

Meltdown at Qana

Israeli sponsored Atrocities in the Holy Land

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In the final phase of the ministry of Jesus, he performed miracles. The first of Jesus's final array of miracles took place at a wedding at Qana in the Galilee. The Madonna attended the wedding, and she told Jesus that the party had no wine. Filling three stone jars with water, the attendants realized that Jesus had transformed the inert mineral water into a fine wine. One week later, Jesus would go to Jerusalem for Passover where he would enter his final conflict and suffer crucifixion.

Qana Atrocity, 30th July 2006.

This past weekend, an Israeli bomb incinerated 37 school children and killed dozens more in the town of Qana, Lebanon, the same location that provided the backdrop for Jesus's first miracle in the final phase of his ministry.

In the aftermath of the atrocity at Qana, western policy for the Middle East hit critical mass triggering a meltdown of its moral authority.

While she was meeting in Tel Aviv with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Condoleezza Rice's request to visit Beirut was spurned by the Prime Minister of Lebanon, Fouad Siniora, who informed the US Secretary of State that her jet will not be allowed to land in his war-torn country. Instead of Rice's summit conference, a chilling scene unfolded in Beirut.

A huge throng stormed the UN building, breaking its shatterproof glass windows and carrying placards proclaiming, "Condy, ur bombs?!! Nice gifts to our children." And, "Condy, Thanks for ur smart Bombs??!!"

Searingly unpopular, Condoleezza Rice is now reviled as a demonic persecutor of peoples - especially children - across the globe, a fit accomplice to the war crimes attributed to her masters, George Bush, Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld.

In his official remarks following the Qana tragedy, Prime Minister Fouad Siniora praised Hezbollah for its 'sacrifices' in protection of the Lebanese people, and he accused Israel of committing "war crimes". Unexpectedly, Siniora cancelled all further meetings with Rice telling her that she is no longer welcome in his country. Rebuked by the Lebanese, Rice slinked back to Washington where she purports to preside over a new plan for a ceasefire.

After hundreds of protestors in Beirut launched their militant attack on the UN headquarters to demand immediate multilateral intervention, Kofi Annan called an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council. Even Pope Benedict XVI was finally driven to make what for him must have been a wretched pronouncement in view of his history of Islamophobic diatribes

and warm political relations with George Bush. After the desecration of Qana, the Pope was literally compelled to issue his belated plea to stop the Israeli reign of terror and violence.

Oddly, a spokesman for the US Department of State named 'Adam Ereli' actually made the official announcement of the 48-hour cessation of bombing by Israel. Ereli, a deeply conservative Yale graduate, is a strident Islamophobe, a harsh critic of Syria and a stalwart defender of Richard Perle's peculiar brand of neoconservatism. Ereli's announcement was the final gesture that unmasked the root of the hostilities - the neoconservative US policy of the Bush-Rice-Cheney-Bolten-Bolton administration.

After hearing from their overlords in Washington, Israel was forced to apologize for the Qana atrocity and agreed to a 48-hour halt in its bombing campaign. Israel's stated military objective is to cleanse and sanitize Southern Lebanon of Hizbullah. But, they have a wider agenda, because at the same time, Israel urged the Lebanese people to leave their homes in the entire region of Southern Lebanon apparently in advance of what will be a continuation of its creation (read - desertification via bombing and pulverization) of its longed-for Sanitized Zone. This campaign will apparently be an ongoing military onslaught of atrocity followed by atrocity - little more than a thinly disguised pogrom of ethnic Lebanese - both Muslim (60%) and Christian (40%) - from the land of their forefathers - Galilee in the Lebanon.

While the Israeli bombs were raining down on Qana, Tony Blair was in California to address a carefully selected clutch of right-wing plutocrats meeting at the home of George Schultz, the influential president of Bechtel, a huge conglomerate with massive government contracts. In the wake of Blair's performance before Schultz's cluster of Islamophobic billionaires there is now a growing tide of speculation about the Prime Minister's post-Downing Street future. Blair's critics are describing the Schultz event as a coming out party for Blair into the real world of capitalism with its quasi-legal graft and bribery oiled by government influence peddling and the powerful seduction of lucrative offers to tantalize an underpaid British bureaucrat with fabulous sums in exchange for his presence on corporate boards or as an after dinner speaker where he might enhance the moral authority of corporate capital at the expense of his own.

Back in London, there is a widening gulf within Blair's cabinet led by Jack Straw and David Miliband. The former Foreign Secretary, Straw is now the leader of the House of Commons and a Jewish supporter of less aggression and more negotiation in the Middle East. Straw advocates a more assertive line with the government of Israel over their disproportionate conduct of hostilities in Lebanon and Gaza. Miliband is another Jewish member of Blair's cabinet, and he has been reported to be sceptical of Blair's position on the course of the Israeli attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure. In Europe, there is a gulf opening between the mainstream Jewish community and Israel.

In Trafalgar Square, the popular comedian, Alexei Sayle, led a protest against disproportionate Israeli aggression. Sayle stated, "While Israel has all the privileges of a state it behaves worse than a terrorist organisation." Participating on the frontlines at the Trafalgar protest, Jewish opponents of Zionism were photographed by the British press and media alongside women carrying placards proclaiming, "WE ARE ALL HIZBULLAH - BOYCOTT ISRAEL."

