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## ForeignPolicy

# Israel Treated Gaza Like Its Own Private Death Laboratory

By [Conn Hallinan](#), *Foreign Policy*. Posted **February 13, 2009**.

Israel tested out a "focused lethality" weapon that minimizes explosive damage to structures while inflicting catastrophic wounds on its victims.

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Erik Fosse, a Norwegian cardiologist, worked in Gaza hospitals during the recent war. "It was as if they had stepped on a mine," he [says](#) of certain Palestinian patients he treated. "But there was no shrapnel in the wound. Some had lost their legs. It looked as though they had been sliced off. I have been to war zones for 30 years, but I have never seen such injuries before."

Dr. Fosse was describing the effects of a U.S. "focused lethality" weapon that minimizes explosive damage to structures while inflicting catastrophic wounds on its victims. But where did the Israelis get this weapon? And was their widespread use in the attack on Gaza a field test for a new generation of explosives?

### DIMEd to Death

The specific weapon is called a Dense Inert Metal Explosive (DIME). In 2000, the U.S. Air Force [teamed up](#) with the University of California's Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. The weapon wraps high explosives with a tungsten alloy and other metals like cobalt, nickel, or iron in a carbon fiber/epoxy container. When the bomb explodes the container evaporates, and the tungsten turns into micro-shrapnel that is extremely lethal within a 13-foot radius. Tungsten is inert, so it doesn't react chemically with the explosive. While a non-inert metal like aluminum would increase the blast, tungsten actually contains the explosion to a limited area.

Within the weapon's range, however, it's inordinately lethal. [According to](#) Norwegian doctor Mad Gilbert, the blast results in multiple amputations and "very severe fractures. The muscles are sort of split from the bones, hanging loose, and you also have quite severe burns." Most of those who survive the initial blast quickly succumb to septicemia and organ collapse. "Initially, everything seems in order but it turns out on operation that dozens of miniature particles can be found in all their organs," says Dr. Jam Brommundt, a German doctor working in Kham Younis, a city in southern Gaza. "It seems to be some sort of explosive or shell that disperses tiny particles that penetrate all organs, these miniature injuries, you are not able to attack them surgically." [According to Brommundt](#), the particles cause multiple organ failures.

If by some miracle victims resist those conditions, they are almost certain to develop rhabdomyosarcoma (RMS), a particularly deadly cancer that deeply embeds itself into tissue and is almost impossible to treat. A 2005 U.S. Department of health [study](#) found that tungsten stimulated RMS cancers even in very low doses. All of the 92 rats tested developed the cancer.

While DIMEs were originally designed to avoid "collateral" damage generated by standard high-explosive bombs, the weapon's lethality and profound long-term toxicity hardly seem like an improvement.

It appears DIME weapons may have been used in the 2006 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, but not enough

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to alarm medical workers. But in Gaza, the ordinance was widely used. Al-Shifta [alone has seen](#) 100 to 150 victims of these attacks.

**Gaza as Test**

Dr. Gilbert [told](#) the *Oslo Gardermoen*, "there is a strong suspicion that Gaza is now being used as a test laboratory for new weapons."

DIME is a U.S. invention. Did the Israelis get the weapons from the United States, or did they design similar ones themselves? Given the close relations between the two militaries, it isn't unlikely that the U.S. Air Force supplied the weapons or, at least, the specifications on how to construct them. And since the United States has yet to use the device in a war, it would certainly benefit from seeing how these new "focused lethality" weapons worked under battlefield conditions.

Marc Garlasco, Human Rights Watch's senior military advisor, [says](#) "it remains to be seen how Israel has acquired the technology, whether they purchased weapons from the United States under some agreement, or if they in fact licensed or developed their own type of munitions."

DIME weapons aren't banned under the Geneva Conventions because they have never been officially tested. However, any weapon capable of inflicting such horrendous damage is normally barred from use, particularly in one of the most densely populated regions in the world.

For one thing, no one knows how long the tungsten remains in the environment or how it could affect people who return to homes attacked by a DIME. University of Arizona cancer researcher Dr. Mark Witten, who investigates links between tungsten and leukemia, [says](#) that in his opinion "there needs to be much more research on the health effects of tungsten before the military increases its usage."

**Beyond DIMES**

DIMES weren't the only controversial weapons used in Gaza. The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) also made generous use of white phosphorus, a chemical that burns with intense heat and inflicts terrible burns on victims. In its vapor form it also damages breathing passages. International law prohibits the weapon's use near population areas and requires that "all reasonable precautions" be taken to avoid civilians.

Israel initially denied using the chemical. "The IDF acts only in accordance with what is permitted by international law and does not use white phosphorus," [said](#) Israel's Chief of Staff Gabi Ashkenazi on January 13.

