

Noam Chomsky on Israel

By Kathleen Wells

Internationally recognized as one of America's most critically-engaged public intellectuals today, Noam Chomsky spoke with me about Israel and its interplay with the United States.

Kathleen Wells: Hi, I'm Kathleen Wells, political correspondent for Race-Talk. I'm speaking with Noam Chomsky, professor of linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and renowned political activist and writer. He has written over a hundred books on linguistics, human rights, economics, and politics. Thank you, Professor Chomsky, for taking the time to speak with me this afternoon.

Noam Chomsky: Very pleased to be with you.

Kathleen Wells: Speak to me about the relation between the United States and Israel. Specifically, address, as you have previously stated, how every crime, violation of international law, that Israel commits is done through the direct participation and authorization of the United States.

Noam Chomsky: That's a ... As a descriptive statement, that is pretty close to accurate. I mean "all" is a very strong word but it is certainly generally true. And, in fact, the United States has overwhelmingly vetoed Security Council resolutions condemning Israeli crimes and atrocities, prevented the Security Council from calling on Israel to terminate aggression, and so on and so forth. The descriptive comment is not really controversial. There are interesting questions about *why* it's true. There were also interesting questions about the sources of support for this position in the United States, which helps us explain *why* it is true.

The history is reasonably clear. This was not the case up until 1967. In fact, before 1967, the relationships were not very different from relationships among other powers. There was sympathy and support for Israel, which has many, many sources, including the Christian Zionism, which is a very powerful force that precedes and is numerically far stronger than Jewish Zionism. But for somebody like, say, Harry Truman, raised in a deeply Christian tradition, it was just taken for granted that the Bible instructs us that God gave the land of Palestine to the Jews. So it is kind of like in his bones. And that's true for a very large part of the American population, much more so than -- far more than any other country. So that is one factor, and there are other factors.

But the major change in relationships took place in 1967. Just take a look at USA aid to Israel. You can tell that right off. And in many other respects, it's true, too. Similarly, the attitude towards Israel on the part of the intellectual community -- you know, media, commentary,

journals, and so on -- that changed very sharply in 1967, from either lack of interest or sometimes even disdain, to almost passionate support. So what happened in 1967?

Well, in 1967, Israel destroyed the source of secular Arab nationalism -- Nasser's Egypt -- which was considered a major threat and enemy by the West. It is worth remembering that there was a serious conflict at that time between the forces of radical Islamic fundamentalism, centered in Saudi Arabia -- where all the oil is -- and secular Arab nationalism, centered in Nasser's Egypt; in fact, the two countries were at war. They were fighting a kind of a proxy war in Yemen at that time. The United States and Britain were supporting the radical Islamic fundamentalism; in fact, they've rather consistently done that -- supporting Saudi Arabia. And Nasserite secular nationalism was considered a serious threat, because it was recognized that it might seek to take control of the immense resources of the region and use them for regional interest, rather than allow them to be centrally controlled and exploited by the United States and its allies.

So that was a major issue. Well, Israel effectively destroyed Nasserite secular nationalism and the whole Arab nationalist movement that was centered in it. That was considered a major contribution to U.S. geopolitical strategy and also to its Saudi Arabian ally. And, in fact, that's when attitudes toward Israel changed sharply and the U.S. support for Israel -- material, diplomatic, and other -- also increased sharply.

In 1970, there was another turning point. In 1970, the Jordanian army (Jordan was a strong, close U.S. ally) -- the Jordanian dictatorship was essentially massacring Palestinians during what's the month that's called Black September. And the U.S. was in favor of that; it supported that. It looked as though Syria might intervene to support the Palestinians against the attack by the Hashemite dictatorship. The U.S. didn't want that to happen. It regarded it as a threat to its Jordanian ally and also a broader threat, ultimately, to Saudi Arabia, the jewel in the crown.

