

MEDIA EDUCATION FOUNDATION

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Peace, Propaganda & the Promised Land *U.S. Media & the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*

Transcript

(News clips)

Narrator: The Israeli-Palestinian conflict dominates American news coverage of International issues. Given the news coverage is America's main source of information on the conflict, it becomes important to examine the stories the news media are telling us, and to ask the question, Does the news reflect the reality on the ground?

(News clips)

Prof. Noam Chomsky: The West Bank and the Gaza strip are under a military occupation. It's the longest military occupation in modern history. It's entering its 35th year. It's a harsh and brutal military occupation. It's extremely violent. All the time. Life is being made unlivable by the population.

Gila Svirsky: We have what is now quite an oppressive regime in the occupied territories. Israeli's are lording it over Palestinians, usurping their territory, demolishing their homes, exerting a very severe form of military rule in order to remain there. And on the other hand, Palestinians are lashing back trying to throw off the yoke of oppression from the Israelis.

Alisa Solomon: I spent a day traveling around Gaza with a man named Jabra Washa, who's from the Palestinian Center for Human Rights and he described the situation as complete economic and social suffocation. There's no economy, the unemployment is over 60% now. Crops can't move. Thousands and thousands of acres of orchards and low-line crops have been bulldozed and uprooted by the Israeli military. There are checkpoints everywhere, Palestinians can't get from one place to another, drives that would ordinarily take ten minutes now take four hours.

Toufic Haddad: All the main access and artery roads are controlled by Israel. Anything that enters and exits the Palestinian areas is underneath their control. So everything from getting medical help to getting education to trying to lead your daily life is at the whim of Israel.

Major Stav Adivi: There are hundreds of checkpoints in the West Bank. Every Palestinian has to walk through a single ride, two or three check points. And the system of those checkpoints makes Palestinian ordinary people's life miserable.

Gila Svirsky: It can even reach very immediate forms of oppression, such as not being able to leave your homes during curfew hours, as the Palestinians are forced sometimes to remain in their home day after day, because the Israeli army says, We don't want you out of the house, on the street. It means they can't buy food, can't send their children to school, can't walk across the street to their neighbor's, can't get medical attention, can't do any of the basic things that you must leave your home to do. That's a horrible way to live your life.

Rabbi Michael Lerner: Since the Intifada Number 2 began; you have a much-heightened level of repression. Often these towns or villages are surrounded by the Israeli army, and people aren't allowed to go out of their village to next door. It's basically a horrendous situation. It's like living in a very big jail.

Prof. Neve Gordon: When one lives under oppression, and there is no other way out, and he's being violated every day by violent means, then sometimes the only way out of that situation is through violence. Particularly if the one who is violating your rights, and taking away your freedom is ruthless. And uses systematic methods of violence to oppress you. Like torture.

Narrator: Amnesty International has regularly documented serious Human Rights violations by Israeli military forces in the Occupied territories. Including unlawful killings, torture and ill treatment of prisoners, wanton destruction of homes with residents still inside, the blocking of ambulances, denial of humanitarian assistance, and the use of Palestinian civilians as human shields. And has gone so far as to label them, War Crimes.

Gila Svirsky: We don't see the suffering that the Palestinians are undergoing through occupation. We don't really understand how bad the occupation is for them. No empathy. No sympathy. No sight of women being able to reach a hospital to give birth and children and their babies dying at the checkpoint because they can't get through. If you don't see that, your heart doesn't skip a beat and say, Something's wrong with the occupation.

Alisa Solomon: That's what's become so twisted. That the dearth of reporting, the absence of images, the lack of analysis, the void of voices, describing the experience of Palestinians under occupation is so vast that people have no idea that the occupation is going on.

AMERICAN MEDIA: OCCUPIED TERRITORY

Narrator: Americans rely on the news media for information about events occurring around the world. News, especially television news, exerts a powerful influence on our perceptions, telling us which events are important and shaping our understanding of the issues. Given the central role played by the United States in the Middle East conflict, and thus the vital role played by American voters, influencing U.S. media coverage of the conflict is crucial. Controlling the images and words used to explain the conflict has become an important extension of the struggle.

Prof. Robert Jensen: Israel is really fighting a war on two fronts. The first is a military campaign being waged in the occupied territories against the Palestinian people. And the second is a PR campaign being waged here in the U.S., through the American media. To ensure continued support for Israel's occupation. Alan Pinkus, Council General for Israel in New York and the Co-coordinator for Israel's PR efforts, was recently quoted as saying, we are currently in a conflict with the Palestinians, and engaging in a successful PR campaign is part of winning the conflict. So you could say that in addition to the military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, Israel is also involved in an attempt to ideologically occupy the American media.

Narrator: The roots of Israel's public relations campaign go back to the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon that earned it worldwide criticism. In particular, the massacre of Palestinian civilians at the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila. To the Israeli government, the problem was not the deaths of thousands of civilians; rather it was the damage to Israel's public image. A public relations disaster in need of damage control.

Robert Fisk: They surrounded Beirut, in three months 17,300 people, almost all of them civilians, were killed. I saw many thousands of their bodies. Then came the massacre of Sabra and Shatila, by Israel's own allies, the camp was surrounded by Israeli troops. And they desperately said, what went wrong? It was concluded that the problem was there wasn't good enough Public Relations.

Prof. Robert Jensen: After the Public Relations disaster of Lebanon, Israel decided to set up permanent institutional structures to control how Americans would think about the Middle East. In 1983, Israel launched the Hazborrah project. The aim of which was to ensure good press in the U.S. media. The goal was to train Israeli diplomats in communications and public relations. For example they trained press officers in Israeli consulates in the U.S. to ensure that American journalists would write stories favorable to Israel. As one of these press officers said in the 1980s, he had breakfast, lunch and dinner with journalists, and that a typical day would involve conversations with producers at leading news and TV talk shows about the content of the program. He described it as, in fact, quote, "a joint formulation of ideas." This targeting of the American media goes on in the present day.

Alisa Solomon: The Israeli Press office is spitting out press releases, statements, information, all the time. So you could sit in a bureau in Jerusalem and file stories from there all the time without having to have much imagination or have much energy or have much drive. The Palestinian Authority press office is almost useless and they certainly aren't providing you with ready-made stories, the way the Israeli Press Office is.

Hussein Ibish: Because of lack of access to Palestinian Officials in the West Bank and the sophistication of Israel's PR techniques inside Israel, a lot of the stories are already tilted in Israel's favor before they ever leave American journalists sitting in the area.

Alisa Solomon: When you're talking about how the story's covered in the U.S., the propaganda machine is even more effective than it is in Israel.