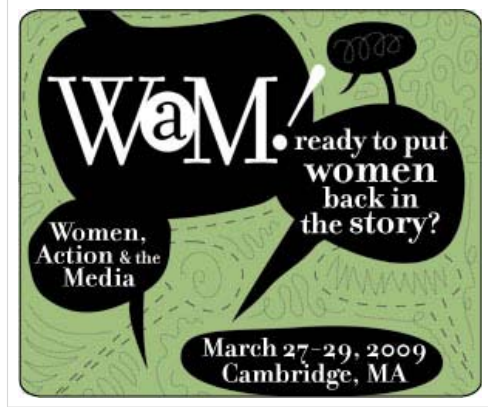
But eyewitness accounts in Gaza and Israel soon forced the IDF to admit that they were, indeed, using the substance. On January 20, the IDF [confessed](#) to using phosphorus artillery shells as smokescreens, as well as 200 U.S.-made M825A1 phosphorus mortar shells on "Hamas fighters and rocket launching crews in northern Gaza."

Three of those shells hit the UN Works and Relief Agency compound on January 15, igniting a fire that destroyed hundreds of tons of humanitarian supplies. A phosphorus shell also hit Al-Quds hospital in Gaza City. The Israelis say there were Hamas fighters near the two targets, a charge that witnesses adamantly [deny](#).

Donatella Rovera of Amnesty International [said](#): "Such extensive use of this weapon in Gaza's densely-populated residential neighborhoods and its toll on civilians is a war crime."

Israel is also accused of using depleted uranium ammunition (DUA), which a UN sub-commission in 2002 found in violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Charter, the Geneva Conventions, the International Convention Against Torture, the Conventional Weapons Convention, and the Hague Conventions against the use of poison weapons.

DUA isn't highly radioactive, but after exploding, some of it turns into a gas that can easily be inhaled. The dense shrapnel that survives also tends to bury itself deeply, leaching low-level radioactivity into water-tables.



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## War Crimes?

Other human-rights groups, including B'Tselem, Gisha, and Physicians for Human Rights, charge that the IDF intentionally targeted medical personnel, killing over a dozen, including paramedics and ambulance drivers.

The International Federation for Human Rights [called](#) on the UN Security Council to refer Israel to the International Criminal Court for possible war crimes.

Although the Israelis dismiss the war-crimes charges, the fact that the Israeli cabinet held a special meeting on January 25 to discuss the issue suggests they're concerned about being charged with "disproportionate" use of force. The [Geneva Conventions](#) require belligerents to at "all times" distinguish between combatants and civilians and to avoid "disproportionate force" in seeking military gains.

Hamas' use of unguided missiles fired at Israel would also be a war crime under the Conventions.

"The one-sidedness of casualty figures is one measure of disproportion," [says](#) Richard Falk, the UN's human rights envoy for the occupied territories. A total of 14 Israelis have been killed in the fighting, three of them civilians killed by rockets, 11 of them soldiers, four of the latter by "friendly fire." Some 50 IDF soldiers were also wounded.

In contrast, [1,330 Palestinians have died](#) and 5,450 were injured, the overwhelming bulk of them civilians.

"This kind of fighting constitutes a blatant violation of the laws of warfare, which we ask to be investigated by the Commission of War Crimes," a coalition of Israeli human rights groups and Amnesty International [said](#) in a joint statement. "The responsibility of the state of Israel is beyond doubt."

## Enter the Hague?

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said that Justice Minister Daniel Friedmann would coordinate the defense of any soldier or commander charged with a war crime. In any case, the United States would veto any effort by the UN Security Council to refer Israelis to the International Court at The Hague.

But, as the *Financial Times* [points out](#), "all countries have an obligation to search out those accused of 'grave' breaches of the rules of war and to put them on trial or extradite them to a country that will."

That was the basis under which the British police arrested Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet in 1998.

"We're in a seismic shift in international law," Amnesty International legal advisor Christopher Hall [told](#) the *Financial Times*, who says Israel's foreign ministry is already examining the risk to Israelis who travel abroad.

"It's like walking across the street against a red light," he says. "The risk may be low, but you're going to think twice before committing a crime or traveling if you have committed one."

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Conn Hallinan is a *Foreign Policy In Focus* columnist.

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**US - no comment**

Posted by: [b253@yahoo.com](#) on Feb 13, 2009 12:31 AM  
 Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

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The US unwavering support of Israel will eventually undo us. When Helen Thomas asked as part of a question "Do you know of any country in the middle east that has nuclear weapons." Everyone knew the answer - Israel. Yet when Obama, just gave the standard us answer that we don't know of any country that does. It was proof that as a country we are not ready to deal with reality yet.

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» [RE: US - no comment](#) Posted by: Gisele

» [RE: US - no comment](#) Posted by: madmax427

**War Crimes are war crimes....**

Posted by: [cordas](#) on Feb 13, 2009 1:51 AM  
 Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

[\[Report this c](#)

How can any nation hold its head up in the international community and NOT back a full investigation of these claims, and support any action taken at the Hague.