While the U.S. was mired in Southeast Asia at the time -- it was right at the time, a little after the Cambodia invasion and everything was blowing up -- the U.S. couldn't do a thing about it. So, it asked Israel to mobilize its very substantial military forces and threaten Syria so that Syria would withdraw. Well, Israel did it. Syria withdrew. That was another gift to U.S. power and, in fact, U.S. aid to Israel shot up very sharply -- maybe quadrupled or something like that -- right at that time.

Now at that time, that was the time when the Nixon ... so-called "Nixon Doctrine" was formulated. A part of the Nixon Doctrine was that the U.S., of course, has to control Middle-East oil resources -- that goes much farther back -- but it will do so through local, regional allies, what were called "cops on the beat" by Melvin Laird, Secretary of Defense. So there will be local cops on the beat, which will protect the Arab dictatorships from their own populations or any external threat. And then, of course, "police headquarters" is in Washington. Well, the local

cops on the beat at the time were Iran, then under the Shah, a U.S. ally; Turkey; to an extent, Pakistan; and Israel was added to that group. It was another cop on the beat. It was one of the local gendarmes that was sometimes called the periphery strategy: non-Arab states protecting the Arab dictatorships from any threat, primarily the threat of what was called radical nationalism -- independent nationalism -- meaning taking over the armed resources for their own purposes. Well, that structure remained through the 1970s.

In 1979, Iran was lost because of the overthrow of the Shah and pretty soon the Khomeini dictatorship -- clerical dictatorship -- and the U.S. once tried to overthrow that and supported Iraq's invasion of Iran, and so on. But, anyway, that "cop" [Iran] was lost and Israel's position became even stronger in the structure that remained. Furthermore, by that time, Israel was performing secondary services to the United States elsewhere in the world. It's worth recalling that through the -- especially through the 80s -- Congress, under public pressure, was imposing constraints on Reagan's support for vicious and brutal dictatorships. The governments around the world -- say Guatemala -- the U.S. could not provide direct aid to Guatemala, because -- which was massacring people in some areas in a genocidal fashion up in the highlands -- Congress blocked it.

Congress was also passing sanctions against aid to South-Africa, which the Reagan administration was strongly supporting South-Africa and continued to do so right through the 1980s. This was under the framework of the war on terror that Reagan had declared. The African National Congress -- Mandela's ANC -- was designated as one of the more notorious terrorist groups in the world as late as 1988. [So] that it [could] support South-African apartheid and the Guatemalan murderous dictatorship and other murderous regimes, Reagan needed a kind of network of terrorist states to help out, to evade the congressional and other limitations, and he turned to, at that time, Taiwan, but, in particular, Israel. Britain helped out. And that was another major service. And so it continued.

Kathleen Wells: I want to come up to today, because I only have 30 minutes.

Noam Chomsky: So, it basically continues. I mean, if we go right up till this moment ...

Kathleen Wells: Exactly.

Noam Chomsky: ... simply ask, where are the strongest sources of support for Israeli actions? Well, pick the newspapers. By far the most rabid pro-Israel newspaper in the country is the *Wall Street Journal*. That's the journal of the business community, and it reflects the support of the business world for Israel, which is quite strong. There's a lot of high-tech investment in Israel. [Our] military industry is very close to Israeli military industry. There's a whole network

of interactions. Intel, for example, is building its next facility for construct development of the next generation of chips in Israel. But, altogether, the relations are very tight, very intimate, quite natural. And it's not surprising that the main business journal in the country would be supporting Israeli expansion and power.

Take a look at the two political parties. Most Jewish money goes to Democrats and most Jews vote Democratic. But the Republican Party is much more strongly supportive of Israeli power and atrocities than the Democrats are. Then again, I think that reflects their closer relations to the business world and to the military system.

There is, of course, also a Jewish lobby – an Israeli lobby -- APAC, which is a very influential lobby. And so there are many... and there's Christian Zionism, which is a *huge* element. Well, you know, all of these combined to provide a background for U.S. support for Israel, and they're facing virtually no opposition. Who's calling for support of the Palestinians?

