

Oh What A Day!

From Cyprus to Gaza

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Global Research, January 01, 2009

1 January 2009

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)

In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

December 30, 2008: I'm so glad that my father told me to buy a special notebook and to write everything down because that's exactly what I did. When we left from Cyprus, one reporter asked me "are you afraid?" And I had to respond that Malcolm X wasn't afraid; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. wasn't afraid. But little did I know that just a few hours later, I would be recollecting my life and mentally preparing myself for death.

When we left Cyprus, the Mediterranean was beautiful. I remember the time when it might have been beautiful to look at, but it was also filthy. The Europeans have taken great strides to clean it up and yesterday, it was beautiful. And the way the sunlight hit the sea, I remember thinking to myself that's why they call it azure. It was the most beautiful blue.

But sometimes it was rough, and we got behind on our schedule. We stayed on course, however, despite the roughness of the water and due to our exquisite captain.

There were no other ships or boats around us and night descended upon us all rather quickly. It was the darkest black and suddenly, out of nowhere, came searchlights disturbing our peace. The searchlights stayed with us for about half an hour or so. We knew they were Israeli ships. Who else would they be?

They were fast, and they would come close and then drop back. And then, they'd come close again. And then, all of a sudden there was complete blackness once again and all seemed right. The cat and mouse game went on for at least one half hour. What were they doing? And why?

Calm again. Black sky, black sea. Peace. And then, at that very moment, when all seemed right, out of nowhere we were rammed and rammed again and rammed again the last one throwing me off the couch, sending all our food up in the air; and all the plastic bags and tubs-evidence of sea sicknesses among the crew and passengers-flew all over the cabin and all over us. We'd been rammed by the Israelis. How did we know? Because they called us on the phone afterwards to tell us that we were engaging in subversive, terroristic activity. And if that if we didn't turn around right then and return to Larnaca, Cyprus, we would be fired upon. We quickly grabbed our lifevests and put them on. Then the captain announced that the boat was taking on water. We might have to evacuate. One of my mates told me to prepare to die. And I reflected that I have lived a good and full life. I have tasted freedom and know what it is. I was right with myself and my decision to join the Free Gaza movement.

I remembered my father's parting words, "You all will be sitting ducks." Just like the U.S.S.

Liberty. We were engaged in peaceful activity, a harmless pleasure boat, carrying a load of hospital supplies for the people of Gaza, who, too are sitting ducks, currently being bombarded in aerial assault by the Israeli military.

It's been a long day for us. The captain was outstanding. Throughout it all, he remained stoic and calm, effective in every way. I didn't know how to put my life jacket on. One of the passengers kindly assisted me. Another of the passengers pointed out that the Israeli motors for those huge, fast boats was U.S. made—a gift to them from the U.S. And now they were using those motors to damage a pleasure boat outfitted with three tons of hospital supplies, one pediatrician, and two surgeons.

I have called for President-elect Obama to say something. The Palestinian people in the Gaza strip are seeing the worst violence in 60 years, it is being reported. To date, President-elect Obama has remained silent. The Israelis are using weapons supplied to them by the U.S. government. Strict enforcement of U.S. law would require the cessation of all weapons transfers to Israel. Adherence to international law would require the same. As we are about to celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, let us remember that he said:

1. The United States is the greatest purveyor of violence in the world, and
2. Our lives begin to end the day we remain silent about things that matter.

I implore the President-elect to not send Congress a budget that contains more weapons for Israel. We have so much more to offer. And I implore the Congress to vote “no” on any budget and appropriation bills that provide more weapons transfers, period.

Israel is able to carry out these intense military maneuvers because taxpayers in the U.S. give their hard-earned money to our Representatives in Congress and our Congress chooses to spend that money in this way. Let's stop it and stop it now. There's been too much blood shed. And while we still walk among the living, let us not remain silent about the things that matter.

We really can promote peace and have it if we demand it of our leaders.

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