Narrator: American news coverage is influenced by a complex set of Institutional relationships. These influences can be thought of as a series of filters through which the news must travel before it emerges in the voices of news anchors. To understand how American news media report on the Middle East conflict, we need to understand how the institutional filters operate. Among the most important of these filters, are the business interests of the corporations that own the mass media, interests that extend beyond the United States and across the globe to the Middle East. The economic interests of media owners are shared by political elites, politicians and policy makers who form a second filter. These political elites have the power to access and influence mainstream media and are themselves part of a system dominated by corporate money and interests. The strategic importance of the Middle East to these two groups is reflected in media coverage of the region, and of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A third filter, Israel's own Public Relations efforts, further affects the coverage. The government of Israel employs some of the largest American Public Relations firms has image consultants to coordinate its political and media campaigns. Nine Israeli consulates help implement these PR campaigns by developing relationships with journalists and monitoring media outlets. Scores of private American organizations, both Christian and Jewish, reiterate the official line and organize grassroots opposition to any coverage deemed unfavorable to Israel. The most important of these is AIPAC, The American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee, widely regarded as the most powerful foreign lobby in Washington. This institutional framework of American business and political interests, in combination with Israeli Public Relations, shapes media coverage of the Middle East. At the same time, those progressive organizations opposing Israeli government policy, such as Jews Against the Occupation, and Americans for Peace Now rarely make it through these filters. Finally, if any news stories critical of Israeli foreign policy do surface, there are a host of media watchdog groups who monitor and pressure journalists and media outlets. The most important of which is Camera.

Alisa Solomon: You have activist organizations from the Right, the Pro-Israeli Right, that very effectively they say monitor, I would say harass, journalists and their editors and try to make sure that the coverage is objective, by which I mean pro-Israel.

Seth Ackerman: You can see all of the kinds of pressure groups to write campaign letters to the editor against news outlets and demand that stories be changed, or that, you know, that reporters be fired.

Robert Fisk: The abuse against a journalist is something you just have to take into account. Both literally, and metaphorically. If you work in the Middle East, you've got to take the sticks and stones. What I object to is that my American colleagues don't seem to be prepared to do that.

Seth Ackerman: Even in Israel itself, you can find the main daily newspapers like Ha'aretz, for example, provides coverage on the ground, and analysis. Some of which has views on the conflict that would be beyond the pale for an American journalist at the New York Times to write.

Robert Fisk: The main, major television news networks and newspapers in the United States have long ago got their fear to be supreme over their duties as journalists. They are not monitoring the centers of power when it comes to the relationship between America and the Middle East, Israel and America, and America and the Arabs and Palestinians, they will not ask the right questions, they will not report it using the correct words, they will not confront the reality, and they've given up. And I think once you acquire a fear, it's very difficult to get rid of it.

PR STRATEGY 01: HIDDEN OCCUPATION

Prof. Robert Jensen: One of the things you have to keep in mind when you're looking at how media report on something like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, is not only understanding what's there in the story, but more importantly, what's not there. What's being left out? In that sense, absence is as vital as presence, in terms of how people make sense of the story. Context is everything.

Alisa Solomon: The context, that's often missing from the current reporting, is that the Palestinian uprising is a revolt against the 34 year long occupation. And if there's no occupation in the story, then the story doesn't really make sense and the occupation is frequently missing.

Seth Ackerman: A typical TV news report, for example, on NBC news, will show dramatic pictures of these confrontations, where Palestinians are confronting Israeli troops, and the Israeli troops are responding.

Cutaway/CNN: But Friday saw more clashes and headlines between stone-throwing Palestinian youths and Israeli soldiers armed with...

Seth Ackerman: For most Americans, who don't understand the history of the conflict, this is an example of riots that are going on where the authorities are taking measures to crack down. What's not mentioned is the fact that these confrontations are taking place on occupied territory, that the Israeli troops who are there are defending an occupation that doesn't have any international legitimacy. It's illegal.

Major Stav Adivi: The American media, they are concentrating only on the deeds, on the violence, and not on the reasons and not on the basic facts of occupation.

Cutaway/CBS: Israeli troops were pelted with stones and they responded with tear gas and rubber bullets.

Hanan Ashrawi: This is not presented as an army using its arsenal against young people who are largely unarmed and who are protesting because of the occupation, the siege, the total oppression of the whole nation.

Narrator: The lack of context is so dramatic that only 4% of the network news reports on the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip mention that the West Bank and Gaza Strip are occupied.

Seth Ackerman: The Israeli military sends its troops into the occupied territories to defend what is considered an illegal occupation. And when the population there resists, Israel is presented as being under attack.

Cutaway/news: Israel was responding to an attack today...Israel has beefed up forces following a Palestinian motor attack...

Hanan Ashrawi: They don't present it as saying Israel is the aggressor or Israel is killing people. On their own land, in their own homes, as an occupier. But no, Israel is different, being itself.

Cutaway/news montage: To Sharon, the West Bank invasion is simple, self-defense... The Israeli Prime Minister reiterated Israel's rights to self-defense.

Hussein Ibish: Israel's basic posture is anything but defensive. Israel is the only country in the world right now, which in contravention to U.N. Security Council resolutions maintains tens of thousands of heavily armed troops. Outside its borders, inside in somebody else's country, for the sole purpose of taking their land away from them and in the process forcing them to live under the worst form of tyranny imaginable, which is a foreign military dictatorship.

Hanan Ashrawi: The tanks, the gun-strips, the snipers, they are all on Palestinian land, and I don't see why they have to protect themselves on our land if they're occupying our land. That context is always missing.

Cutaway/FOX: A crowd throwing stones and homemade stun-grenades at the soldiers. The troops opening fire and killing two Palestinians and injuring...

Hanan Ashrawi: So even when Israel is busy murdering people in cold blood, it is always presented as part of the self-defense mechanism of Israel.

Prof. Noam Chomsky: When Israel, in the occupied territories now, claim that they have to defend themselves, they are defending themselves in the sense that any military occupier has to defend itself against the population that they're crushing.

Cutaway/ABC: Prime Minister Ariel Sharon justified the siege as self-defense.

Prof. Noam Chomsky: You can't defend yourself when you're militarily occupying somebody else's land. It's not defense. Call it what you like, it's not defense.

PR STRATEGY 02: INVISIBLE COLONIZATION

Prof. Karen Pfeifer: Once we know that the occupation is illegal and we know that it's subject to International condemnation and it's very costly in terms of lives and money, then we have to ask why Israel continues to maintain the occupation. And the reason is, because it intends to annex the territories eventually.

