accident: case closed. The family requested an independent investigation by a non-biased individual or group, but that request, of course, was denied. Israel, the U.S. assures us, is capable of performing its own, completely unbiased, totally fair investigations into such matters, which result in exonerating whatever Israeli is accused at least 99% of the time.

When the child was hit, the driver attempted to flee, and was stopped by the victim's family and friends; her father actually saw her being hit. They took the driver's weapon

until police arrived. Let's remember that Israelis living illegally in the West Bank can be as heavily armed as they want; Palestinians, living on their own land, are forbidden any weapons. We can thank the Fatah traitor Mahmoud Abbas for this inequity.

During the summer of 2014, the Israeli government decided to perform one of its periodic 'mowing of the lawn' exercises in Gaza. This genocidal bombardment targeted school, hospitals, mosques, United Nations refugee centers, and residential neighborhoods. Targeting any of these is a violation of international law. Over 2,000 people were killed, about a quarter of them children. This was all done with U.S.-provided weapons, and U.S. approval. Might not the 'free press' (yes, I'm laughing, too), consider this worth covering? In what other possible situation on the planet would the slaughter of over 500 children, as young as infancy, be all but ignored? U.S. officials repeat the worn out and invalid mantra that 'Israel has a right to defend itself'. The number of people who believe this stupidity is constantly diminishing; it seems almost to be reserved for U.S. elected officials. As Palestinian activist Hanan Ashrawi has said: "The Palestinians are the only people on earth required to guarantee the security of the occupier, while Israel is the only country that demands protection from its victims." The concept of 'defending oneself from one's victim' is truly bizarre. Does a rapist have a right to 'defend' himself if the woman he is raping fights back? Can he then charge her with assault, because, after all, he was defending himself from her vicious attack? All he was doing was raping her; what right had she to fight back? This logic makes as much sense as Israel 'defending' itself from the Palestinians.

And so there we are. Saudis who bomb school buses with U.S. financial and moral (an odd word to use in this situation) support can be questioned; Israelis who bomb schools, hospitals and homes are merely 'defending' themselves.

We have learned from government officials and the media that Yemeni children dying in a school-bus bombing, and Syrian children who drown fleeing U.S.-supported terrorism in their country, are worthy of our sympathy and concern. Conversely, Palestinian children killed when sleeping in their own home or a United Nations refugee center, and Rohingya children violently driven from their homes, often dying in the process, or of starvation, are not.

This is the U.S. today; the government, and the corporate-owned media which happily does its bidding, work hand in hand for the good of the rich and the powerful.

This writer sometimes refers to George Orwell's novel, *1984*, when discussing current events. That author's prophetic sense, it seems, is affirmed with each passing day.