



AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL TRUST

## WASHINGTON REPORT ON MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS

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Those of us who care about peace and justice in the world have some serious work to do in the coming months. By this time next year U.S. voters will have elected a new president. That means we have just a few months to engage candidates and bring the issues we care about into the public debate: Pakistan is in serious trouble; Lebanon is still picking up the pieces (and cluster bombs) from Israel's July 2006 invasion; the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 has turned into an occupation with no fixed end in sight. The U.N. estimates that 2.25 million Iraqis are displaced inside their country, and another 2.2 million have fled to neighboring states. Having learned nothing from the debacle in Iraq, Washington is setting the stage for a major confrontation with Iran. Once again we're doing the Israeli two-step: "First isolate, then annihilate." What do our would-be presidential candidates propose to do about these problems?

Palestinians and Israelis are at a crossroad this year. It's past time for Palestinians to have their own state. Six decades after they lost their civil and human rights in 1948 it's time for refugees to come home, if they so choose. After 60 years it's also time for Israel to live in peace with all its neighbors. The 60th anniversary of *al-Nakba*, which will be observed on May 15, 2008, could mark an historic opportunity for individuals, organizations, unions, political parties, communities and the world-wide solidarity movement to pool resources and campaign for a rights-based solution to end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

As always, thanks to your support, the *Washington Report* will be there. We'll report on "the campaign of freedom and return," and proudly document your actions, speeches, art exhibitions, music, films, parades and protests. We yearn to write articles describing Israelis tearing down the apartheid wall and roadblocks, and demanding the evacuation of West Bank settlers. We can't wait to portray the long overdue birth of a Palestinian nation and the return (*al-awda*) of refugees, as well as a return to the rule of law and respect for human rights.

Palestinians need help from every one of us in the coming year to help make this happen. A just peace must include those Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip. Israel has closed Gaza's borders, prevented food and medical supplies from reaching its residents, and cut off vital electricity and fuel supplies as collective punishment. The U.S. government is standing by and letting Israel impose this cruel and inhumane siege. In Iraq, sanctions imposed between the two Gulf wars hurt innocents and damaged U.S. standing in the world. Sanctions in Gaza also are killing the weak and corrupting the oppressors.

### WHAT CONCRETE STEPS TOWARD PEACE CAN WASHINGTON REPORT READERS TAKE?

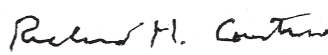
- Increase your involvement with local, national, and international organizations working for peace. Help the *Washington Report* continue to cover their activities and to send magazines and "Remember These Children" books to events across the nation. Keep up with Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) activities and *Nakba* Anniversary activities, conferences and actions in your community.
- Write letters or speak to candidates, legislators, editors, radio talk show hosts, and journalists. Send them updated fact sheets to point out American double standards when it comes to the *al-Nakba* and occupation. See our postcards or action alerts for ideas.
- Join our e-mail action alert list (see our home page <[www.wrmea.com](http://www.wrmea.com)>). We'll help keep you informed about events and recommend actions you can take.
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- Promote the Palestinian economy: Purchase fair trade olive oil, ceramics, embroidery, keffiyehs, and other items from Palestine Arts and Crafts Trust, at the AET Book Store in Washington, DC or on the Web at <[www.middleeastbooks.com](http://www.middleeastbooks.com)>.
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- Use the simplified donation form on the back of this letter to help us keep publishing the *Washington Report* and to give gift subscriptions to help educate others—and, if you can, join our Angels' Choir. Use the separate book list to order books and films. We've also included an optional survey of suggestions—and a wish list—to help us improve the *Washington Report*.

*Washington Report* writers have spent nearly 26 years educating Americans about U.S. foreign policies in Iraq, Iran, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon and the rest of the region. Your generous donation, or a charitable bequest in your will, will help ensure that this vital work continues and endures. Together we can change U.S. foreign policy, bring a just peace and security to the Middle East and...

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