Narrator: For decades, Israel has been colonizing Palestinian land by building settlements on that land. The settlements are in contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention that forbids the transfer of population into land colonized by illegal force. The settlements are dotted throughout the Palestinian territories and are set up strategically, often on hilltops to give Israel military control of the land and its natural resources, namely water. The settlements, together with the surrounding land that they have expropriated, control over 40% of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Israeli settlements are Jewish-only settlements, and they are linked together by a network of bypass roads that carve up the West Bank, restricting Palestinians freedom of movement, and simultaneously link the settlements to Israel proper. The strategic placement of the Israeli settlements and the bypass roads can be described as an Israeli matrix of control over the occupied territories.

Hussein Ibish: The purpose of the settlements, the purpose of the bypass roads, is in the end, to create a web of control that will make Israel a permanent possessor of the territory, and the rights and interests and concerns of the indigenous people of the land, the Palestinians, the big majority, are not of interest here.

Prof. Karen Pfeifer: Given that Israel's goal is eventual annexation of the occupied territories, the settlements of course are a means to attaining that goal, but they would

appear to be threatening colonies if they were presented in their true light, so better to hide their identity, to sanitize the language that describes them.

Robert Fisk: CNN sent out a memorandum to its staff in the Middle East, In the future, Gilo is to be called a neighborhood.

Cutaway/CNN: The Jewish neighborhood of Gilo on the outskirts of Jerusalem...the Israeli neighborhood, Gilo....Gilo, a Jewish neighborhood in East Jerusalem...

Robert Fisk: Now there's a great deal of difference between a colony, which is what the settlement is, and a neighborhood. A settlement, an Israeli settlement, is built for Jews and Jews only on Arab land. And it's illegal. Against international law. A neighborhood is just a nice friendly place.

Cutaway/CBS: This is Southern Jerusalem, a quiet neighborhood, while the only thing beating down on me is the rain, bullets frequently rain in this area, which is the reason those Israeli tanks are right back there.

Robert Fisk: So by pressuring journalists into changing the use of words, by making them alter their lexicon, by linguistically changing the narrative story, not only are the journalists kept in line, this is the language, this is the system of linguistics you much use, but it also successfully takes away from one side of the dispute: The Palestinians. The reasons they're acting the way they do. Whether we approve of it or say that it's a wicked thing.

Prof. Robert Jensen: When we look at the British press, which remains pretty independent of the Israeli Public Relations machine, you get a very different story about the settlements. They emphasize both the illegality and their vital importance in the conflict.

Cutaway/BBC: They look like ordinary Israeli neighborhoods, suburban, modern and comfortable, but the Jewish settlements in the Occupied West Bank in Gaza Strip are now the key issue in the conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis. There is something like 200 Israelis living on land captured from the Palestinians in the War of 1967. The government knows it's under intense pressure to stop expanding the settlements, which are illegal under international law. But the people left with no choice are the Palestinians. They see every new Israeli building on occupied land as a gross invasion of their sovereignty. And they insist that the Israelis must stop all building.

Prof. Robert Fisk: In contrast to British coverage, in American news coverage, the Settlements are downplayed. And questions regarding their legality are rarely raised. In fact there are times when they're flat-out legitimized and defended.

Cutaway/CBS: Israeli settlements are so interspersed throughout Palestinian territory

that a border around them all would be too long to defend, and evacuating Jewish settlements, even those deep inside the territories, is politically impossible. At least, for now.

Prof. Karen Pfeifer: When American reports tend to obscure, is the fact that the Israeli government has promoted the settlements as part of the strategy.

Cutaway/BBC: The Right is in government, and armed with bulldozers, expanding in the West Bank and Gaza, staking a claim to the land, making space for new immigrants, whose numbers are meant to counter the fast-growing Arab population.

Hussein Ibish: The insertion of a large, Israeli population in certain areas gives the Israeli government a rationalization for refusing to relinquish control and to give Israel an argument that this part of the occupied territories has become so Israeli, has so many Jews living in it, that it simply has to be annexed to the state of Israel, which is why you can see East Jerusalem completely ringed by a pattern of heavily fortified Israeli settlements, designed to cut Jerusalem off from the rest of the West bank for the permanent domination and eventual annexation. At the very least, key areas if not in the end the whole thing.

Prof. Karen Pfeifer: The settlements are illegitimate by International Law. But what's worse is that many of the occupants of the settlements, their founders, and people who live there today are very aggressive toward Palestinians, they go around fully armed, sub-machine guns, they carry grenades and they frequently threaten Palestinians.

Cutaway/BBC: In Hebron, settlers initiated more clashes. They say they're tired of coming under attack. But their communities are illegal under International Law...They say they set fire to Palestinian fields, smashed cars, and vandalized shops, and all this under what is being called officially a Cease-Fire...Settlers have vowed to intensify protests against the cease-fire, they want Ariel Sharon to hit back. Some of them have already carried out their own vigilante attacks on Arab villages.

Major Stav Adivi: They're sitting on a hundred thousand settlers in little settlements all over the West Bank, inside or very near Palestinian places, and they're treating the Palestinians in patronizing way, violent way, they are not saying, Live and let to live. They are trying to take from the Palestinians their dignity, their land, their homes, their traditional way of life.

Narrator: Israeli colonization of Palestinian land has been a two-fold process. On the one hand, Israel has been constructing Jewish-only settlements on Palestinian land, on the other; Israel has taken various measures to drive Palestinians out. One way this has been done is by demolishing Palestinian homes. In two-and-a-half years since the outbreak of the Intifada, Israel has demolished over one thousand Palestinian homes, making thousands of civilians homeless.

Sam Hussein: It's a large-scale process of demolishing the homes of Palestinians, in order to affect what Israel is largely about, which is controlling the territory, making life uncomfortable for the Palestinians, making Palestinians leave their homes on the West Bank, it's tacitly a gradual, ethnic cleansing process.

Rabbi Arik Ascherman: If you are a Palestinian family, and you have clear and uncontested title to your land, even, clear security record, you could stand on your head! And in most cases, you're not going to get a legal building permit. If you have to go ahead and build in any case, for demographic reasons, what have you, you build an illegal home and it's subject to demolition. And thousands of people have been made homeless this way. And today there are at least two thousand standing demolition orders, and of course each of those orders represents a family. So basically land which belonged to Palestinian families for generations is now considered State Land.

Cutaway/BBC: This was home to fifteen people, eleven of them children. Too much for Zia Al-Hirbawi to take--he helped build the house with his own bare hands. This is the babies food, a relative says, Israel, what are you doing? It was making a family homeless, they had no permit to build, but for Palestinians in Jerusalem, permits are almost impossible to get.