Kathleen Wells: Exactly, and so when you hear statements being made that Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East, and yet you see the occupation and the blockade on Gaza, the occupation of East Jerusalem and the West Bank, what shall one think about this fact?

Noam Chomsky: First, let's ask about being the only democracy in the region. First of all, it's not true. There were free elections in Palestine in January 2006. There were free elections in Palestine, carefully monitored, recognized to be free. The victor was Hamas, okay, centered in the Gaza Strip. Israel and the United States *instantly*, within *days*, undertook perfectly public policies to try to punish the Palestinians for voting the wrong way in a free election. I mean, it couldn't have been... you couldn't see a more dramatic illustration of hatred and contempt for democracy unless it comes out the right way.

A year later, July 2007, the U.S. and Israel, together with the Palestinian authority, tried to carry out a military coup to overthrow the elected government. Well, it failed. Hamas won and drove Fatah out of the Gaza Strip. Now, here, that's described as a demonstration of Hamas terror or something. What they did was preempt and block a U.S.-backed military coup to overthrow the democratically-elected government.

Kathleen Wells: What do you say to the fact that Hamas is listed on the United States State Department terrorist list? So they're characterized as terrorist?

Noam Chomsky: Yeah, they are. Because they do things we don't like. The terrorist list has been a historic joke, in fact, a sick joke. So take a look at the history of the terrorist list. Up until 1982, Iraq -- Saddam Hussein's Iraq -- was on the terrorist list.

In 1982, the Reagan administration removed Iraq from the terrorist list. Why? Because they were moving to support Iraq, and, in fact, the Reagan administration and, in fact, the first Bush administration strongly supported Iraq right through its worst – Saddam, right through his worst atrocities. In fact, they tried to ... they succeeded, in fact, in preventing even criticism of condemnation of the worst atrocities, like the Halabja massacre -- and others. So they removed Iraq from the terrorist list because they wanted to support one of the worst monsters and terrorists in the region, namely Saddam Hussein. And since there was an empty position on the terrorist list, they had to fill it, so they added Cuba. Cuba's probably the target of more terrorism than any country in the world, back from the Kennedy years. Right? In fact, just at that time, there had been a rash of major terrorist acts against Cuba. So Cuba was added to the terrorist list to replace Saddam Hussein, who was removed because the U.S. wanted to support him.

Now, you take a look through the terrorist list, yeah, that's the way it is. So, for example, Hezbollah is on the terrorist list. Well, you know, probably it's carried out terrorist acts, but by the standards of the U.S. and Israel, they're barely visible. The main reason why Hezbollah is on the terrorist list is because it resisted Israeli occupation of Southern Lebanon and, in fact, drove Israel out of Southern Lebanon after twenty-two years of occupation -- that's called terrorism. In fact, Lebanon has a national holiday, May 25th, which is called Liberation Day. That's the national holiday in Lebanon commemorating, celebrating the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon in year 2000, and largely under Hezbollah attack.

Kathleen Wells: How would you characterize Hezbollah and Hamas? How would *you* characterize them?

Noam Chomsky: Hezbollah happens to be the major political grouping in Lebanon. It's the Hezbollah-based coalition, handily won the last election in the year 2009. Now you know it's not a perfect election, but it's one of the ... by the standards of U.S.-backed dictatorships it was an amazing election, and they won it. They didn't happen to win the largest number of representatives because of the way the confessional system works, but they won the popular vote by about the same amount that Obama had won.

So they're the main political grouping in the country. They largely -- almost completely -- control southern Lebanon. They're a national Lebanese organization. They've ... they're charged with some terrorist acts outside of Lebanon, maybe correctly. But again, if the charges ... we take all the charges and weigh them against U.S./Israeli violence, aggression, and terror, they don't even count. But that's basically what they are. As far as Israel's concerned, Hezbollah's position is they don't recognize Israel. They don't ... they... but they say they're position is, well,

they'll accept any agreement with Israel that the Palestinians accept; we're a Lebanese organization.

