

**Statement prepared by Max Kantar and Ahlam Mohsen; August 2010**

Senator Levin,

There's no doubt that you are one of the most respected senators in the United States. Coupled with three decades of senatorial experience and your role as Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, this respect translates into great influence in policy making, especially in regard to US foreign policy.

Despite your relative popularity, I sincerely doubt that many of your constituents know the extent of your contributions to increasing human suffering around the world.

How many people know that you were an enthusiastic supporter of the primarily Clinton-era US-led sanctions on Iraq during the 1990s--sanctions which likely killed over one million innocent people by way of starvation, disease, and denial of medicines? Who were these victims? Certainly not Saddam Hussein and his regime--their grip on the besieged population was strengthened as a result. The victims were poor people, children, the sick, and the elderly. Publicly available declassified government documents now reveal the murderous (and ultimately successful) intentions of the US government to destroy Iraq's water system and then to systematically ban the importation of crucial items such as chlorine-- the effects of which were designed, according to top officials, to unleash "disease epidemics" which were predicted to affect "children in particular." The result? Hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children were deliberately murdered, perhaps up to half a million, according to mainstream estimates. Their blood is on your hands.

For three decades you have been the strongest supporter of Israeli war crimes against the Palestinian people. While the record is far too long to run through here, it is worth mentioning that just two winters ago, the Israeli military slaughtered some 1,400 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Over 1,000 were civilians according to leading Israeli and Palestinian human rights groups. Over 300 were children. Israel used F-16 fighter jets paid for by us; they used guns and ammunition, paid for by us; according to *Human Rights Watch*, Israel dropped white phosphorus--a chemical weapon supplied by US taxpayers which burns the flesh at 1500 degrees Fahrenheit--on Palestinian schools and incinerated children and noncombatants alive. Your response to these atrocities was to co-sponsor a Senate resolution praising the US-organized bloodbath. In fact, for years you have worked diligently to make sure that US taxpayers subsidize these campaigns of murder and oppression against the Palestinian people. Perhaps this is why you receive more pro-Israel lobby money than any other senator aside from Joe Lieberman. The blood of thousands of Palestinians living under military occupation and apartheid is on your hands.

You have repeatedly voted to allocate billions of dollars in funding for the US invasion and occupation of Iraq; an occupation and invasion which has killed, according to conservative British estimates, well over one million human beings. It might behoove you to remember that according to the ruling at the Nuremberg Tribunals following World War Two, an aggressive war is "the supreme international crime" because it encompasses and is ultimately responsible for all of the crimes and suffering that comes about as a result of the aggression. This funding--our money--is the lifeblood of a brutal military occupation which has killed, maimed, caged, tortured, humiliated, devastated, impoverished, and otherwise destroyed the

lives of millions and millions of people. But you don't care how many Iraqi mothers bury their sons; you don't care how many tears are shed over the unfathomable amounts of death, destruction, degradation, and humiliation suffered at the hands of the US and its surrogates. This blood, too, is on your hands.

And power learns no lessons about human suffering. Today you urge more taxpayer support for the war in Afghanistan and for a so-called government in Afghanistan which is run by, in the words of *Human Rights Watch*, some of the "most notorious warlords in the country,"; warlords and criminals who killed some 50,000 Afghans during the early 1990s after the US and Russia had systematically destroyed Afghanistan in a nasty game of imperial Cold War politics. The blood spilled in every house raid and every air strike on civilians is on your hands.

Today, you continue to call for more murderous attacks in the region. You have prominently called for increasing US drone strikes in Pakistan. These cowardly bombings--which are carried out by robot planes guided by Americans sitting at computers on an Air Force Base in Nevada--have killed several hundred civilians, including women and children. Not only are these bombings wildly immoral because of this, but they also inflame and incite, quite understandably, hatred against the United States. Pakistani blood will continue to drip from your hands as long as the bombings continue.

You remain hawkish and aggressive in your posture towards other sovereign nations as well. For example, your position on Iran--a country that, in stark contrast to Israel, hasn't attacked its neighbors for centuries--is that "all options, including military options, should be on the table." In plain terms, this is a threat to bomb Iran, maybe even with nuclear weapons. Such threats are flagrant violations of the UN Charter, if anybody cares. If and when the US or its Israeli client attacks Iran, that blood, too, will be on your hands.

Senator Levin, reasonable people can disagree on policy and politics. BUT, reasonable people CANNOT disagree on basic human principles of justice and decency. It is both perverse and shameful that you claim to uphold values like freedom and justice while actively taking part in the murder, mutilation, repression, and infliction of suffering on millions of Iraqis, Palestinians, Lebanese, Afghans, Pakistanis, and many more peoples living under the whip of US imperialism, from Latin America to Africa, to Asia and the Middle East.

