

60 Minutes
524 West 57th St
New York NY 10019

Attention: Executive producer Don Hewitt
Subject "Israel. Terror Linked To Iran, Iraq"

Dear Sir,

I want to register my protest over Leslie Stahl's segment of the September 29 broadcast discussing the Palestinian documents captured by the Israeli army. We were told that Iraq and Iran fund the Palestinians and the implication is that if the funds could be cut off, then the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will somehow go away. This is absurd.

There will never be peace in the Middle East until the American public and the officials they elect understand the true nature of the conflict. There were endless references to *Palestinian terrorism* but none to *Israeli occupation*.

You do a disservice to your viewers by failing to explain the context. I'm sure that if you were doing a story about the bombing of Hiroshima, you would probably mention Pearl Harbor and a little of what happened in between. If someone only knew about the atom bomb, how would they view America?

From the perspective of Arabs in general and Palestinians in particular, they are fighting a just war of liberation against overwhelming odds. I believe most Americans would reach the same conclusion if they were better informed by programs like yours.

We were told that the amount of money funneled to the Palestinians was "in the millions of dollars, probably tens of millions" and we were shown various small arms and explosives. This is trivial compared with the \$2 billion plus that the US provides in aid to Israel each year—aid that helps maintain the illegal occupation. Add to that economic aid and the diplomatic cover that America frequently provides for Israel at the UN and the conflict is overwhelmingly one-sided. If the Palestinians had tanks, jet fighters and attack helicopters like the Israelis, I'm sure they would use them. Since taking on the Israeli military directly is futile, they are forced to resort to the "asymmetric warfare" that inevitably targets innocent Israeli civilians.

Given Amnesty's recent figures of:

Palestinian dead: 1700
Israeli dead: 580

one has to ask which side is being terrorized the most by the other. I think these figures make a good case for ceasing US funding of Israeli terror operations!

Your program is rightly held in high regard and you could, if you chose, do a great service to the American public but giving us a more balanced view of what is going on over there. I was very happy some months ago when you did a report on Israeli reservists who were refusing to take part in the occupation and I wrote at the time to thank *60 Minutes*.

On the following page, I've included some suggestions for future programs I hope you'll take a look

[my signature]

Program suggestions:

1. Rapidly rising malnutrition in the occupied territories. See our own government's report:
http://www.usaid.gov/wbg/reports/Nutritional_Assessment.pdf
It appears that we are funding one group of people to starve another. Show us what life is like under 24-hour curfew for days on end. Isn't this community punishment? Doesn't it only breed more hatred, and make people desperate—sometimes so desperate they feel they have nothing to lose if they strap explosives to their bodies and blow themselves up amongst a group of Israelis?
2. Sustained reports of the Israeli army blocking medical treatment to wounded Palestinians and even targeting ambulances. See B'Tselem's report "Impeding Medical Treatment and Firing at Ambulances by IDF Soldiers in the Occupied Territories" on <http://www.btselem.org/English/Publications/index.asp>.

(There are several other topics here that are surely worth a report on your program such as, "*Standing Idly By: Non-enforcement of the Law on Settlers: Hebron, 26-28 July 2002*", "*Land Grab: Israel's Settlement Policy in the West Bank*" and "*Trigger Happy—Unjustified Gunfire and the IDF's Open-Fire Regulations during the al-Aqsa Intifada*".

3. Amnesty's brand new report, "*Killing the Future: Children in the line of fire*" at <http://web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/recent/MDE020052002!Open>.
4. The plight of those who lost their land and homes in 1948. Why are they still living in refugee camps? It is naive to think there will ever be peace in the region until their needs are accounted for. Given that UN Resolution 194 demanding the right of return is never going to be allowed by Israel, what options are there for compensation? Since the US wants to ensure Israel's security, isn't that served by us funding what ever must be done to resettle those people in new Palestinian state, in the US, or elsewhere. Letting them continue to rot in camps is not an option.
5. Israel's covert nuclear program with an update on the plight of Mordechai Vanunu, the man who blew the whistle on their program—who was then kidnapped and thrown in prison efforts. Israel's nuclear facilities are closed to international inspectors.

It seems we are about to go to war with Iraq because they probably hold chemical, biological and possibly nuclear weapons, they have repressed their own people and attacked their neighbors. Isn't Israel guilty of all these things? While Israel hasn't used poison gas against a minority group, it has stolen their land, demolished their houses and impoverished millions. The current prime, led the invasion of Lebanon 20 years ago and was found "indirectly responsible" *by his own government* of the massacre of over 1000 Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. Mr. Bush recently lectured the UN on all the resolutions that Iraq has ignored but Israel has ignored UN resolutions for its entire existence but that seems to be of no concern to this Administration of its predecessors. See article "*Nothing Doing*" in *The Guardian* <http://www.guardian.co.uk/elsewhere/journalist/story/0,7792,798021.00.html>.

6. The use of American military equipment against civilian targets in breach of the conditions of sale/gift. For instance, the bombing July 22nd in a densely populated area of Gaza by an F-16 jet.
7. The effect of campaign contributions by Jewish-Americans on our Middle East policy. Just why are we often out of step with our allies? (I guess this one is really too hot to handle. Same for the Cuban-American community but that is more about votes than money.)