Prof. Robert Jensen: If you watch American coverage, Israel's demolition of Palestinian homes is presented as simply enforcement of the law. What we don't see is how the law is unequally applied in order to steal Palestinian land.

Cutaway/news: Israeli bulldozers demolish two Palestinian homes under construction in East Jerusalem; Israeli's said the owner had no building permit...

Prof. Karen Pfeifer: The demolition of Palestinian homes is done on the excuse that they're not legal, that they don't have permits to be built. When in reality, this is a way of clearing Palestinians from the land, making it impossible for them to live there. Pushing more and more of them off, in order to claim the land for Israel.

PR STRATEGY 03: VIOLENCE IN A VACCUUM

Narrator: Palestinian resistance to the occupation has been both non-violent and violent. Some of the violent resistance has been aimed at Israeli soldiers and civilians in the occupied territories. And some has been spilling over into Israel proper in the form of Suicide Bombers.

Cutaway/BBC: Scene of chaos and destruction. Rescue workers rushing to search for the living among the carnage. The center had been packed; it was just before the Jewish Sabbath. Now shoppers lay dead on the street, victims of a suicide bomber. This

woman came looking for her loved ones, not knowing if they were alive or dead. There was no mercy here today; no thought about the baby inside this pushchair, but the infant did survive the slaughter. This was a devastating attack on innocent civilians, and Israeli's have reason to fear more days like this. Islamic extremists say they have other suicide bombers who are ready and waiting to do just what this one did.

Robert Fisk: I was very close to the pizzeria bombing in Jerusalem in August of last year. And I got there faster than the police did. And I saw an Israeli baby without a head, a woman with a chair-leg sticking out of her chest. My reporting, for example, I'm pretty brutal about suicide bombers, I call them wicked. And I say that. I use the word. But I also make a point of saying why.

Rabbi Michael Lerner: When you have a population that is being occupied, when their fundamental human rights are being systematically denied, when they're not allowed to move from city to city or from place to place, without huge amount of harassment. When they're being subject to torture. When people are essentially in desperate conditions. It's not a surprise that they're going to be very very very angry.

Gila Svirsky: They feel so helpless in the face of a powerful Israeli army, that some Palestinians think the only answer, and I condemn this, but some Palestinians think the only response to a powerful army is a guerilla tactic, going into Israel and setting bombs off in cities. And there's increasing support for this among Palestinians because of the growing frustration of not getting anywhere.

Major Stav Adivi: They are doing it with horrible means, it's something inhuman, I totally condemn it, but we have to understand that these are the effects of the occupation.

Prof. Karen Pfeifer: In the non-American coverage, BBC for example, the suicide bombings are generally put in the context of the occupation. That they are a response to conditions, which are very dehumanizing to Palestinians and against which they are defenseless.

Cutaway/BBC: The attack, a reply to Ariel Sharon's devastating air strikes. We found the bombers family in their modest house near Bethlehem, not militants or gunmen, just ordinary people. Ariel Sharon has made good on his threat of a huge military offensive. And this may be the only result: more Palestinian attacks, not less. A suicide bombing in this supermarket today. Just what Sharon is trying to stop. But all the tanks in the world are no substitute for a political settlement. Today's bomber was not prepared to wait. Here, a brief glimpse of her face: not a hardened fighter, but a girl of 16.

Rabbi Michael Lerner: But there is absolutely no understanding on the part of the American media, and hence on the part of the American population that's educated by that media, about what creates this circumstance.

Cutaway MSNBC: MSNBC investigates the mind of a suicide bomber. So hard for us to understand why they would be trying to sacrifice their lives in this way.

Rabbi Michael Lerner: Israel occupies, people strike at Israel against that occupation, they use means that I think are wrong means, namely, the terror, and then Israel imposes punishment on the entire Palestinian people. Which then generates a climate in which it is much easier for the terrorists to recruit.

BBC: Praying when we arrived, the men who believe in suicide bombings. All are senior militants, the kind Arafat has promised to arrest. They kept their guns by their sides for our meeting." At the end of the day, Arafat will have to halt the arrests," says this man, who is on Israel's Most Wanted list. "He can't stop us resisting the Israeli Occupation." ... The Israeli Security Cabinet has agreed to still further intensify its operations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It's difficult to see how such a move can fail to provoke still more Palestinian attacks.

Professor Robert Jensen: In contrast to the International Press, in American media there is a reversal of cause and effect in that the occupation is framed as a response to suicide bombings.

Cutaway/ news montage: The Israeli's moved into the Occupied territories to root out the suicide bombers... The Israeli's are now stationed in force all over the West Bank. Their iron grip designed to prevent suicide bombers getting through.

Seth Ackerman: And it's true, that Israeli's do feel insecure, and they have very good legitimate reasons for feeling insecure, but overwhelmingly reporters will see the source of the insecurity they feel as Palestinian "hatred," is a word that you see all the time. That this conflict isn't motivated by a struggle over power over land or territory, but simply by Palestinian hatred.

News: A Palestinian man emerged from a taxi on a busy shopping street in downtown Jerusalem with a machine gun in his hands and hate in his eyes.

Sam Hussein: If the Occupation is invisible, as it's been rendered by how the United States government looks at this and how that's echoed in the media in many cases, then the reason for the frustration seems nonsensical and therefore they're just inherently upset people, they're violent people and so on, it's either in their genes or in their culture.

Cutaway: Neither the best intentions of the Saudis, nor the power of the Israelis could stop another young zealot willing to die so he could kill Jews on Passover.

Sam Hussein: It's spun in such a way so as to justify Israeli Occupation.

Cutaway: Israeli soldiers say their actions are justified. "They use suicide bombers," he said, "we use tanks."

Rabbi Arik Ascherman: Yes, Israeli's are being shot and killed and so yes, Israel does have real defense needs. At the same time, defense in Israel has become this mantra and once people hear the word "defense," they stop thinking. And so all too often, anything can be called "defense" and then justified.

Cutaway ABC: Israeli bulldozers and tanks moved into the refugee camp at two in the morning, two hours later, 50 poor Palestinian homes had been flattened. The raid was widely seen as retaliation for the deaths of four Israeli soldiers yesterday.

Hussein Ibish: Israel is always casts itself and is always cast by the media as reactive, as simply responding to the Palestinian aggression. Israel strikes back against terror, Israel retaliates, Israel responds. Palestinians attack, Israel retaliates.

Cutaway/news montage: A day of Palestinian attacks and Israeli retaliation...Israel resumed its retaliation...Violence could escalate over the coming days as Israel retaliates...