And back home in Michigan, you treat the people you purport to serve with equal contempt. While you go to sleep in your Detroit mansion as a millionaire each night, nearly 20,000 human beings in the same city go to bed homeless, on the streets. Do you have even the slightest idea what being homeless entails? These people could be housed with money you prefer to spend on war, or money you prefer to spend on yourself. While you sit self-righteously in Washington making laws to protect power and privilege, the police systematically brutalize and imprison our state's African-American population at rate nearly THREE TIMES that of South Africa during the years of apartheid.

The truth is that, on principle, you are no different than every other senator in the U.S. and I don't respect you. And I'm not the slightest bit interested in hearing your entirely predictable response, replete with the same old dastardly lies and apologetics for heinous crimes against

humanity. If there was any justice in this country or in this world, you would be in prison and I am going to say it straight to your face.

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## Sources

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### Iraq Sanctions, 1990-2003

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For commentary and sources regarding the death toll in Iraq due to the sanctions, see <http://www.globalissues.org/article/105/effects-of-sanctions#UnitedNationsreportsonmassivedeath tollfromsanctions>

Even Richard Garfield, the author of the most conservative estimate/analysis of child death due to sanctions in Iraq following the first Gulf War (his original estimate being 106,000 to the “more likely” figure of 227,000 dead Iraqi children), has since acknowledged that some 500,000 children died under the sanctions regime during the years 1990-2002, due in large part to US bombing of civilian infrastructure during the first Gulf War and of course, the sanctions themselves, which denied millions of Iraqis adequate access to clean water, food, and medical care. See for example, Rahul Mahajan, "We think the price is worth it': Media Uncurious About Iraq Policy's effects--here or there," *Extra!*, Nov/Dec 2001, <http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=1084>

This is an excellent in-depth article published in the British press which details the effects and substance of the sanctions. In it, the author quotes Dennis Haliday extensively. Haliday was a top UN official responsible for overseeing the sanctions. He resigned because he said the deadly sanctions fit the definition of "genocide" and killed more than 1 million innocent people while strengthening Saddam's power: John Pilger, "Squeezed to death," *The Guardian*, March 4, 2000, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/theguardian/2000/mar/04/weekend7.weekend9>

Regarding the declassified government documents I cited: In a January 1991 Defense Department intelligence report, officials made note of the likely ramifications of the sanction regime they were imposing on the people of Iraq. “Failing to secure supplies will result in a shortage of pure drinking water for much of the population. This could lead to...epidemics of disease and to certain pure-water-dependent industries becoming incapacitated, including ...food processing...and thermal powerplants...Iraq’s rivers also contain biological materials, pollutants, and are laden with bacteria. Unless the water is purified with chlorine, epidemics of such diseases as cholera, hepatitis, and typhoid could occur.” The report goes on to highlight the fact that “chlorine has been embargoed” by the sanctions. Another intelligence report issued less than a week later, entitled “Disease Information,” notes that the “increased incidence of diseases” induced by the sanctions “will be attributable to degradation of normal preventive medicine, waste disposal, water purification/distribution, electricity, and decreased ability to control

disease outbreaks. Any urban area in Iraq that has received infrastructure damage will have similar problems.” The report repeatedly explains that those most affected—meaning those dying and suffering most—by disease, hunger, and denial of medicine will be “particularly children.” Respectively, see Defense Intelligence Agency, “Iraq Water Treatment Vulnerabilities,” January 18, 1991, [http://www.gulflink.osd.mil/declassdocs/dia/19950901/950901\\_511rept\\_91.html](http://www.gulflink.osd.mil/declassdocs/dia/19950901/950901_511rept_91.html) (accessed August 15, 2010); Defense Intelligence Agency, “Disease Information,” January 22, 1991, [http://www.gulflink.osd.mil/declassdocs/dia/19950901/950901\\_0504rept\\_91.html](http://www.gulflink.osd.mil/declassdocs/dia/19950901/950901_0504rept_91.html) (accessed August 15, 2010). There are many other similar declassified documents available online. For critical background and commentary, as well as references to additional documents, see Thomas J. Nagy, “The Secret Behind the Sanctions: How the U.S. Intentionally Destroyed Iraq’s Water Supply,” *The Progressive*, September 2001, <http://www.progressive.org/mag/nagy0901.html>

See this letter to President Clinton authored by Senator Levin: <http://www.iraqwatch.org/government/US/Letters,%20reports%20and%20statements/levin-10-9-98.html> In the letter, note how Levin provides a textbook example of how an abuser justifies his crimes by blaming others for his own actions, or in Levin's case, for the actions of the US government against the people of Iraq.