In Washington, the silence is deafening so complete has been the transubstantiation of a

nation once committed to the protection of the innocent and the rule of democracy into a relentless plunderer of energy and a promoter of the twisted Christian Zionism that elevates Israeli predominance in its so-called 'Holy Land' above humanitarian concerns for the lives of innocent civilians living in pastoral biblical communities by the side of the Sea of Galilee.

Since Israel launched their scorched earth cum shock and awe attack on Gaza and Lebanon, the power and influence of the United States and Britain have taken another precipitous plunge – not merely in the Middle East – but globally. America's mishandling of this Middle East crisis is elevating the respect and influence of its most serious rivals for superpower status: Brazil, China, India and Russia. From a global perspective, the stock of Hugo Chavez is soaring, and Castro is glowing brighter in Havana.

In fact, it is difficult to recall a period when American prestige and power was so badly mismanaged. Not even in the depths of the Vietnam era was there such an acute deconstruction of American power in such an alarmingly short space of time.

Where is the man who led us in singing, "Don't stop thinking about tomorrow"? When will we hear voices in America ringing out to demand justice and peace for the Middle East? Tomorrow will really not be soon enough.

In Connecticut there may be a ray of hope. The most pro-Israeli Democrat, Joe Lieberman, is trailing in the polls against his anti-war opponent, Ned Lamont.

Michael Carmichael became a professional public affairs consultant, author and broadcaster in 1968. He worked in five American presidential campaigns for progressive candidates from RFK to Clinton. In 2003, he founded The Planetary Movement, a nonprofit public affairs organization based in the United Kingdom. He has appeared as a public affairs expert on the BBC's Today, Hardtalk, and PM, as well as numerous appearances on BBC FiveLive, ITN, NPR and European broadcasts examining politics and culture. He can be reached through his website: www.planetarymovement.org

References

Israel suspends air strikes on south Lebanon

http://news.independent.co.uk/world/middle_east/article1205990.ece

Israel halts air strikes after 37 children die – The 48-hour cessation of aerial attacks came hours after an air strike on the Lebanese village of Qana that killed about 60, including 37 children, and prompted widespread criticism and a day of intense diplomatic activity.

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,251-2292953,00.html>

'They found them huddled together' – More than 60 people, including 34 children, killed by Israeli attack on home where families were sheltering

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,,1833884,00.html>

Straw hits No 10 in Israel revolt – JACK STRAW has become the first cabinet minister to break ranks with Tony Blair publicly by issuing a strong attack on "disproportionate" Israeli military action in Lebanon. The leader of the Commons and former foreign secretary

believes that allowing Israel to continue its assault risks destabilising the Lebanese government and fuelling further terrorism in the Middle East. In a statement to Muslim community leaders in his Blackburn constituency last week, Straw voiced the concerns of several cabinet colleagues, saying: “Disproportionate action only escalates an already dangerous situation.” And – “One of many serious concerns I have is that the continuation of such tactics by the Israelis could further destabilise the already fragile Lebanese nation. If you want to go for Hezbollah, go for Hezbollah, not the whole Lebanese nation.”

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2087-2292077,00.html>

Cabinet in open revolt over Blair’s Israel policy – Tony Blair was facing a full-scale cabinet rebellion last night over the Middle East crisis after his former Foreign Secretary warned that Israel’s actions risked destabilising all of Lebanon. Jack Straw, now Leader of the Commons, said in a statement released after meeting Muslim residents of his Blackburn constituency that while he grieved for the innocent Israelis killed, he also mourned the ‘10 times as many innocent Lebanese men, women and children killed by Israeli fire’. He said he agreed with the Foreign Office Minister Kim Howells that it was ‘very difficult to understand the kind of military tactics used by Israel’, adding: ‘These are not surgical strikes but have instead caused death and misery amongst innocent civilians.’ Straw said he was worried that ‘a continuation of such tactics by Israel could destabilise the already fragile Lebanese nation’.

<http://observer.guardian.co.uk/world/story/0,,1833538,00.html>

The day Israel realised that this was a real war – When a bloody ambush in a Lebanese village ripped apart a squad of Israeli troops last week, the full reality of the fighting reached homes in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem for the first time. But calls for a major offensive have reawakened painful memories of old defeats, and old losses, across the troubled border

<http://observer.guardian.co.uk/world/story/0,,1833349,00.html>

The anti-war tycoon splits Democrats – Senator Joe Lieberman, who was Al Gore’s vice-presidential running mate in 2000, had looked certain to win a fourth term in Connecticut, despite his support for President George W Bush’s conduct of the war. Yet opinion polls show that Lamont, 52, is riding a wave of Democratic opposition to the war, magnified by resentment of Lieberman’s cosy relations with Bush. A photograph of the Republican president and the Democratic senator hugging last year helped Lamont to a four-point lead in the most recent poll. “We have crazies running this country,” said Charlotte Koskoff, a local Democratic activist. “And Joe Lieberman is carrying water for them.” . . . Former president Bill Clinton arrived in Connecticut to campaign for Lieberman last week in what was seen as a return of old political favours. But Democratic insiders believe Clinton warned Lieberman not to run as an independent if he loses the primary.

http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2089-2291293_1,00.html

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