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Facts & Logic About the Middle East

June 1, 2021



Anti-Israel bias in Gaza war coverage: Mainstream media exposed again

Dear Friend of FLAME:

On May 21, a *New York Times* front-page headline claimed that Israel's response to Hama's unprovoked missile attacks had left "More than 250 dead, mostly civilians" in Gaza. However, later the article reports that 230 people were killed, "many of them civilians," according to the Hamas-controlled Gaza Health Ministry.

Not only did the *Times* parrot Hama's claim of casualties—with no substantiation—it *exaggerated* them. It also said that the "high civilian toll—more than 60 children were killed—shocked the world." Again, no substantiation for the Hamas numbers—which the terror group notoriously overstates—but plenty of gratuitous ("shocked!") drama.

Two days later, Israel's estimate of 200 Hamas militants killed—which would represent the overwhelming majority of the Gaza deaths—received no headlines in the *Times*, but was buried near the bottom of a follow-up article on the conflict's ceasefire. Thus, most *Times* readers presumably remained shocked at Israel's alleged killing of innocent Palestinian civilians.

American consumers of mainstream media coverage of the latest war between Gaza and Israel will be forgiven if they believe the conflict was started by Israel and dominated by its killing and destruction of "the impoverished territory's infrastructure"—since that's the way the *Times* and other media portrayed it.

We should also be forgiven for wondering why every Israeli defensive action—and they were all defensive in this most recent war—receives so much coverage. Indeed, this episode was one of the least bloody worldwide, yet it received more attention than almost any other globally. In the last 2014 Hamas-Israel war, for example, some 2,200 were killed—ten times the toll of this one—largely because of the dramatically increased precision of Israel's response to Hamas attacks.

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**THIS MONTH'S AD
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YOU DESERVE TO KNOW THE TRUTH...

No Fool's Deal with Iran

Any new agreement with Iran must halt its development of weapons of mass destruction and its sowing of terror against the U.S. and our Middle East allies.

What are the facts?
While the White House continues to negotiate with Iran, it must be clear that the U.S. is not under any pressure to make a deal. The U.S. should only agree to making these concessions in return for major, verifiable behavior changes from Iran that serve our vital strategic interests.

What the next Iran deal should encompass. Any agreement with Iran should address the threat of terrorism. The Islamic Republic is dedicated to spreading its radical Shiite revolution globally. Half steps will not suffice. Thus, the next Iran deal should mean that Iran agree to a complete, permanent halt to its nuclear weapons program. The Biden administration should also ensure that Iran cease its development of intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons, as required by the 2015 UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

The U.S. is under zero pressure to make a deal with Iran.
Finally, Iran must halt colonization of its neighbors and other forms of terrorism. It must agree to limit the length of its occupation of Gaza and West Bank, and end the violence, export of terrorism, Shiite revolutionary ideology. Besides, as the U.S. would surely see regional allies most threatened by Iran—Israel and Saudi Arabia—can just Western nations—by forwarding the next deal. In addition, unlike the JCPOA, any agreement with Iran should be ratified by Congress.

Showing Iran does not solve the problem—the next deal that Iran sign. President Biden has the opportunity to make the greatest peace ever in the Middle East. He deliberately ignores fact conditions. He should also eliminate of any global realities—such as the Abraham Accords and Iran's general economic and political isolation—as well as a deal that truly makes the region and the world a safer place.

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**IF YOU SUPPORT
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Israel-Palestinian conflicts receive so much press simply because they are usually covered by more international media based in Israel than in China, India, Russia and Sub-Saharan Africa *combined*, though those countries are home to many billions of people.

Far from independently observing the conflict, it is clear that these media carefully sculpt a narrative that pits good and against bad, with Israel always wearing the black hat.

For many years, Israel observers had suspected that foreign media based in Israel would bury stories that made Israel look good and highlight stories that made Israel look bad. However, it wasn't until former Associated Press journalist Matti Friedman pulled back the curtain on his former employers that we understood just how distorted the coverage was. In 2014, Friedman wrote an expose of the tactics of the foreign media in general and the AP in particular. He observed that members of the international media have "a hostile obsession with Jews".

According to Friedman, "Palestinians are not taken seriously as agents of their own fate." Their shortcomings are never published, whereas "Israeli actions are analyzed and criticized, and every flaw in Israeli society is aggressively reported."

An example of this obsession with the anti-Israel narrative is former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's highly significant offer of a Palestinian state in 2009. It was not reported because it was deemed "unimportant"—or rather because it would tell the truth behind the story: That Israel wants peace, while the Palestinians reject it.