Prof. Robert Jensen: Calling Palestinian actions "attacks" and Israeli actions "retaliation" is meaningful. "Retaliation" suggests a defensive stance in response to violence initiated by someone else. It places a responsibility for the violence on the party provoking retaliation. In other words, Palestinian violence, like suicide bombings, is seen as aggression and thus as the cause and the origin of the conflict.

Colin Powell: That's what has caused this crisis to come upon us. Not the absence of a political way forward, but terrorism in its rawest form.

Prof. Robert Jensen: Since the September 11th attacks on the U.S., Israel's P.R. strategy has been to frame all Palestinian actions by, violent or not, terrorism. To the extent that they can do that, they've repackaged an illegal military occupation as part of America's War on Terrorism.

Cutaway/news montage: This is Israel's War on terrorism. F16's hit a Palestinian police station in the Gaza strip this morning.... The case the Israeli's are trying to make: This is no different than what the U.S. is doing in Afghanistan...Prime Minister Ariel Sharon declared on National Television tonight that he was determined to root out what he called the Terrorist Infrastructure in the Palestinian Territories...Israeli Prime Minister Sharon said his nation has taken many steps to cooperate in the search for peace, but the only thing it's had in return is Terrorism, Terrorism, and more Terrorism.

Prof. Robert Jensen: Israel has made Americans empathize with its position by linking itself emotionally to Americans' 9/11 experience. Making a connection where there really isn't one. It's been breathtaking how American journalists have allowed themselves to be manipulated in this way.

Cutaway: A New York Delegation toured suicide-bombing sites today. Mayor Rudolph Giuliani said, "the people of Jerusalem and New York City stand shoulder to shoulder against terrorism."

PR STRATEGY 04: Defining Who Is Newsworthy

Narrator: In nearly three years since the outbreak of the Intifada, over 500 Israeli Civilians have been killed. Most inside Israel by Palestinian suicide bombers. On the Palestinian side, over 2,000 civilians have been killed, most in the Occupied Territories by Israeli Soldiers. Yet, while many innocent people have died on both sides, not all are considered newsworthy in the American media.

Hussein Ibish: There have been periods where almost no Israelis have been killed and large numbers of Palestinians have been killed. Those periods have been referred to, routinely, by the American press as periods of "relative calm." What that means is, it's relatively calm if only Arabs are dying.

Prof. Robert Jensen: In August of 2002, news outlets were reporting a period of "relative quiet."

Cutaway: Relative quiet was held in the West Bank Town of Bethlehem.

Prof. Robert Jensen: What the reports failed to mention was that during the same time period, 39 Palestinian civilians were killed. 24 of them were women and children.

Gila Svirsky: The media presents the situation as being, somehow, there are victims on both sides, but the Israeli victims are nearer, dearer...

Prof. Robert Jensen: For example, when in March 2002, 29 Israelis were killed in Natanya by a suicide bomber, that killing was rightly labeled a massacre.

ABC news cutaway: But how much the Palestinians maybe suffering is not the main Israeli concern now, they'll be burying the 28th victim tomorrow from the Natanya Passover Massacre.

Prof. Robert Jensen: However, when a few weeks later, when at least as many Palestinian civilians had been killed, when Israeli forces invaded Jenin, an event that was widely condemned as a war crime by Human Rights Organizations, American news

outlets downplayed the event, and questioned and dismissed the possibility of a massacre.

Cutaway/news montage: U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell said today, he has "seen no evidence of a massacre"... They're still digging up the rubble of Jenin, still trying to get to the bottom of what really happened here... Palestinians claimed that in Jenin, hundreds of bodies are buried under the rubble in the center of town. The Israeli Army says that the death toll there is only a matter of a few dozen.

Prof. Karen Pfeifer: In the American media, on television of course, but even in "sophisticated" media like the New York Times, Israelis, whether they're Israeli citizens or settlers, or soldiers, are presented in a very humane, human way. In a way in which the humans can identify with them.

Cutaway: 23 Israeli soldiers were killed in the fighting; one was Mark and Reena Robinson's 21-year-old son, Matanya. His name means, "God's gift." (Father:) "There is a saying in Hebrew, God gives, and God takes. And he took him."

Hanan Ashrawi: You have, for example, an Israeli soldier, who's on Palestinian territory, shooting Palestinians if he gets injured or killed. Immediately you get the fullness of his humanity. You go to his funeral, you see his grieving mother or wife or child. You learn his name, his hopes, his dreams, where he came from, and so on. And yet you have, you know, hundreds and thousands of Palestinians killed. And you never get to know their name. You never get to see a funeral. You're not exposed to the grief of the family. You don't know that these children probably many of them were shot in their own homes and their own backyards or on their way to school. It doesn't matter. They become part of the abstraction. You know, "400 Palestinians killed," that's it, it's a number.

Cutaway/news montage: In the West Bank, a car explosion killed 3 Palestinians... 6 Palestinians were killed and 45 wounded by Israeli troops in various incidents...

Gila Svirsky: There's no attention paid to the Palestinian victims. When an Israeli missile hits a building, and kills collaterally a number of Palestinians, it's as if that's the price they, that has to be paid.

Cutaway/news montage: The F16s leveled several Palestinian security buildings, killed 12 Palestinian policemen.... A funeral for a Palestinian killed with two of his children in an explosion yesterday.... [Images of guns]

Gila Svirsky: There's no in-depth empathy, there's no superficial empathy, for the fact that these were innocent people who are being killed.

Cutaway: In the West Bank town of Ramala, an Israeli tank destroyed a pickup truck

belonging to Abu Quaaaiq. He wasn't in it. His wife and three of his children were. They were all killed, and so were two other children nearby.

Hanan Ashrawi: This sort of blowing up of a car and using missiles against people who, you know, raining death from the skies, is something normal. It's part of the procedure.

Cutaway/news montage: The Israelis say they use the F16s because they can do more damage. Tonight they hit the Palestinians hard... Tonight in Gaza, Israeli helicopter gun ships lit up the night sky... Israel attacked Palestinian targets with F16 warplanes, killing 11 people...

Hanan Ashrawi: So this normalization of the horror, and the exclusion of the human dimension has been part of the ongoing policy.

Cutaway/news montage: About 20 Palestinians were killed today as Israeli warplanes, troops and tanks targeted Palestinian militants... Israeli soldiers fired on Palestinians violating the military curfew, at least four were killed....

Prof. Robert Jensen: There are other ways of reporting on Palestinian victims. In fact, when you look at the British press, the ways in which the Palestinian victims are dismissed and downplayed in the American media, the ways in which their deaths are justified in American coverage becomes even more glaring. A really clear example of this is the BBC story on Palestinian kids killed by an Israeli booby-trap, and one the next day by Israeli soldiers.

