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Palestine, Israel and CNN *Half-truths, Omissions and Distortions*

by ROBERT FANTINA

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As the current cease-fire in the Israeli massacre of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip draws to a close, reports indicate that the two parties are not close to an agreement to extend it. However, it is difficult to know what is actually happening, if one bases their knowledge solely on the mainstream media.

An article in the August 18 edition of CNN indicates clearly the kind of misinformation the news media is presenting about the situation, with much of it including half-truths, omissions and distortions that may be more damaging than outright lies. The following are some examples, with commentary.

“It’s unclear how many of the dead were militants. The United Nations has estimated that about 70% were civilians, but Israel has estimated a higher number of militants.”

Note that CNN did not include any comment on Palestinian estimates, which state that far more than 70% of the victims were civilians. In the view of CNN, only United Nations and Israeli estimates are worth reporting.

“Israel blames Hamas for civilian deaths, saying militants fire rockets from civilian areas and encourage people to stay despite Israeli warnings of impending attacks.”

There is no rebuttal from Palestine; CNN didn't bother to say that Palestinians deny these charges.

"From the first day, the Israeli delegation to Cairo has worked under very clear instructions, to remain steadfast on Israel's security needs," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Sunday."

CNN continues to foster the fantasy that the very existence of a poor, vulnerable little Israel is in grave danger from big, bad Palestine. It makes no mention of the fact that Israel has the most modern weaponry on the planet, provided by the United States, or that Israel receives \$3 billion a year in aid from the U.S., while Palestine receives nothing. It also doesn't mention that many of the weapons used against Palestinians citizens are in violation of international law.

"Palestinians say they want an end to Israel's blockade of Gaza, which they say is suffocating the economy of the small, impoverished strip of land and the lives of its inhabitants."

Note the phrase 'they say', as if there is some doubt about this. The United Nations has condemned this blockade, because it is, indeed, suffocating the economy in the Gaza Strip.

"But Israeli authorities — who retain control of Gaza's airspace, Mediterranean waters and their shared border — say that releasing their grip on what goes into and out of the territory is too risky as things stand."

CNN fails to mention that the only border not mentioned in this sentence, that with Egypt, is controlled by Egypt, which does Israel's bidding. So, in effect, Israel controls all the borders of the Gaza Strip.

"Israel and Hamas, which have fought three major conflicts in the past six years, both seem to be dug in, refusing to give ground on their key demands."

It isn't Israel and Hamas; it is Israel and Palestine. If CNN insists in referring to the Palestinians as 'Hamas', then it must refer to Israel as 'Likud'. Hamas is the party in control of the Gaza Strip; Likud is the party in control of Israel.

Also, to say that they 'have fought three major conflicts' is also untrue. The Gaza Strip has suffered and endured three major bombardments by Israel, killing thousands of Palestinians. Genocide is not a 'conflict'. It is a crime against humanity.

"Without a deal out of the negotiations in Cairo, the stage seems set for further confrontation."

To call genocide a 'confrontation' is an insult not only to the Palestinians, but to anyone who is concerned about human rights anywhere in the world. Over 2,000 Palestinians have been killed; tens of thousands rendered homeless. Hundreds of the dead and homeless are children, many as young as newborns. The death toll of Israelis is 70, with all but three of them soldiers invading Gaza.

One need not look to the news media for information about the Israeli massacre of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, or for information about its ongoing crimes against Palestinians in the West Bank. It is all part of the ongoing genocide of the Palestinian people that Israel has engaged in since its bloody establishment, founded on the ethnic cleansing of at least 750,000 Palestinians in 1947 – 1948. But information is readily available to anyone with access to the Internet. There one can see the reality of life and death for Palestinians. Mangled bodies; anguished, grief-stricken parents; destroyed homes; blood and horror are all there for the world to see, and more and more the world is taking note.

As mentioned previously, this writer has a young friend who has lived his life in the Gaza Strip. He and this writer are in contact when his friend has electricity, and when he is able to access a computer. This is not frequent; much of his time is spent in trying to obtain shelter, food and water for himself and his family. Their home was destroyed by U.S.-made bombs, delivered by Israel. He also spends time tending to three younger brothers, the youngest only nine, who were seriously injured by Israeli bombs. Such information is not part of CNN's news reporting.

Nor is coverage of the thousands of people in various cities around the world, including Tel Aviv, who demonstrate against Israeli crimes. But tens of millions of people on Twitter, Facebook and other social media sites are getting this information. People like this writer's friend are sending pictures and information about their experiences, and such information is being widely disseminated. Finally, the world is taking notice, becoming more aware of Palestinian oppression and Israeli lies, and seeing genocide happening in front of them.

Palestinians can have no hope of justice from any U.S.-brokered agreement; the Israeli lobby in the U.S. is too strong. But the growing ostracism of Israel by academics, entertainers and others, and the boycotting of Israeli products by ever-increasing numbers of people the world over, will bring positive results for Palestinians, as these actions did a generation ago for South Africans. One hopes the results will soon be seen, so the horrific suffering of the Palestinian people can end.