
HOW MUCH LONGER?

Eduardo Galeano

One country bombed two countries. Such impunity might astound were it not business as usual. In response to the few timid protests from the international community, Israel said mistakes were made.

How much longer will horrors be called mistakes?

This slaughter of civilians began with the kidnapping of a soldier.

How much longer will the kidnapping of an Israeli soldier be allowed to justify the kidnapping of Palestinian sovereignty?

How much longer will the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers be allowed to justify the kidnapping of the entire nation of Lebanon?

For centuries the slaughter of Jews was the favorite sport of Europeans. Auschwitz was the natural culmination of an ancient river of terror, which had flowed across all of Europe

How much longer will Palestinians and other Arabs be made to pay for crimes they didn't commit?

Hezbollah didn't exist when Israel razed Lebanon in earlier invasions.

How much longer will we continue to believe the story of this attacked attacker, which practices terrorism because it has the right to defend itself from terrorism?

Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Lebanon: How much longer will Israel and the United States be allowed to exterminate countries with impunity?

The tortures of Abu Ghraib, which triggered a certain universal sickness, are nothing new to us in Latin America. Our militaries learned their interrogation techniques from the School of the Americas, which may no longer exist in name but lives on in effect.

How much longer will we continue to accept that torture can be legitimized?

Israel has ignored forty-six resolutions of the General Assembly and other U.N. bodies.

How much longer will Israel enjoy the privilege of selective deafness?

The United Nations makes recommendations but never decisions. When it does decide, the United States makes sure the decision is blocked. In the U.N. Security Council, the U.S has vetoed forty resolutions condemning actions of Israel.

How much longer will the United Nations act as if it were just another name for the United States?

Since the Palestinians had their homes confiscated and their land taken from them, much blood has flowed.

How much longer will blood flow so that force can justify what law denies?

History is repeated day after day, year after year, and ten Arabs die for everyone Israeli. How much longer will an Israeli life be measured as worth ten Arab lives?

In proportion to the overall population, the 50,000 civilians killed in Iraq-the majority of them women and children-are the equivalent of 800,000 Americans.

How much longer will we continue to accept, as if customary, the killing of Iraqis in a blind war that has forgotten all of its justifications?

Iran is developing nuclear energy, but the so-called international community is not concerned in the least by the fact that Israel already has 250 atomic bombs, despite the fact that the country lives permanently on the verge of a nervous breakdown.

Who calibrates the universal dangerometer? Was Iran the country that dropped atomic bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima?

In the age of globalization, the right to express is less powerful than the right to apply pressure. To justify the illegal occupation of Palestinian territory, war is called peace. The Israelis are patriots, and the Palestinians are terrorists, and terrorists sow universal alarm.

How much longer will the media broadcast fear instead of news?

The slaughter happening today, which is not the first and I fear will not be the last, is happening in silence. Has the world gone deaf?

How much longer will the outcry of the outraged be sounded on a bell of straw?

The bombing is killing children, more than a third of the victims.

Those who dare denounce this murder are called anti-Semites. How much longer will the critics of state terrorism be considered anti-Semites?

How much longer will we accept this grotesque form of extortion?

Are the Jews who are horrified by what is being done in their name anti-Semites? Are there not Arab voices that defend a Palestinian homeland but condemn fundamentalist insanity?

Terrorists resemble one another: state terrorists, respectable members of government, and private terrorists, madmen acting alone or in those organized in groups hard at work since the Cold War battling communist totalitarianism. All act in the name of various Gods, whether God, Allah, or Jehovah.

How much longer will we ignore that fact that all terrorists scorn human life and feed off of one another?

Isn't it clear that in the war between Israel and Hezbollah, it is the civilians, Lebanese, Palestinian, and Israeli, who are dying?

And isn't it clear that the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the invasion of Gaza and Lebanon are the incubators of hatred, producing fanatic after fanatic after fanatic?

We are the only species of animal that specializes in mutual extermination.

We devote \$2.5 billion per day to military spending. Misery and war are children of the same father.

How much longer will we accept that this world so in love with death is the only world possible? ■

Eduardo Galeano, Uruguayan writer and journalist, is author of *Open Veins of Latin America* and *Memory of Fire*.

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