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زبانهای اروپایی

APRIL 6, 2018

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09.04.2018

## CNN: Blaming the Palestinian Victim



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As Palestinians continue to struggle under the heavy, deadly hand of U.S.-sponsored Israeli oppression, the world's governments mainly ignore them. This is business as usual for most governments, including U.S. officials, many of whom are 'PEP' – Progressive Except for Palestine.

March 30 is Land Day in Palestine, a day commemorated annually to mark events first held in 1976, in response to a major land theft announced by Israel. This year, tens of thousands of peaceful demonstrators camped and marched on the Palestinian side of the Palestine – Israel border, once again demanding the basic human rights that the world community has refused them. In response, Israeli snipers killed at least 18 unarmed Palestinians.

On April 1, CNN's loftily titled 'International Diplomatic Editor', Nic Robertson, offered his pearls of wisdom on this situation. He wasted no time in both showing his ignorance of the current events, and his desire to blame the victim.

We will look at just a few quotations from his ill-informed editorial. We will start with the title of the article.

*"The Timing of the Gaza Protest is No Coincidence."*

Is there anyone who is familiar with the situation in Palestine who thought it was a coincidence? The organizers were clear from the start: the demonstration would start on Land Day and continue to May 15, the day of the Nakba, or catastrophe, when, on that date in 1948, three-quarters of a million Palestinians were displaced from their homes, with no voice in the matter, no choice and no recompense. Does Robertson not know that this current protest was to be a major event, planned carefully to hopefully draw international attention to the plight of the Palestinians? Or did he, in his oh-so-insightful way, see that those crafty Palestinians were up to something, hidden from view but obvious to his particular brand of cleverness?

In this bizarre article, Robertson recognized that the scheduled end of the protest coincides with the relocation of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, something which the Palestinians and the vast majority of the world oppose. Said he, again demonstrating that particular intelligence that is clear throughout his article: "Given that Palestinians oppose this move, the timing of the protest is not likely a coincidence." Right.

*"Like so many battles of yesteryear, both sides arrive to this current field of conflict carrying a weight of historic grievances, armed with today's political imperatives."*

Let's look for a moment at some of these 'historic grievances'. Palestinians were driven from their homes so the United Nations could establish the state of Israel. Hundreds of ancient Palestinian villages were bulldozed, leaving not a trace. Sacred shrines and cemeteries received the same fate. Since that time, using the advanced weaponry that the U.S. provides to Israel, thousands of additional Palestinian men, women and children have

been killed, arrested, illegally jailed, displaced, beaten, abused and disregarded by Israeli law. This is ongoing to this day.

On the other hand, Israel must contend with Palestinians throwing stones at its occupying soldiers, and occasionally even slapping one of them. Yes, as Robertson said, there are grievances on both sides.

*“Israeli officials are convinced Hamas is challenging the status quo of Gaza’s limits and is ready to throw down civilian lives to achieve it.”*

Yes, the murders of at least 18 unarmed Palestinians by Israeli snipers, and the injury to at least 700 more, injured with live ammunition, is all Palestine’s fault!

*“In public statements before the confrontation, Israeli officials said an attack on the border fence is an attack on Israel’s sovereignty and pulled no punches on what a response could look like.”*

Robertson neglects a few pertinent facts here, so we will inform him. The vast majority of the protesters were hundreds of yards away from the fence, ON PALESTINIAN LAND. Yet many were shot by Israeli snipers. To read Robertson’s words, one would think that hundreds or even thousands of Palestinians stormed the fence. Yes, a few dozen did approach the fence, but at all times they remained on Palestinian land. And, as mentioned earlier, some of the pesky Palestinians actually threw stones at the ‘brave’ Israeli snipers, who were heavily armed and outfitted against them. All this was happening while Israeli drones dropped tear gas on unarmed and defenseless Palestinians on their own land.

*“To make their message clear, the Israel Defense Forces’ Arabic website posted a video of a young man being shot in the leg; it was accompanied by the caption: ‘This is what will happen to you if you try to get close to our border.’”*

Robertson sees no problem with Palestinians being threatened for committing the ‘crime’ of being ‘close’ to the Israeli border. He did not choose to comment on that at all.

*“It is hard to ignore the calculation on Hamas’s part that some of their protesters would get killed.”*

Was this Hamas’ ‘calculation’, or an expectation, based on Hamas’, and the world’s, knowledge of the savagery of Israel? Robertson, like most U.S. government officials, seems to see Palestinians demanding equal rights from their apartheid oppressor as something that is ‘calculated’ by a scheming ‘terror’ organization.

*In 2014, Robertson met with Khaled Meshaal Hamas’ political leader. In the current article, he says this: “He told me that Hamas does not seek international sympathy*

*through its own victims. Today, that notion is increasingly questioned amid criticism that the group is once again sacrificing civilians for political gain.”*

Once again, he is blaming the victim. The government of Gaza is right to encourage its citizens to peacefully demonstrate for their rights. The government of Israel is in violation of international law by shooting them and tear-gassing them. Yet it is the Palestinians in whom Robertson sees culpability.

It has been some time since this writer has seen such a blatantly one-sided, biased article about Palestinian's struggles on a 'mainstream' news site. Generally, although Israel is usually seen as defending its 'national security', there is usually some bone thrown to Palestinian aspirations for peace, freedom and human rights. But CNN's 'International Diplomatic Editor' was content to find fault only with the Palestinians, a people who have been brutally oppressed by Israel for decades.

Thankfully, Robertson is in the minority, although it is far more than a shame that he is given a national audience. The unspeakable injustices committed against the Palestinians seem to not only continue, but also increase, as more of the world stands up to Israel. Eventually, however, justice will prevail; it's tragic that so many innocent Palestinians must suffer and die before that occurs.