For several detailed analyses regarding the motivations, substance, and impact of the US-led UN sanctions on Iraq, see Ed. Anthony Arnove, *Iraq Under Siege: The Deadly Impact of Sanctions and War* updated edition (London: Pluto Press, 2003).

## **Israel-Palestine**

For extensive and exhaustive documentation on Israel's numerous war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the course of its assault on Gaza in December 08/January 09, see the report commissioned by the UN Human Right Council which was headed by South African Jurist, Richard Goldstone. The text can be accessed online at [http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/specialsession/9/docs/UNFFMGC\\_Report.pdf](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/specialsession/9/docs/UNFFMGC_Report.pdf)

Regarding US aid to Israel in connection with Israel's assault on Gaza, see (“Take Action: End Israel’s attacks on Gaza” US Campaign to End the Occupation, Jan. 2, 2009 <http://www.endtheoccupation.org>). The crucial remarks issued by the US Campaign to End the Occupation were as follows:

“From 2001-2006, the United States transferred to Israel more than \$200 million worth of spare parts to fly its fleet of F16’s and more than \$100 million worth of helicopter spare parts for its fleet of Apaches. In July 2008, the United States gave Israel 186 million gallons of JP-8 aviation jet fuel and signed a contract to transfer an addition \$1.9 billion worth of littoral combat ships to the Israeli navy. Last year, the United States signed a \$1.3 billion contract with Raytheon to transfer to Israel thousands of TOW, Hellfire, and “bunker buster” missiles.”

For more on the US role in the Gaza assault, see Max Kantar, "The Degree of US Responsibility in the Gaza Bloodbath," January 6, 2009, <http://www.countercurrents.org/kantar060109.htm>.

Regarding the use of white phosphorus, see Human Rights Watch, "Rain of Fire," March 25, 2009, <http://www.hrw.org/node/81760>.

On Levin's co-sponsorship of the resolution, see this article by Stephen Zunes at AlterNet: [http://www.alternet.org/world/119252/virtually\\_the\\_entire\\_dem\\_controlled\\_congress\\_supports\\_israel's\\_war\\_crimes\\_in\\_gaza/](http://www.alternet.org/world/119252/virtually_the_entire_dem_controlled_congress_supports_israel's_war_crimes_in_gaza/)

"Michigan Senator Carl Levin and the Israeli Lobby," February 13, 2008, <http://www.mediamouse.org/news/2008/02/michigan-senato-9.php>.

Regarding Palestinian casualties during the Gaza massacre, also known as "Operation Cast Lead," see B'Tselem's (top Israeli human rights group covering the occupied Palestinian territories) report:

[http://www.btselem.org/Download/20090909\\_Cast\\_Lead\\_Fatalities\\_Eng.pdf](http://www.btselem.org/Download/20090909_Cast_Lead_Fatalities_Eng.pdf)

\*Note that B'Tselem had a separate category for Palestinian civilian police officers killed by Israel. According to B'Tselem's numbers 248 Palestinian civilian police officers were killed. Under international law, civilian police officers are considered to be "noncombatants" so long as they are not directly participating in hostilities. Human rights watch, as well as other independent commentators argued that these officers were not participating in hostilities. Israel has yet to produce any evidence on the contrary. Therefore, the total civilian toll on the Palestinian side was, using B'Tselem's numbers, 1021. B'Tselem also noted that 320 children were killed by Israel.

For additional sources (such as Human Rights Watch, B'Tselem, Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, and the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights) regarding international law and Palestinian police officers, see, this fact-sheet I put together last year entitled "The Gaza Massacre: Check the Facts," For the relevant material in this case, see block quotes under the heading, "Targeting Civilian Police Stations and Officers," [http://www.palestinechronicle.com/view\\_article\\_details.php?id=14675](http://www.palestinechronicle.com/view_article_details.php?id=14675).

## **US Invasion and Occupation of Iraq, March 2003-present**

Senator initially voted against invading Iraq. However, Levin was not opposed to invading Iraq on principle; he simply wanted Russia, Britain, France, and China to sign off on it in the UN Security Council. That is not an antiwar position. Levin has criticized Bush's handling of the war--as have most people--but Levin's criticism is tactical, not moral, meaning that Levin's tactical criticism still reveals that he supports the "right" of the US government to impose its will, using force and violence if necessary, on other peoples and countries. Naturally, Levin has always voted to fund the war using the cowardly excuse that not funding the Iraq war would "put the troops in harm's way." The whole point of cutting off war funding would be to force the President to withdraw American troops from Iraq. No one has ever suggested--nor will anyone ever suggest--that we cut off funding for the war and leave US soldiers in Iraq. Examples of Levin's

position on this issue are abound and can be accessed with a simple google search of "Senator Levin Iraq war funding." Here is just one of many examples:

<http://levin.senate.gov/newsroom/release.cfm?id=322003>

Regarding Iraq War casualties, see "Iraq conflict has killed over one million Iraqis: survey," *Reuters*, January 30, 2008,

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSL3048857920080130>;

For an excellent examination of the extent of the killing in Iraq and how exactly it went down, see, "Is the United States Killing 10,000 Iraqis Every Month? Or Is It More?", Michael Schwartz, July 5, 2007, <http://www.counterpunch.org/schwartz07052007.html>.

