Every time Israel seeks to defend its civilians against terrorist attacks, it is accused of war crimes by various United Nations agencies, hard left academics and some in the media. It is a totally phony charge concocted as part of Hamas' strategy - supported by many on the hard left - to delegitimize and demonize the Jewish state. Israel is the only democracy in the world ever accused of war crimes when it fights a defensive war to protect its civilians. This is remarkable, especially in light of the fact that Israel has killed far fewer civilians than any other country in the world that has faced comparable threats. In the most recent war in Gaza fewer than a thousand civilians -- even by Hamas' skewed count -- have been killed. This, despite the fact that no one can now deny that Hamas had employed a deliberate policy of using children, schools, mosques, apartment buildings and other civilian areas as shields from behind which to launch its deadly anti-personnel rockets. The Israeli Air Force has produced unchallengeable video evidence of this Hamas war crime.

Just to take one comparison, consider the recent wars waged by Russia against Chechnya. In these wars Russian troops have killed tens of thousands of Chechnyan civilians, some of them willfully, at close range and in cold blood. Yet those radical academics who scream bloody murder against Israel (particularly in England) have never called for war crime tribunals to be convened against Russia. Nor have they called for war crime charges to be filed against any other of the many countries that routinely kill civilians, not in an effort to stop enemy terrorists, but just because it is part of their policy.

Nor did we see the Nuremberg-type rallies that were directed against Israel when hundreds of thousands of civilians were being murdered in Rwanda, in Darfur and in other parts of the world. These bigoted hate-fests are reserved for Israel.

The accusation of war crimes is nothing more than a tactic selectively invoked by Israel's enemies. Those who cry "war crime" against Israel don't generally care about war crimes, as such, indeed they often support them when engaged in by country's they like. What these people care about, and all they seem to care about, is Israel. Whatever Israel does is wrong regardless of the fact that so many other countries do worse.

When I raised this concern in a recent debate, my opponent accused me of changing the subject. He said we are talking about Israel now, not Chechnya or Darfur. This reminded me of a famous exchange between Harvard's racist president, Abbott Lawrence Lowell, and the great American judge Leonard Hand. Lowell announced that he wanted to reduce the number of Jews at Harvard, because, "Jews cheat." Judge Hand replied that "Christians also cheat." Lowell responded, "You're changing the subject. We are talking about Jews."

Well, you can't just talk about Jews. Nor can you just talk about the Jewish state. Any discussion of war crimes must be comparative and contextual. If Russia did not commit war crimes when its soldiers massacred tens of thousands of Chechnyans (not even in a defensive war) then on what basis could Israel be accused of accidentally killing a far fewer number of human shields in an effort to protect its civilians? What are the standards? Why are they not being applied equally or selectively? Can human rights endure in the face of such unequal and selective application? These are the questions the international community should be debating, not whether Israel, and Israel alone, violated the norms of that vaguest of notions called "international law" or the "law of war."
If Israel, and Israel alone among democracies fighting defensive wars, were ever to be charged with "war crimes," that would mark the end of international human rights law as a neutral arbitrator of conduct. Any international tribunal that were to charge Israel, having not charged the many nations that have done far worse, will lose any remaining legitimacy among fair-minded people of good will. If the laws of war in particular, and international human rights in general, are to endure, they must be applied to nations in order of the seriousness of the violations, not in order of the political unpopularity of the nations. If the law of war were applied in this manner, Israel would be among the last, and certainly not the first, charged.

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Photos From Israel That You Won't See on the News
Israel is not media savvy — we have installed warning systems and bomb shelters. No casualties means no photos, which means that many incidents aren't even covered by the media.
If Israel, and Israel alone among democracies fighting defensive wars, were ever to be charged with “war crimes,” we must ask ourselves what crimes this country is really committing. Said we are talking about Israel now, not Chechnya or Darfur. This reminded me of a famous exchange in World War II where the German Ambassador in London noted that the Gulf of Finistere is a dangerous place for ship traffic, and the British diplomat's reply was: “This may be true, but it is a dangerous place to be if you are a ship. The world’s deepest waters, however, are in the Arctic—where there are no ships.”

In similar situations around the world, civilians caught in the midst of conflict would have the option of seeking safety in neighboring countries as refugees. Gazans have no such option.

Evidence Grows That Israel is Using White Phosphorus in Gaza

Today, at least two UN officials have flatly declared that three or more white phosphorous shells were part of the attack today that set a UN building and compound ablaze in Gaza City.

Reportage from Israel/Gaza

We can’t ignore this fact: Gaza is becoming not the embryo of the so-desired Palestinian State, but the advance base of a total war against the Jewish State.

Proportionality and Disproportionality: A Guide to Arguments about Gaza

Even if the guns fall silent the charges and counter-charges of violations of international law will continue. Already the airwaves are full of talk that Israel’s “disproportionate” response is a violation of international law.

Changing the Reality in Gaza

Counting on international pressure to bring a quick end to the Israeli onslaught may prove to be misplaced as Israel is now determined to never allow a return to the status quo ante.

Obama – Please Say Something!

In just over two weeks Obama will be unable to avoid saying something and the world will be looking to him and demanding to hear his opinion on the crisis in Gaza.