What about Hamas? Hamas is a ... its background is it's an outgrowth of the Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamist organization, which would be a major competitor in Egypt's elections, if Egypt permitted democratic elections, which it won't. The Egyptian dictatorship -- which the U.S. strongly backs, Obama personally strongly backs -- doesn't permit anything remotely like elections and is very brutal and harsh. But they don't ... they hate the Muslim Brotherhood, and Hamas is an offshoot.

In its early days, Israel supported Hamas as a weapon against the secular PLO. Later, when Hamas really crystallized, became a significant organization, Israel turned against them, and it became bitterly opposed to them in January 2006, as the U.S. did, when they won a free election. That was intolerable and they had to be overthrown.

Hamas's position is that as a political party it does not recognize Israel, but that doesn't mean much: the Democratic Party doesn't recognize countries either. It says that their position is that they're willing to accept a two-state settlement in accordance with the international consensus, which the U.S. and Israel have blocked for 35 years. So they say, "Yes, we'll accept that, but we don't want to recognize Israel." Well, okay, that's their position. Are they a nice organization? No. I wouldn't ... I certainly wouldn't want to live under their clerical rule. But compared with organizations and states that the United States strongly supports, they don't stand out as particularly harsh, say Egypt, for example.

Kathleen Wells: So respond to those who defend Israel's policy and state that Israel is surrounded by enemies. Their Arab neighbors -- Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Palestine, Ahmadinejad in Iran -- they pose a threat to Israel. They want to see Israel's destruction, and they feel like these Arab countries are an imminent threat to Israel. Give me your thoughts on those who defend Israel's policies.

Noam Chomsky: Well, the truth of the matter is that Israel and the United States, which act in tandem, are a tremendous threat to the ... mainly to the Palestinians. In fact, while we're discussing the potential threat to Israel that might exist, the United States and Israel are crushing and destroying the Palestinians. That's the live reality.

Now what about the threat? Well, yeah, there's a potential threat, and Israel and the United States are substantially responsible for it. I mean, if the U.S. and Israel would accept the overwhelming international consensus on a political settlement, that would very sharply reduce the threat. But Israel and the U.S. prefer Israeli expansion to diplomatic settlement and, therefore, are blocking that settlement -- they're alone. I mean, Europe, the non-aligned

countries -- the Arab League, the Organization of Islamic States, which includes Iran -- have all accepted the international consensus on the two-state settlement. I mean, there are details to be worked out, but the basic structure is clear. For 35 years, the U.S. and Israel have been blocking it. There are a few rare and temporary exceptions, but that's basically the story. I don't have time to run through all the details here.

Kathleen Wells: But what's the rationale?

Noam Chomsky: That creates...

Kathleen Wells: But what's the...

Noam Chomsky: The rationale's very simple.

Kathleen Wells: Exactly.

Noam Chomsky: They prefer expansion to security. That's been explicitly true since 1971. I think the most fateful decision that Israel and the U.S. made in this regard was in February 1971 when President Sadat of Egypt offered Israel a full peace settlement -- full peace settlement; no conditions -- nothing for the Palestinians, in return for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, and, in fact, he cared only about Sinai. Jordan made the same proposal a year later with regard to the West Bank. Israel had to decide, at that point, whether to accept security -- which would certainly have followed from the withdrawal from the conflict of the major Arab military forces, primarily Egypt, secondly Jordan -- whether to accept security or to insist on expansion. Now expansion at that time was mostly into the Sinai. Israel was developing plans for substantial expansion into the Egyptian Sinai, including a major city, Yamit, supposedly a million people, a lot of settlements, and so on. And that was a very clear choice: do we choose expansion or security? They chose expansion.

