

Weekly Briefings Resume: No. 19.
Wednesday, November 14, 2007

In this Briefing:

- Gaza Doesn't Need Aid, It has a Huge Gas Field
- The Seige of Gaza is going to lead to a violent escalation
- Excerpts from online service, "Today in Palestine"

Dear Weekly Briefing folks,

Apologies for the break in the weekly briefings...they should resume more regularly now, although they may come out closer to every two weeks.

In this briefing you will find two recent articles, plus excerpts from a service called "Today in Palestine" to which you can subscribe. Information on that is at the end.

Also, since it has been so long since the last briefing, there are a few more items than usual in this one.

As always, if you find articles you would like to submit to the weekly briefing, please forward them to rafahsistercity@yahoo.com .

Gaza doesn't need aid: it has a £2bn gas field
By Tim Butcher (Daily Telegraph/BBC online, 11-7-2007)
Worldstage
International donors will - again - gather next month to pledge money for the Palestinians.

[Tony Blair has so far avoided putting his weight behind the Gaza Marine field project]

This time France hosts the Palestinian panhandling circus, but the same chorus that for years has argued aid will help solve Palestinian grievances will be heard once more.

Tony Blair, in his job as international envoy to the Palestinians, will look earnest and speak publicly about the importance of the world providing financial support.

But instead of checking into their smart Parisian hotels, donors would do better to come to Gaza to help free a Palestinian economic asset so large that it would do away with the need to bleed the international community of millions in aid every year.

Twenty miles from the beaches of Gaza, too far for the eye to see but still very much in Palestinian waters, lies a fortune in untapped, off-shore gas. Prospecting vessels sent down two probes seven years ago and what they found got the juices of executives from multinational fuel companies flowing. In one field alone, experts estimated a reserve of £2 billion worth of natural gas. And there is plenty of potential for other fields. Full Article:
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/main.jhtml?xml=/opinion/2007/11/07/do0705.xml>

The siege of Gaza is going to lead to a violent escalation

Far from helping settle the Middle East conflict, the US and Europe are fuelling it with their contempt for democracy
By Seumas Milne Thursday November 1, 2007 (The Guardian)

There is, it seems, an unbridgeable gap between the western world's apparent recognition of the dangers of Palestinian suffering and its commitment to do anything whatever to stop it. This week the collective punishment of the people of Gaza reached a new level, as Israel began to choke off essential fuel supplies to its one and a half million people in retaliation for rockets fired by Palestinian resistance groups. A plan to cut power supplies has only been put on hold till the end of the week by the intervention of Israel's attorney general. Full Article:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/Columnists/Column/0,,2202895,00.html>

Excerpts from "Today in Palestine" for Thursday, Nov. 8, 2007

News from Gaza:

Mezan Report: "Army Attacks Middle Gaza; Kills Four Palestinians and Injures Four The Israeli army has escalated its military operations in the Gaza Strip and killed four Palestinians, including a father and his son, and injured four others; including a child, since Sunday 4 November 2007.

<http://www.imemc.org/article/51360>

Report: Palestinian agricultural losses since 2000 exceed \$56 million

The Governor of Khan Younis, Usama al-Farra, released a report on Wednesday stating that Palestinian farmers have lost over \$56 million due to Israeli attacks, closures and seizures of land since the current uprising began in 2000.

<http://www.imemc.org/article/51358>

Court demands State explain how it will prevent Gaza crisis
The High Court has instructed the State Prosecution to explain within a week how planned cuts to the Gaza Strip's power supply will not a cause a humanitarian crisis to the residents of the coastal territory. The court decided to issue the instruction after justices reviewed petitions presented by several human rights organizations seeking to stop the government's plans to scale back the supply of fuel and electricity to the Strip.