Hamas and the Death of a Better Future

To me, Gaza is personal. As an Israeli infantry officer, I served in Gaza before, during, and after the 2005 Disengagement.

Al Jazeera English Beats Israel's Ban on Reporters in Gaza with Exclusive Coverage

Some may call it propaganda but I call it hardcore reporting. If you are not watching Al Jazeera English's coverage of the War on Gaza, you are missing much, if not, most of the story.

Why Aren’t More Americans Dancing To Israel’s Tune?

The surprising trend in American opinion on Gaza may be because the same pundits who are cheerleading Israel’s assault once sold the occupation of Iraq, and with a nearly identical set of arguments.

Maybe Hamas is Not so Stupid

Judged as a piece of political theater, Hamas has succeeded in presenting Israel as the golem on the block.

Israel as Mini-Me

We are both settler states – the Puritans, who escaped oppression in the Old World only to mete out oppression in the New, unfolded their Zionist project in the 17th century with their “city built upon a hill” as the New Jerusalem.

Israel’s Risk

What we’re watching in Gaza is not so much low-intensity warfare as the continued fracture of the post-Soviet international order.

Gaza: The War On Children

Israel has accused Hamas of intentionally attacking from civilian-populated areas, driving up casualties among non-combatants to provoke anger against Israel. But do children have to pay the price?

Why Do So Few Speak Up for Gaza?

Why is it that there is such widespread acceptance, beginning with the apologetic arguments of George Bush, that whatever Israel does is always justified as necessary to the survival of the Jewish state?

Why Israel Was Right to Invade Gaza

How should Israel attempt to protect its people, long-term, if it merely acts defensively in a tit-for-tat manner? That would be a horribly naive response given its history.

What Was Israel Supposed to Do?

Every day now, I hear someone saying, “What was Israel supposed to do? Hamas keeps firing rockets into their country.” So, here is a quick list of the things they were supposed to do.
If the laws of war in particular, and international human rights in general, are to endure, they must be...
Dozens at U.N. School
It takes until paragraph #8 for the Times, to mention that, by the way, Israel "must" allow foreign journalists access to Gaza, especially since its highest court so ordered.

Gazans in Peril
The human tragedy that has befallen Gaza's Palestinians -- Hamas supporters or not -- warrants every American to take cognizance because of its consequences for a durable Middle East peace.

Israel and Hamas: Two to Tango
What is going on in Gaza is that it is not the result of a sudden decision or an immediate and intolerable provocation by one side or the other -- this thing has been in the planning by both sides for months.

Hamas Is Responsible for the Civilian Casualties in Gaza
By choosing tactical advantages over the safety of its citizens, the terrorist organization chose its military goals over the safety of its fellow Palestinians in Gaza.

Hold Your Fire: Children and Civilians In Gaza
If the killing of unarmed civilians by terrorist groups is wrong, Israel's killing of unarmed Palestinian civilians and our defense of Israel's conduct cannot be right.

War Diary from Sderot
Not in my name and not for me did you go into this war. The bloodbath in Gaza is not in my name nor for my security. Behind this accused leadership of Hamas live human beings.

Overwhelming Force is the Only Way to Fight Terrorists
The destruction of Hamas benefits the Palestinians far more than the Israelis. It is they that must live under the cruelty of an organization that terrorizes its citizens even more than its enemies.

Self-Deception and the Assault on Gaza
From the civilian deaths in Gaza will spring more hatred and terrorism. Yet no people are so prone as Americans and Israelis to think admiringly of our own good intentions.

Gaza and the Obama Effect -- Ending the War
It might be pushing the envelope to call Obama the peacemaker here, but it's hard to deny that his impending entrance to the world stage has an effect.

How to Defeat Hamas -- Face Up to the Truth
Making Hamas into a unique demon is pure propaganda. But no form of Islamic extremism will end until moderate Muslims stand up for their religion.

Letter From Beersheva
I am here in Beersheva -- on the "almost" frontlines of the conflict with Hamas -- to tell you the first thing to go when missiles start to fall nearby, is your diet.

It's Time for a Sustained Focus on a Lasting Middle East Peace
What we continue to lack is the kind of real political solution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict that could finally make a "ceasefire" endure.

Gaza: Fight at the End of the Tunnel?
Any ceasefire must include an ironclad commitment by Egypt to cooperate fully with Israel to shut Hamas' tunnel network once and for all whatever Hamas' political or military wings decide tomorrow in Cairo.

How Propaganda Hijacked Israeli Strategy in Gaza
While Israel's explicit goal is to cease all attacks on southern Israel, senior IDF and intelligence officials have privately signaled that this is unrealistic, even with a ground invasion.

Obama's Silence
As January 20 approaches, Obama will have to make a lonely decision - to remember his 2007 words about Palestinian suffering and his campaign pledge to talk unconditionally with adversaries.

Video Reveals that a Lack of Moral Center Is Central to Hamas's War Strategy
The whole world is quick to condemn Israel for civilian deaths in Gaza, but there is utter silence over Hamas's blatant disregard for the lives of its own citizens.

Goodnight My Love, See You in Heaven -- Diary From an Aid Worker in Gaza
The situation has now reached such a critical point that doctors frequently confront dilemmas such as these -- to treat the child who is bleeding to death or the baby who has severe head injuries?