For commentary on the media blackout regarding the "one million" casualties figure, see Project Censored, <http://www.projectcensored.org/top-stories/articles/1-over-one-million-iraqi-deaths-caused-by-us-occupation/>.

## **Afghanistan War**

Levin's position on the war in Afghanistan is well known and a quick google search will provide plenty of policy statements. He supports the war, has voted to spend billions of taxpayer dollars on the war and notably on Obama's Afghanistan surge. He favors pouring more money and training into the US-client government in Kabul rather than sending more US troops at this time.

Regarding the "notorious warlords" that Levin and the US government are supporting and financing, see, for example, Human Rights Watch, "Blood Stained Hands," July 7, 2005, <http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2005/07/06/blood-stained-hands-0>.

Also, regarding the criminals in the Karzai government and the death toll they amassed in the early 1990s, see this article by Human Rights Watch posted by the leading feminist organization in Afghanistan, the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan, (RAWA), "Analysis of New Cabinet Warlords...", June 20, 2002, <http://www.rawa.org/loyajirga2.htm>

For commentary from independent and credible Afghan sources on the US war in Afghanistan see RAWA's website and its many articles: [www.rawa.org](http://www.rawa.org) In particular, see this statement released by RAWA on Universal Human Rights Day, December 10, 2007, "The US and Her Fundamentalist Stooges are the Main Human Rights Violators in Afghanistan," [http://www.rawa.org/events/dec10-07\\_e.htm](http://www.rawa.org/events/dec10-07_e.htm)

Also see this excellent article by Malalai Joya, an Afghan legislator, known worldwide as "the bravest woman in Afghanistan": "The Biggest Lie of Afghanistan," *The Guardian*, July 25, 2009, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/jul/25/afghanistan-occupation-taliban-warlords>.

## **Pakistan Drones and Bombings**

"Carl Levin Wants to Expand Drone Strikes in Pakistan," *Huffington Post*, July 2010, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/07/13/carl-levin-wants-to-expand\\_n\\_644212.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/07/13/carl-levin-wants-to-expand_n_644212.html)

Last year I wrote a comprehensive legal analysis of the US drone campaign in Pakistan. I went through every news report for every US drone strike available and examined every casualty report and relied on very mainstream sources for the entire article. See Max Kantar, "International Law: The First Casualty of the Drone War: A Comprehensive Legal Analysis of US Drone Strikes in Pakistan," *ZNet*, December 2011, <http://www.zcommunications.org/international-law-the-first-casualty-of-the-drone-war-by-max-kantar>

Nobel Peace Prize nominee, Kathy Kelly visited Pakistan last year and reported what traumatized residents told her about US drone strikes and terror. See Kathy Kelly, "Visitors and Hosts in Pakistan," *The Huffington Post*, June 9, 2009, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kathy-kelly/visitors-and-hosts-in-pakistan\\_b\\_213472.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kathy-kelly/visitors-and-hosts-in-pakistan_b_213472.html)

Leading military experts, Andrew Exum and David Kilcullen wrote an op-ed in the NYT discussing the civilian killings which are routine in drone strikes: David Kilcullen and Andrew Exum, "Death From Above, Outrage Down Below," *New York Times*, May 17, 2009. This article is available online as well.

## **Iran**

See Levin's policy statement on Iran sanctions and "all options on the table": <http://levin.senate.gov/senate/statement.cfm?id=325905>

Levin suggests the US should attack Syria and Iran: <http://www.afterdowningstreet.org/node/19177>

## **Michigan-related imprisonment statistics**

— Regarding the incarceration of black men in Michigan see page 8 of the Sentencing Project's report, "Uneven Justice: State Rates of Incarceration By Race and Ethnicity," [http://sentencingproject.org/doc/publications/rd\\_stateratesofincbyraceandethnicity.pdf](http://sentencingproject.org/doc/publications/rd_stateratesofincbyraceandethnicity.pdf)

Regarding South Africa's rate of incarcerating black men under apartheid, this is well known as any google search will reveal. See, for example, this link put together by the Prison Policy Initiative, [http://www.prisonpolicy.org/articles/not\\_equal\\_opportunity.pdf](http://www.prisonpolicy.org/articles/not_equal_opportunity.pdf)