BBC: Five small bodies on their way to the grave carried shoulder high, a martyr's funeral in Gaza for the dead schoolboys. Sources in the Israeli government and Security Services have admitted they were probably the victims of an Israeli booby-trap. Victims who died side-by-side. Two sets of brothers and a cousin. All members of one devastated Palestinian family, the Allahstals. Nayim lost his oldest and his youngest who was only 6. "Both good boys," he told me, "who never gave any trouble." This Israeli Minister wants a full inquiry, but claims it wasn't a civilian area. I stood there yesterday, this is a place where children pass to go to school, this is a place where people cultivate, I have stood there and I have seen it. Now is it appropriate that a roadside bomb should be planted in this place? [Minister:] "That's exactly what we're investigating." Even as he spoke, Palestinians say another child was killed in Gaza. They claim Israeli forces fired on these stone throwers, killing 15 year-old, Wa'el. The army denies it.

Prof. Robert Jensen: If you look at the American coverage from the same day, you'd struggle to even think of it as the same event. The report practically blames the victims for their own deaths.

CNN: In Gaza, a Palestinian teenager was killed in a clash with Israeli troops, following the funerals of five boys. They died Thursday when one of them kicked an unexploded tank shell.

Hanan Ashrawi: There's anti-septic language, cleaned-up language, that doesn't not show the human attitude, the substance, and does not really show the inherent injustice of the situation.

Prof. Robert Jensen: It is possible for Journalists and media outlets committed to Independence and Balance to show the humanity of both Israelis and Palestinians.

BBC: The army insists it only returned fire today when its troops were in danger, but it was two Palestinian teenagers who were killed. This mother lost her eldest son. Shadi Siam was just 18, deaf, unable to speak, unable to protect himself. Just like 6 year-old Sasha Sourkin. Months ago his family left Russia for Israel. Last Friday, they were victims of a suicide bombing attack. So far, Sasha hasn't asked for his father, hospital staff believes inside, he already knows he's dead.

PR STRATEGY 05: Myth of U.S. Neutrality

Seth Ackerman: You'll see on most commentators in the media, urging, constantly urging the U.S. to become more engaged. More engaged in the negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Cutaway/news montage: The U.S. must get more involved in settling the conflict... There are growing calls for President Bush to take on a more active role... Nearly everyone agrees the U.S. must play a more active role in.

Seth Ackerman: The premise of that view is the idea that's stated over and over again, that the U.S. is merely trying to bring about a Peace, trying to bring the two sides together, it has no preconceptions about, you know, whose side is right and whose side is wrong, you know which side needs to make more compromises and which doesn't. And I think that's a fundamentally inaccurate view of how U.S. diplomacy has worked over the past several years.

Prof. Karen Pfeifer: The United States has presented itself as a neutral broker between these two parties, but if you look at its actions rather than its words, you see that it has favored Israel. Almost 100% of the time. The U.S. has vetoed resolutions many times that would have put a stop to Israel's actions in the territory.

BBC: In New York, a push by the Palestinians and their supporters to win a Security Council Resolution, calling for an end to the violence, was vetoed by the United States... Israel has rejected U.N. involvement in the conflict, backed by its closest ally, the United

States.

Prof. Noam Chomsky: The U.S. blocked diplomatic moves from the Arab States, from Europe, from the P.L.O., anything, because it just refused to accept this kind of diplomatic settlement. Well there's a name for that in the United States, it's called a Peace Process. What it actually is is the process by which the United States prevented peace.

Cutaway/news montage: The United States has struggled for decades with widely varying success and failure, to help ease this Mid-east conflict...

Prof. Karen Pfeifer: "The United States is a neutral broker between Israel and the Palestinians" is a cruel joke on both Palestinians and the Arab world at large. The United States has exercised its veto, many many times, in the Security Council. But perhaps worse than that is that it provides billions of dollars in aid to Israel, a lot of it military aid. And a lot of it in the most lethal possible form.

Narrator: American aid to Israel totals over \$6 billion per year. Israel receives \$3 billion in direct aid, 2/3 of which is military aid, intended for the purchase of American-made weapons. In addition, Israel receives \$3 billion in indirect aid. At least half of which is used for military ventures, such as subsidizing Israel's domestic armaments industry. Not included in this figure are other forms of military aid, such as weapons given to Israel free of charge including fighter planes and attack helicopters. Total U.S. aid, to Israel, since 1949, has amounted to more than \$100 billion. Making Israel, a country the size of New Jersey, the fourth most powerful military in the world. In possession of the largest fleet of F16 fighter planes outside the United States.

BBC: The International community says that better not mean more of this, the devastation caused by Israel's F16s. So Israel's tanks, missiles, helicopters and gun ships are no longer enough, now Ariel Sharon has used fighter planes. America supplied the planes, seen here in action in Lebanon.

Sam Hussein: The pipeline of violence is very much stamped Made in U.S.A. I'm the United States has been brokering an alleged Peace Process for how long? And what does the situation look like? I mean if peace were the obvious, genuine goal, it would be such a failure that it would've ended a long time ago. Clearly, in the name of peace, other things are going on here.

Noam Chomsky: Control over Middle-East oil will provide us with veto power. Over Japan, and other countries. They rely on Middle East oil. If we have our hand on the lever, we have veto power over what they do. These are techniques of world control and the source of an enormous profit and wealth, not just for the energy corporations.

Prof. Karen Pfeifer: The United States, at least the Bush Administration and its

strategists, have recognized that the E.U. and possibly Russia are potential competitors, and so being able to keep control of trade, investment, and the oil industry in a region that is very close to Russia, very close to Europe, this is a way for the United States to maintain its hegemony.

Noam Chomsky: There's a framework of State Policy that's been in place for about 30 years, of supporting Israel as a kind of base for projection of U.S. power in the region.

Prof. Robert Jensen: That support intensified under Clinton, intensified even more under the Bush Administration, with the rise to power of the Neo-Conservatives in the Defense Department, such as Paul Wolfowitz, Douglas Fieth, Donald Rumsfeld, and others like them.

Robert Fisk: Now, in effect, you have so many people close to Israel in the U.S. administration, I think Israel's in the White House.

Cutaway/news montage: This was the 6th meeting between Mr. Bush and Prime Minister Sharon. [Bush:] "Every time he comes I learn a lot. "

Robert Fisk: There's no difference any longer between U.S. policy in the Middle East and Israeli policy.

