

Israel's Warsaw Ghetto Campaign in Gaza

by Carl Osgood

Jan. 9—The horrific pictures and accounts of civilian deaths and suffering caused by the Israeli assault in Gaza have evoked comparisons to the Nazi extermination of the Jewish Resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto in 1943. Even though such comparisons ignite red-faced rage from backers of the Israeli policy, it was an Israeli journalist, Amir Oren, who let the cat out of the bag, in 2002. Oren reported that the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) had studied the methods the Nazis used in Warsaw, not to ensure that it would happen “Never Again,” but rather, to use those same methods against the Palestinians. At that time, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon had embarked on a campaign to eliminate the Palestinian leadership in the West Bank, and make it impossible for the Palestinian Authority (PA), then under Yasser Arafat, to even govern, much less make peace.

Oren's report, in the Jan. 25, 2002 edition of the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz*, came in the form of a confession from an anonymous IDF officer, after the Israeli army had conducted a similar assault on the West Bank town of Jenin. The Bush Administration at the time, refused to address the implications of Oren's revelation, but Sharon's press spokesman, Ra'anana Gissin was unblushing, a few days later, when questioned by *EIR* about IDF officers studying the Nazi Warsaw Ghetto strategy. “Some officers may have been looking at that,” he said. “They thought that it was similar because you would be fighting street-by-street against the Palestinian Authority.” What bothered Gissin was not IDF officers studying Nazi methods to use against the Palestinians, but rather the then-burgeoning resistance movement against that by Israeli reservists. “They may have to face a court-martial. They will have to face consequences if they do not serve when they are called up. That is the real problem.” (See “Israeli Warsaw Ghetto Methods: U.S., Europe Are Accountable,” by Paul Gallagher, *EIR*, Feb. 8, 2002.)

The pictures and accounts, especially those report-

ing the deaths of Palestinian children coming out of Gaza over the past two weeks, confirm that the IDF is still using the same Nazi methods it had previously applied in the West Bank. The targets are much the same: police stations, government buildings, leadership, and anything else that allows a people to govern itself. The party in power may carry a different label, but the strategic logic remains the same: destroy the Palestinians' ability to govern themselves and punish them for daring to choose their own leaders.

Lyndon LaRouche laid this crime at the feet of the Bush-Cheney regime on Jan. 6. “We know that this assault was fully planned a year ago, at the beginning of 2008, with the full backing of Bush and Cheney,” LaRouche declared. “Only a fool like Bush and a sociopath like Cheney could go along with such a murderous scheme, a scheme fully devised by the Anglo-Saudi apparatus of ‘Al Yamamah’ notoriety.”

Horrific Humanitarian Conditions

Samer Badawi, the executive director of the United Palestinian Appeal (UPA), provided an account of the horrific humanitarian conditions imposed on Gaza by the Israeli assault, during Jan. 7 remarks at the Palestine Center in Washington, D.C. Badawi's report, along with those of the UN, the International Red Cross, and other relief agencies working in Gaza, makes a mockery of Israeli claims that they are acting in self defense and with due regard to the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian population.

Everything that Gazans need to survive—food, medical supplies, energy, clothes, and so on—must enter Gaza through crossings that are controlled by Israel. Badawi reported that, based on his own communication with the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), and other agencies working on the ground in Gaza, almost no relief supplies have been getting in, for a population of 1.5 million people, 80% of whom are dependent on international food aid. According to reports on Jan. 6, fifty truckloads of food were allowed in, following 41.5 truckloads the day before. Depending on the contents of the trucks, this means about enough food for 100 families for three days; in other words, less than the proverbial drop in the bucket. The Karni crossing, where wheat and other bulk commodities would be brought in, near the north end of Gaza, has been closed since the assault began, with the result that only 9 of the 53 known bakeries are operating, which has caused a doubling of bread

prices. UNRWA and the World Food Program still have food stocks in warehouses throughout Gaza, but are unable to distribute it because of the security situation.

Nearly 14,000 people have taken shelter in 23 UN shelters in Gaza, but this includes the UN school that was bombed by the IDF on Jan. 6, killing 40 people, including many women and children. The shelters are running low on food, have no access to electricity or heat, and freshwater is running dangerously low. Coats, blankets, mattresses, and clothing necessary to protect people from the cold January temperatures are also in short supply.

The medical situation is equally grim. Eleven ambulances and medical vehicles have been damaged or destroyed by Israeli bombs. These include three mobile clinics that were supported by UPA. Only three out of 56 PA medical clinics were functioning. Most of the remaining 53 were closed due to lack of fuel. Al Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, the main hospital for all of Gaza, was down to two days worth of fuel for power, but is also suffering from acute shortages of medical supplies. Physicians and staff have been reduced to depending on hand-operated respirators to keep patients alive for hours on end, because the mechanical ones are no longer usable. It is under those conditions that Gaza's medical system has to handle the dead, now estimated to number nearly 800, and the approximately 3,000 wounded.

Most of Gaza is without electricity because the main power plant has been damaged and, in any case, it isn't receiving enough fuel to continue to operate. All but a few of the lines that carry power from the plant to substations around Gaza have been damaged.

The Israelis have also blocked the shipment of spare parts that are needed to make the plant fully operable again.

Siege Began 18 Months Ago

Badawi reminded his audience that the crisis did not begin on Dec. 19 when Hamas refused to renew the six-month ceasefire with Israel. He pointed out that, in June of 2007, various UN agencies reported that Gaza was receiving only 10% of the supplies it had been receiving one year earlier. "For 18 months," he said, "the people of Gaza have been subjected to a siege unlike anything since the ghettos of Warsaw." This includes food, medical supplies, fuel, repair parts, and so on. Eight months ago, for example, there were 11 incubators for premature babies in Gaza hospitals, but seven did not work, and could not be replaced because of the siege. Even the usefulness of the four remaining incubators was limited to periods when there was power.

Badawi maintains that the Israeli bombing campaign is two to three times deadlier than the U.S. campaigns against Serbia, Afghanistan, and Iraq. In the first two days of the war, over 300 Palestinians were killed by about 100 tons of Israeli bombs, or about 3 deaths per ton of bombs. University of New Hampshire Prof. Marc Herold has calculated that the U.S. bombing campaign in Afghanistan in 2001-02 killed 2,643 Afghan civilians per *10,000 tons of bombs*. For comparison, his number for Cambodia (early 1970s) is 1,852; for Serbia, 522; and Iraq, 341. If his calculations are close to accurate, this would make Israel's campaign in Gaza *11 times deadlier*, by kill ratio, than the U.S. campaign in Afghanistan. (As the Israelis know, the fact that Gaza is one of the most densely populated areas of the world, with 1.5 million people crowded into concentration-camp conditions, means that every strike will likely kill many people.) Even if we accept Israeli claims that a high proportion of those killed on the first two days of war were Hamas fighters, and not civilians, then the Israeli bombing campaign is still far deadlier than any previous bombing campaign in recent decades. The civilian casualty rate has climbed even higher now that the Israeli army has entered Gaza.

In his Jan. 6 statement, LaRouche called George Bush's backing of the Israeli assault "an unspeakable crime." He added that "The mass killing of Arab children by the Israeli military cannot be defended. It cannot be tolerated and must be stopped immediately."

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