The crucial question is what would the United States do? Well, there was an internal bureaucratic battle in the U.S., and Henry Kissinger won out. He was in favor of what he called "stalemate." A stalemate meant no negotiations, just force. So the U.S. and Israel proceeded with expansion. Sadat, for the next... he made gesture after... move after move for the next year or two to try to convince the U.S. to accept the political settlement. It was disregarded. He kept threatening war if Israel continued to develop the northeast Sinai. It was dismissed. Then came the October 1973 war, which was a very close thing for Israel, the worst moment in its history. Well, at that point, Kissinger and the Israeli leaders recognized they can't simply dismiss Egypt, and they moved slowly towards the Camp David Settlement in 1978, which pretty much

accepted what Sadat had offered in 1971 -- a diplomatic catastrophe. Meanwhile, Israel has continued its expansion, by then mostly into the West Bank, and the U.S. was supporting it all the way, and so it continues.

So, sure, if Israel continues to settle in the occupied territories -- illegally, incidentally, as Israel recognized in 1967 (it's all illegal; they recognized it) -- it's undermining the possibilities for the viable existence of any small Palestinian entity. And as long as the United States and Israel continue with that, yes, there will be insecurity.

Kathleen Wells: This is essentially an issue of land; it's not a religious issue. It's an issue of land, and it's economics that's motivating Israel to expand. Is that what you are saying?

Noam Chomsky: Primarily. In fact, the President of Israel, Ezer Weizman, shortly before he became President after 1967, pointed out, (he was then chief of the Air Force) -- he said, "Look we could withdraw from the occupied territories, but then we couldn't live at the scale and style and grandeur that we would prefer." That's not an exact quote; words were approximately to that effect. And, you know, that's basically true.

The expansion into the West Bank is, you know, it's kind of understandable. I mean, the parts of the West Bank that Israel is taking over are, first of all, a good part of the arable land: the pleasant suburbs of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, which happen to be in the West Bank; the major water resources, which are in the area that Israel is taking over; the Jordan Valley, which is arable land, of course, and essentially imprisons what's left. And then Israel has been sending corridors through the occupied territories. The most important one -- one of several -- is east of what's called Jerusalem. Jerusalem is now a vastly-expanded area which Israel has annexed in violation of Security Council orders, as well as in violation of international law. And expanding east from there is a corridor, started in the 1970s under Yitzhak Rabin, now includes the town of Ma'ale Adumim. It basically bisects the West Bank. There are two other corridors to the north. It breaks up the remaining areas of the West Bank into what Ariel Sharon -- the architect, one of the main architects of the policy -- called Bantustans.

And, sure, as long as they do that, there is going to be continuing ... it's understandable why they do it: sure, they want that land, and they want the resources. And it does, as Ezer Weizman said, it allows them to live in a scale and character beyond what would happen if they lived peacefully within their own territories. And the U.S. backs them, so they can do it, and it's continuing to back them under Obama. So, sure, their position is: well, okay, let's just go ahead and do it. And it does lead to insecurity, but that's the decision they made in 1971.

Kathleen Wells: And you have stated that this expansion is dangerous for Israel. Can you

elaborate on that?

Noam Chomsky: Well, you already elaborated on it at the beginning, when you said that they are facing threats. When you expand into somebody else's territory and you refuse to allow ... and you destroy the national ... the legitimate national aspirations of the indigenous inhabitants, now restricted to about 22% of Palestine, even in the international arrangements ... when you do that, sure, you're going to lead to insecurity. Remember also that Israel has invaded its northern neighbor, Lebanon, five times -- brutally, harshly, plenty of terror, plenty of violence and no credible pretext.* I don't have time to go through the details, but I've done so in print. Well, yes, so Lebanon is hostile, too. Lebanon happens to be a weak state; they can't do much, but that leads to plenty of hostility in the region.