Colin Powell: All of us here tonight are brought together by a deep commitment to Israel's security, prosperity and freedom. And to the strongest possible relationship between Israel and the United States.

Noam Chomsky: the U.S. wants to make sure that Israel can control the situation by violence, as it does of course, and it will give the diplomatic cover given the military means.

BBC: Congress, which is very very strongly pro-Israeli at the moment, 94 votes to 2, was the way a resolution was passed in the Senate the other day wholeheartedly endorsing everything Israel is doing.

Robert Fisk: At no point, however, has the mainstream media, whether television or newspapers, confronted or challenged this issue in your country, in the United States.

Seth Ackerman: To find critical views in diplomacy, you really have to go beyond the American, the mainstream media. You can find very critical views in the British press, you can even find critical Israeli views in the Israeli press, but whereas there will be some criticisms at the margins, of details of how America conducts its diplomacy in the Middle East, you don't find a real alternative viewpoint in the mainstream media.

Robert Fisk: It is the last taboo subject in America. You can talk about Lesbians,

Blacks, Gays, anything you want, but not America's relationship, or not any serious examination of America's relationship with Israel or what Israel is doing, be it almost always with American weapons.

Prof. Robert Jensen: U.S. journalists are enmeshed in symbiotic relationships with the powerful. Instead of being independent and critical, journalists are typically dependent on policy makers and unwilling to raise the crucial, critical questions. Rather than monitoring the game of power, most journalists are simply part of that game.

Robert Fisk: You only have to see the press conferences, Condoleezza Rice, George Bush, Donald Rumsfeld. It's all on first name.

Cutaway

Ari Fleischer: I'm happy to take your questions. Helen?

Condoleezza Rice: Yeah, April?

Ari Fleischer: David?

Condoleezza Rice: Yes, Wendy?

Ari Fleischer: John?

Robert Fisk: But the relationship between the American journalists, particularly television journalists, and the centers of power, has become incestuous. So close, because an argument couldn't cut you off from access to such a power. So close, that it is impossible any longer to convey what you know about the centers of power. All you can do is say what you think they mean and what you know they say. So what's the point of journalism?

PR STRATEGY 06: Myth of the Generous Offer

Narrator: 1991 marked the beginning of a series of Peace Efforts. Of the most recent and well known, were the negotiations that took place in the summer of 2000 at Camp David, with then-President Bill Clinton, PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat, and former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak. The aftermath of their breakdown is perhaps the clearest example of the Israeli PR Machine at work.

Alisa Solomon: There are two pieces of this narrative that the Israeli Propaganda Machine has been very effective in convincing everybody of. The first is that what happened at Camp David was that Barak made the most generous offer that any Israeli ever had or would make, Arafat answered with violence.

Cutaway/news montage: The charismatic crusader for a Palestinian homeland has rejected what many thought was the best peace deal he could get, and he's failed to stop the terror...In fact two years ago, Ehud Barak did lay it all out on the table. A Palestinian homeland, giving back over 90% of Jewish settlements, even a plan, which

divided Jerusalem.

Rabbi Michael Lerner: What was being offered to the Palestinians was an impossible deal that no Palestinian leader could have possibly accepted.

Hussein Ibish: They proposed creating a Palestinian State in most of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, but this state was not going to have control over its borders, it was not going to have control over its air space, it was not going to have control of the only resource, natural resource, in that area, which were the major aquifers, and it was going to be bifurcated and criss-crossed by Israeli settlements and Israeli roads. So it was going to be broken up into at least four or five different pieces. It was a nominal Palestinian state within, effectively, a greater Israel.

Sam Hussein: It's as if the Palestinians have been put in the basement of their house and they might be allowed most of the rooms, but Israel gets to control all of the hallways and some of the rooms. So you wanna go from your living room to your bedroom? Then you've got to go through Israeli checkpoints. You know from your kitchen to your bathroom you've gotta go through an Israeli checkpoint. Well do you really control your house under that set of circumstances?

Rabbi Michael Lerner: It did not offer Palestinians unimpeded access to their holy sights, and it did not offer Palestinians any solution to the three million Palestinian refugees who live in these refugee camps under horrendous conditions.

Toufic Haddad: The occupation was not being dismembered, it was being made more efficient. It was being consolidated. Where Israel would maintain its strategic interests, whether it would be hilltops or water, whether it would be different agricultural things that they had interests in, and the Palestinians would have what was left, basically. And if they wanted to call it a state, they could call it a state. If they wanted to print postage stamps, they could print postage stamps. If they wanted to have a national anthem, feel free.

Prof. Robert Jensen: The second myth that the Israeli PR machine was able to spin was that Arafat, having rejected the deal of a lifetime, then incited the Intifada out of spite.

Cutaway/News Montage: The failure of these negotiations which the United States supported, in which the Israelis made serious offers, that the Palestinian leadership decided on a strategy of street fighting as a response.

Seth Ackerman: When this latest round of violence broke out, if you look at the editorials that ran in the big, American newspapers, they overwhelmingly said that the cause of the violence was Arafat's rejection of the Camp David accord, and they blamed the Palestinians, and they sided with Israel.

Rabbi Arik Ascherman: This intifada had very little to do with Camp David. Because, on the ground, parallel to what the leaders were talking about who had become so many talking heads, as far as the average Palestinian was concerned. You had ongoing land expropriation. Tree uprooting. Road building. Settlements were being expanded at a quicker pace under Barak than they had been under Netanyahu. Unfair water allocation! Which many Palestinians in the summer and fall had approximately two hours of running water a week! When next-door, you could have a settlement with green lawns, and a swimming pool. So what are people supposed to think? Rightly or wrongly, to this set of people, this is not a "peace process." And even if it is, by the time it is concluded, everything is going to be gone, is gonna be expropriated. So what's in it for me?

Narrator: On September 28th, 2000, Ariel Sharon, then Israel's Defense Minister, sparked the Palestinian Intifada, with a provocative visit to a site in Jerusalem, holy to both Jews and Muslims. Surrounded by hundreds of riot police, Sharon strode onto the contested sacred site as a demonstration of Israel's control of the area. Sharon was met with protests from Palestinians, who began hurling rocks at police, and who then stormed the holy site. Israeli riot police fired tear gas and rubber bullets at the protesters. The rioting quickly spread to other parts of East Jerusalem, and to Ramallah in the West Bank. Dozens, both Israelis and Palestinians, were injured. The Palestinian Intifada had begun.

PR STRATEGY 07: Marginalized Voices

Narrator: Public Relations works not only by controlling the content of media reports, but also by making sure that some voices are never heard. The marginalization of the Israeli Peace Movement in the American media is an example of how this works.