While Israeli defensive operations against Hamas are reported in excruciating detail, issues like Hamas' intimidation of the media, terrorists dressed in civilian clothes, rockets launched from residential neighborhoods—every fact about Gaza—comes directly from a Hamas mouthpiece, and the group censures media reports. This means that American news consumers remain deceived about the real conditions and wider picture of the conflict.

Thus, we saw in the recent conflagration: Hamas was barely mentioned. The narrative was Israel's highly sophisticated military pounding the Gaza Strip and killing people. Rather than depict Hamas as the Islamist terror aggressors they are, the Palestinian "people" were portrayed as helpless underdogs. The media were quick to confront all Israeli spokespeople with the fact of "disproportional" death tolls—as if that is the bottom line for deciding who is good and who is bad in any story.

Almost every media article on the conflict begins with Israeli "aggression." For example, the BBC reported on May 14: "Israel intensifies attacks in Gaza as conflict enters fifth day." AP reported on May 16: "Israeli warplanes stage more heavy strikes across Gaza City." On both of these days—and every other day of the conflict—Hamas and other terrorist groups launched hundreds of rockets at Israeli population centers, sending half of the country into bomb shelters and killing those who couldn't make it.

FLAME is the only organization that defends Israel with paid editorial hasbarah messages placed in media nationwide every month: The dire threats from Iran, Hamas and Hizbollah, the injustice of BDS, Palestinian anti-Semitism and more. If you support a bold voice that tells the truth about Israel in American media, please donate now.

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Headlines like these, which are highly representative of the reporting on the conflict, give the subtle and not-so-subtle impression that Israel is the sole aggressor.

HonestReporting, an organization that monitors the international media, wrote on coverage of the recent conflict: “*The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, BBC, CNN and other major media outlets produced misleading headlines about the conflict, many of which totally ignored Palestinian terrorism.”

Even more egregiously, while the media usually likes to think of itself as in the shadows and not an actual party in the conflict, sometimes the mask slips. In the recent conflict, the international media became even more intimately involved when Israel bombed a building that houses AP and Al Jazeera, because it also housed Hamas operations.

The Israeli military maintains that Hamas used the high-rise building for electronic warfare against Israel, attempting to interfere with the GPS signal that the Israel Defense Forces uses, as well as for offices of the terror group’s intelligence department. Rather than admit they were either negligent or complicit, the foreign media came out swinging, attacking Israel for bombing what was an entirely legitimate target under the laws of war.

These are just a few of many examples of media bias in the conflict. It creates what former AP staffer Matti Friedman called “the perception gap,” which is the difference between the media narrative and the reality on the ground.

Please emphasize to friends, family, colleagues and your elected representatives that such biased media coverage of this latest Israel-Palestinian conflict is simply a more blatant example of how today’s news outlets are driven by political bias and the need for sensationalized conflict to attract news customers.

This strategy would be crass enough, but the underlying odor of anti-Semitism that causes the only Jewish state to be *invariably* represented as the villain—even as it defends itself from Jew-hating racists—makes the practice that much more despicable.

I hope you'll also take a minute, while you have this material front and center, to forward this message to friends, visit FLAME's lively [Facebook page](#) and review the P.S. immediately below. It describes FLAME’s new hasbarah campaign—which exposes the outrageous, false accusation that Israel is an “apartheid state.”

Best regards,

Jim Sinkinson

President, Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME)

P.S. Every year, dozens of major American colleges and universities host Israel Apartheid Week, sponsored by radical pro-Palestinian groups like Students for Justice in Palestine. In addition, critics of Israel also assert

that Israel is or will soon become an apartheid state. As you know, nothing is further from the truth. Israel guarantees equal rights to all its citizens and its laws bear zero resemblance to any of the hateful rules of apartheid South Africa, where the term was invented. To clarify this point, FLAME has created a new *hasbarah* message called “[The Israel Apartheid Lie](#).” I hope you'll review this convincing, fact-based paid editorial, which has run in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and other media nationwide. This piece will also be sent to all members of Congress, Vice President Harris and President Biden. If you agree that this kind of public relations effort on Israel's behalf is critical, I urge you to support us. Remember: FLAME's powerful ability to influence public opinion—and U.S. support of Israel—comes from individuals like you, one by one. I hope you'll consider giving a donation now, as you're able—with \$500, \$250, \$100, or even \$18. (Remember, your donation to FLAME is tax deductible.) To donate online, just go to [donate](#) now. Now, more than ever, we need your support to ensure that the American people, the U.S. Congress and President Biden to oppose efforts to slander or otherwise weaken the Jewish state.

As of today, more than 15,000 Israel supporters receive the FLAME Hotline at no charge every week. If you're not yet a subscriber, won't you join us in receiving these timely updates, so you can more effectively tell the truth about Israel? Just go to [free subscription](#).



Facts and Logic
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