<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/921463.html>

Khudari: More than 1,000 patients in Gaza require urgent treatment abroad

MP Jamal Al-Khudari, the head of the popular anti-sanctions committee, said that there are more than 1,000 Palestinian patients awaiting urgent treatment abroad but

cannot because of the imposed siege on the Gaza Strip, which, he asserted, is contrary to all international norms and human rights, and called for the immediate opening of the Rafah border crossing before the situation in Gaza explodes.
<http://www.palestine-info.co.uk/en/default.aspx?xyz=U6Qq7k%2bcOd87MDI46m9rUxJEpMO%2bi1s7iA6aChcMdoDdBURoxONVYj9v9%2fB64NJTl7dABpRj7xpiD7tKIE4O7dmUwzdDSZgHmeIThCopPEBSknDEupHMQ1Z7fC1klucamHjgUFhlGbE%3d>

European municipalities to launch a media campaign to protest Gaza siege
A number of European municipalities are set to launch a media campaign to protest the siege being imposed on the Gaza Strip, in a time the siege has endangered all facets of the population's life.
<http://www.imemc.org/article/51355>

Gaza's hard place between Israeli and Palestinian violence
Since the Hamas-led government seized control of the Gaza Strip in mid-June, severe Israeli pressure has been imposed on the coastal region's 1.4-million-strong population. Gaza has been sustaining the effects of such pressure at the same time as it has been absorbing the impact of the seemingly unending inter-Palestinian violence, which has claimed the lives of at least 400 Palestinians and continues to disrupt everyday life in the already impoverished society. El correspondent Rami Almeghari writes from Gaza.
<http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article9086.shtml>

News from the West Bank:

Beit Omer village attacked by Israeli troops; 19 civilians kidnapped
Israeli forces on Thursday morning invaded the village of Beit Omer, located near the southern West Bank city of Hebron, kidnapping at least 19 civilians.
<http://www.imemc.org/article/51370>

West Bankers get some medical care
After packing the ambulance with medical equipment and bags full of medicine, Dr. Jameel Mashny, Dr. Rami Habash and their nurse, Maysa Youseff, all from the Palestine Medical Relief Society (PMRS), prepare themselves for the long day ahead. If it is business as usual, it will be a day of organized chaos. Screaming children will hide behind their mothers, elderly men will complain that they do not like the taste of their medicine -- and a poor village will get desperately needed medical relief.
<http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article9085.shtml>

Nothing less than our freedom
For the people of our small village of Bil'in, which lies west of Ramallah in the occupied West Bank, the planned negotiations between Palestinian and Israeli leaders in Annapolis, Maryland evoke mixed feelings. Like all

Palestinians, we pray that our children will not spend their lives as we did, under Israeli military occupation.
<http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article9084.shtml>

News from Israel:

Lieberman tells Barak to outlaw major Arab leadership council
Strategic Affairs Minister Avigdor Lieberman demanded Wednesday that Defense Minister Ehud Barak outlaw the Higher Arab Monitoring Committee, the senior leadership body of Israel's Arab citizens.
<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=921483&contrassID=1&subContrassID=7>

AND SO...

Higher Arab Monitoring Committee tells gov't to dismiss Lieberman

The Higher Arab Monitoring Committee asked the government on Thursday to dismiss Strategic Affairs Minister Avigdor Lieberman over his demand to outlaw the senior Israeli Arab leadership council, Israel Radio reported.
<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=921882&contrassID=1&subContrassID=7>

(This service comes out every day and I estimate it contains between 15 - 20 news and analysis items each time. It is excellent but takes some time to keep up with it. If you want to subscribe, and have a yahoo id, visit this link and follow the directions: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/f_shadi/ . If you don't have a yahoo id and want to subscribe, reply to me and I'll get you in touch with another method. You can also find them posted at <http://palestineandiraq.blogspot.com>)

Today in Palestine also has links to the following sites:

Today in Iraq

<http://palestineandiraq.blogspot.com/2007/11/11807-meanwhile-in-iraq.html>

Today in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran

<http://palestineandiraq.blogspot.com/2007/11/11807-meanwhile-in-afghanistan-pakistan.html>

Today in the U.S.

<http://palestineandiraq.blogspot.com/2007/11/11807-meanwhile-in-amreeka.html>