Seth Ackerman: It's been the point of view of the Israeli Peace Movement that for years the fundamental cause of the conflict is the Israeli Occupation of Palestinian Land. And the Settlement Policies. But that view is considered in the United States something that is extremely marginal, that you rarely see that view put forward in the American media.

Gila Svirsky: We, in the Women's Peace camp in Israel, organized a mass vigil of women in black, and a mass march through the streets of Jerusalem. 2,000 women strong, both Israelis and Palestinians. Can you picture that dramatic moment? 2,000 women dressed in black, marching down the streets of Jerusalem, to the walls of the old city, where we hung banners from the walls of the old city, saying "peace" in three languages, Hebrew, Arabic, and English. And guess what? It didn't get into the media.

Prof. Neve Gordon: That's not the kind of image that the media wants to create because then all these images of Jews and Arabs working together, of Palestinians

wanting peace, would create a kind of dissonance. It would contradict the message that the media has been giving us for years and years. Then how do you explain it? You can't explain it.

Narrator: One of the major groups working for peace inside the occupied territories that has not received coverage in the United States is the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions. The committee's work has attracted a range of Israelis committed to peace, including Israeli soldiers.

Major Stav Adivi: Our role is to go over there, and to rebuild Palestinian homes, as a constructive way of resisting occupation. We're going to a Palestinian village and we're standing shoulder-to-shoulder, hand-to-hand, with Palestinian people, who wish to have peace with Israelis. And that way a lot of Palestinians are seeing that there are other Israelis. Not the one who demolishes, but others who are rebuilding. And it keeps a flame of hope for a better future.

Narrator: In January 2001, 53 Israeli Reserve officers in the Israeli Defense Force publicly refused to serve beyond the 1967 borders. They signed a petition stating they would not serve in the Occupied Territories "in order to dominate, expel, starve and humiliate an entire people." Since then, hundreds of Israeli Officers and soldiers have joined the movement Courage to Refuse. For their refusal, they have paid a heavy price, including serving jail time, and labeled "traitors."

Major Stav Adivi: I am an Israeli Patriot, we are an Israeli Patriot, I served more than 25 years in the Israeli army as a major in the IDF. All of us were volunteering to their service in dangerous places, and we earned the right to say that the occupation doesn't serve the security of Israel. And we're doing it from our stand as specialists on Military jobs. We're the military. We know what provides security, and we paid with our time and our energy, some of us paid with our blood in order to keep Israel safe. And if, from our point of view, as patriots, as Zionists, as officers in the Israeli army, we're saying that the occupation has nothing to do with security. We have the right to say it.

Narrator: There are many American Jews who also believe it is their right to speak out against the occupation. Included among them are Jewish-American rabbis. For their refusal to keep silent, they too suffered threats, and intimidation.

Rabbi Michael Lerner: One part of that intimidation has been to say that any Jew who raises criticisms about a current Israeli policy is a "self-hating Jew." But on the contrary, my criticisms and Tikkun Magazines criticisms of Israeli policy flow directly from our commitment to Judaism and our love for the Jewish tradition and our insistence that it be taken seriously, not just as a bunch of empty words, but as a set of principles that we really take seriously and believe in!

Prof. Robert Jensen: Israeli Public Relations machine knows that if the views and

voices of Jews who disagree with its policies were to become public, it would be impossible to maintain the lie that any criticism of Israel is by definition anti-Semitic. In fact the accusation of anti-Semitism has been Israel's most effective strategy in silencing dissent. And American journalists in particular have been targets of this tactic.

Robert Fisk: Any environment in which journalists or any person steps forward and starts making serious criticism of Israel, of America's relationship with Israel, the unconditional support for Israel, the failure for any serious pressure to be put upon Israel by the United States to prevent the building of further settlements for Jews and Jews only on Arab land. Any suggestion that the war between the Israelis and the Palestinians is a colonial war will be met by a deafening chorus of accusations, slanderous and lying though they are, that the person who brings up that subject is in some form an anti-Semite or racist. And this shall remain the constant weapon that is used.

Prof. Robert Jensen: That fact that anti-Semitism is alive and well in the world today makes it all the more important to differentiate between real anti-Semitism, which needs to be opposed and condemned in its own right, and its misuse as a PR strategy. Trying to scare people into silence by conflating any criticism of Israeli policies with anti-Semitism in fact detracts from the very real threat that anti-Semitism does pose.

Robert Fisk: Because there are anti-Semites in the world, there are racists, and if this continued campaign of abuse against decent people, trying to shut them up by falsely accusing them of anti-Semitism continues, the word "anti-Semitism" will become respectable. And that is a great danger. And the really bad guys, and they're around, they are people who want to burn Synagogues just like there are people who want to burn Mosques, they'll start coming into their own.

Is Peace Possible?

Narrator: Through its unconditional support for Israel, the American government has become one of the biggest obstacles to achieving peace. Consequently, the struggle for peace and justice in the Middle East will have to be waged here in the United States.

Noam Chomsky: Because the United States has primary responsibility for this. There's nothing either anti-Semitic or of being a self-hating Jew in condemning U.S. policies which underlie massive atrocities. And have been blocking a peaceful settlement. They've led the world pretty close to war, nuclear war, several times. These are things we ought to be concerned about. I mean, what Israel does, it's for them to worry about. What we do, is for us to worry about.

Sam Hussein: Americans need to wake up. And find out what's happening in their name throughout the world. They have a responsibility if they pretend to live in a

Democratic society, which is being eroded, in terms of how Democratic it is, to find out what your Government's supporting, what it's doing overseas, in your name with your tax dollars.

Noam Chomsky: How many people do not want to send helicopters to attack civilians? If people know what's going on in the occupied territories, they won't want to support it. Anymore than they support other atrocities that we're responsible for. So you keep it quiet. Describe it as "defense against terrorism." Not as brutal military occupation, which is evoking resistance. If U.S. policy shifts, the coverage will shift.

Major Stav Adivi: The occupation doesn't serve security. And if the American public opinion will come to understand this very truth that we believe in, we hope that that administration, that the President, will do whatever he can in order to help to facilitate a Peace Talks which will bring end to the occupation on one hand, safety and security to Israel on the other hand, and decent life for the Palestinians, as he suggested in his speech. He said it very beautifully, but he's doing nothing about it.

Gila Svirsky: The only way Israel will have peace and security is by making Peace with our neighbors. The only way that we will have a safe Israel is by making a just peace with the Palestinians.

Prof. Neve Gordon: Their struggle in many ways is a just struggle. And they're struggling for a state. We in Israel have a state, the American people have a state, why shouldn't the Palestinian people have a state?

[END]