With regard to Iran, Iran was a very close ally of Israel's as long as it was under the Shah. Ahmadinejad has issued what we call "threats against Israel." They're not actually threats, and if you look at the exact wording, he's repeating statements by Khomeini at a time when Israel was pretty close to Iran and didn't care about them. He's saying, "Yes, in the end of days Israel should disappear." Okay, not nice -- does a lot of other rotten things; it's a horrible regime. But to say that it's a *threat* to Israel is a bit extreme. I mean, it's a ... and, in fact, to the extent that there is a potential Iranian threat it would be ... it's claimed that the Iranian nuclear program is a threat.

Well, okay, if you believe that, there are clear steps to take: move towards a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the region. Now, that would not terminate any potential threat, but it would certainly mitigate it. Nuclear-weapons-free zones are very important steps towards reducing the threat of nuclear weapons and of proliferation. And, in fact, the U.S. is committed to that. It agreed to it in 1995 and in the Nuclear Review Conference just last May. A couple of weeks ago, Egypt, which leads the Non-Aligned Movement at the moment [of] 118 countries, pressed very hard for moving towards establishing a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the region. The U.S. was pressed into a corner and couldn't disagree, so said, "Sure, we agree in principle." But Hillary Clinton said, "Yes, but the time is not right". And the U.S. -- Obama -- hid behind the Israeli position, which said, sure, let's do it but after this comprehensive peace settlement, in which the U.S. and Israel can delay indefinitely, as they've been doing. So there are no steps toward a nuclear-weapons-free zone, to which, incidentally, the United States is *very* strongly committed.

The U.S. and Britain, when they invaded Iraq, tried to provide a kind of a thin, legal cover for it. And the legal cover was Security Council Resolution 687 from 1991, which called on Iraq to eliminate its weapons of mass destruction program. And, as you recall, the U.S. and Israel and the U.K. claimed that they had not done so. Well, it turned out to be false, but they claimed

that they had not done so. But if you look at that resolution, Article 14, it calls on the signers to move to establish a nuclear-weapons-free zone in their region. So the U.S. and U.K., above everyone else, are committed to this. But it isn't even discussed here.

So to talk about the Iranian nuclear threat, while we're refusing to take the most elementary steps towards eliminating any potential threat that might arise sometime, is kind of ludicrous. In fact, if you look [at] the ... there is now a declassified study from last April from the Defense Intelligence Agency and the Pentagon, assessing the military balance in the region, the Iranian threat included, in particular; and they point out that Iran's military doctrine is essentially defensive, it's an attempt to deter attacks, that Iran's military expenditures are relatively low compared to the region and, of course, minuscule as compared to the U.S. and that, *if* they're developing nuclear weapons, it would be as a deterrent.

So whatever threat Iran poses, it's not a military threat; it's a threat of independence. Well, Israel doesn't like that, the U.S. doesn't like that, but to call that a threat -- while, Israel has a huge nuclear capacity, has refused to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty, is rejecting calls from the international agency -- International Atomic Energy Agency -- to open up it's facilities to inspection, backed by the U.S. and is, in fact, proceeding to crush Palestinians. I mean, anybody watching this from Mars would break down in hysterical laughter.

Kathleen Wells: Well, Israel is the only nation in the Middle East which has nuclear weapons, but it has not officially acknowledged that they have them.

Noam Chomsky: That's correct. And it is one of three countries -- three nuclear states -- that have not signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty: Israel, India, and Pakistan, all of which are protected by the United States in their nuclear weapons programs, to which the U.S., in fact, contributes and has contributed. Those are the three non-signers.

Kathleen Wells: And so...

Noam Chomsky: And that continues to this moment. I mean, in this context, how can we even listen to Obama saying he wants to get rid of nuclear weapons?

Kathleen Wells: And so, I mean, there is some cynicism I hear in your voice so ... and it's understandable, I would say. But so what do ... what can we expect to happen, if there's not going to be ... the international community is calling on the Middle East to be a nuclear-free-zone and yet Israel and the United States are not moving in that direction?

Noam Chomsky: Not only are they not moving in that direction, but blocking it.

Kathleen Wells: So ...

Noam Chomsky: And remember that the U.S. has a specific commitment, over and above other countries, because of the Iraq invasion.

Kathleen Wells: So where do we go from here?

Noam Chomsky: That's up to people like you, the citizens of the United States. If we have ... if we care about what our country is doing, we should proceed to do something about it.

Kathleen Wells: So when you say we should proceed to do something, get me some specifics. What should we do?

Noam Chomsky: We should be organizing and acting to get Congress to compel the administration to move towards reducing the *dire* threat of nuclear weapons. And there are many ways to do it. One is by establishing nuclear-weapons-free zones. The Middle East is one case, but it's not the only case. So, to mention another, relevant here, the African Union did finally agree to a nuclear-weapons-free zone, but it can't implement it, and the reason it can't implement it is because of the United States and Britain.

There is an island in the Indian Ocean, Diego Garcia, which is claimed by the African Union; its part of Africa. Britain and the U.S. -- it has bases for U.S. nuclear weapons and nuclear submarines, and so on. The population was kicked out by Britain so that the United States could establish a major military base there. That base is used -- it's a major military base -- it's used for bombing of Middle East and Central Asia. Obama is beefing it up very sharply -- both its nuclear weapons capacity and its massive ordinance. In fact, he's just sent there a couple of hundred so-called bunker busters, the biggest weapons in the arsenal, short of nuclear weapons, aimed at Iran. All of that's going on right now. Diego Garcia is excluded by the U.S. and Britain from the African Union nuclear-weapons-free zone, which means they can't implement it.

Well, that's one case. The Middle East is another case, there actually are others. But if we are interested in non-proliferation, we should be compelling the U.S. government to take concrete steps that are available towards reducing the threat of war -- for example, dismantling the military base in Diego Garcia and terminating the threats of aggression against Iran and moving towards mitigating the threat of use of nuclear weapons or development of nuclear weapons. It can be done in many ways, nuclear-weapons-free zones being the most obvious.

Kathleen Wells: But this is ...

Noam Chomsky: There is a lot we could do.

Kathleen Wells: But this isn't widely covered in the U.S. media.

Noam Chomsky: That's a little bit of an understatement. It isn't covered, period. Try to find some references.

Kathleen Wells: So how do American citizens get informed on this issue? It's not covered ... Why is it that we ...

Noam Chomsky: By people like you writing about it and organizing and educating: that's our job. We are not thrust in jail for telling the truth about these things. I'm afraid I have to take off. I have another interview.

Kathleen Wells: Okay. I really appreciate you ... Can I ask you one last question?

Noam Chomsky: Yeah.

Kathleen Wells: Okay. As a Jewish American, what would you like to say to other Jewish Americans regarding Israel?

Noam Chomsky: Pretty much what I said in the 1970's. I mean, I wrote at that time -- and I think it's even more true today -- that those who call themselves supporters of Israel are, in fact, supporters of Israel's moral degeneration, increased isolation, and possible ultimate destruction. I hate to say it, and I hate to see it, but it's coming true.

Kathleen Wells: Okay. On that note, I think it went well. Thank you very much. I appreciate you taking the time with me, Professor Chomsky. Have a great afternoon.

Noam Chomsky: Good to talk to you.

Kathleen Wells: Okay, bye-bye.

**On August 3, 2010, Hareetz reported that Israel and Lebanon entered into a border clash that was spurred by Israel's attempt to uproot a tree on Lebanon's soil. The incident amounted to a thirty-minute firefight that left three Lebanese soldiers, a Lebanese journalist, and an Israeli officer dead.*

On August 7, 2010, tensions between Israel and Lebanon escalated when the Israeli Navy opened fire on a Lebanese fishing boat. This clash marked the worst confrontation between the two sides since Israel's 2006 incursion into Lebanon, during which about 1,200 Lebanese -- mostly civilians -- were killed.

On August 10, 2010, American lawmakers said that because of the clash/firefight on August 3, U.S. funding for Lebanon's military would be blocked/cut.