It seems to me that to try and stop these investigation / prosecutions\* is in and of itself a crime against humanity.

\*Of course anyone accused deserves a defence and the best defence that can be given.

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» [RE: War Crimes are war crimes....](#) Posted by: Gisele

» [RE: War Crimes are war crimes....](#) Posted by: cordas

» [RE: War Crimes are war crimes....Monkey see Monkey snot do the same.](#) Posted by: s

**Deliver US from Israel:Earth's little shop of horrors**

Posted by: [weathered](#) on Feb 13, 2009 3:21 AM  
 Current rating: **4** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

[\[Report this c](#)

Behold the toxic trojan horse all dressed up like relationship and all at our immense expense.

Israel is a hand grenade of very bad karma and it went off in our living room.

See Netanyahu for exactly what he is, a terribly insecure, dark little man, who's ego shows up on radar and who's core capacity for selfish deceit is diabolic.

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**WAR CHILD**

Posted by: [tony\\_opmoc](#) on Feb 13, 2009 5:18 AM  
 Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

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**WAR CHILD**

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» [RE: WAR CHILD](#) Posted by: Erin

**Hamas Responsible For All - Not Israel**

Posted by: [iris89](#) on Feb 13, 2009 5:51 AM  
 Current rating: **1** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

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Hamas is Responsible for All As It Lit The Proverbial Fuse in Palestine, and Israel's actions was in response to Hamas's uncalled for actions so if any war crimes were committed they should be charged to Hamas.

Wars should be eliminated and at present one religion is responsible for over 90% of the violence as pointed out by an Australian newspaper as follows:

"Did you know that 90-95% of the conflicts in the world today are Muslims fighting non-muslims or other?" [source - The Weekend Australian, November 26-27, 2005 AD]"

I am getting very tired of hearing Palestinians and other Ishmaelite crying crocodile tears and always trying to put the blame for what they do on others such as their conspiracy weavers tried to do at the 9/11/2001 attack on the World Trade Center, etc. Screaming against what they call wrongful occupations when they are guilty of occupying Byzantine territory, Palestine which belongs to the [see Numbers the 34 th. Chapter in any Bible for proof of this, and their outright greed as they have 98% of the Middle East, but still greedily want the less than 2% belonging to their sister tribe Israel. It is time we get real and put an end to this so the world can stop experiencing continuous Ishmaelite strife such as shooting rockets at Israel.

Solution, dissolve this false religion and rid the earth of at least 90% of the violence. But of course politicians will not do what is needed since as Jeremiah 10:23 says, "O LORD, I know that the way is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Authorized King James Bible; for more detailed information, go to the following article:

[\[go to\] When Should A Religion Be Dissolved In The Interest Of World Peace?](#)

Which can be found at,

<http://religioustruths.proboards59.com/>

An Educational Referral Forum under the sub-heading, ' ISLAM THE SOURCE OF MOST VIOLENCE

Along with many other useful articles.

Iris89

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- » [RE: Israel Not Interested in Peace](#) Posted by: saadasim
- » [If Israel didn't help engineer 9/11](#) Posted by: weathered
- » [RE: Hamas Responsible For All - Not Israel](#) Posted by: clvngodess
  - » [RE: Put the bong down Iris](#) Posted by: recklessron
  - » [RE: Hamas Responsible For All - Not Israel](#) Posted by: scarlettm512
    - » [RE: It's all about the "rapture" for Christians Scarlett...](#) Posted by: Gisele
  - » [RE: Iris is a Christian Bigot Nutjob](#) Posted by: DCostello2
  - » [RE: Hamas Responsible For All - Not Israel](#) Posted by: sirios
  - » [RE: Hamas Responsible For All - Not Israel](#) Posted by: cordas
  - » [RE: Hamas Responsible For All - Not Israel](#) Posted by: mkdelta69
  - » [RE: Hamas Responsible For All - Not Israel - WRONG](#) Posted by: symcokid

#### **Hamas Responsible For All - Not Israel**

Posted by: iris89 on Feb 13, 2009 6:08 AM

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Current rating: [1](#) [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

Hamas is Responsible for All As It Lit The Proverbial Fuse in Palestine, and Israel's actions was only a response to Hamas's uncalled for actions so if any war crimes were committed they should be charged to Hamas.

Wars should be eliminated and at present one religion is responsible for over 90% of the violence on earth as pointed out by an Australian newspaper as follows:

"Did you know that 90-95% of the conflicts in the world today are Muslims fighting non-muslims or each other?" [source - The Weekend Australian, November 26-27, 2005 AD]"

I am getting very tired of hearing Palestinians and other Ishmaelite crying crocodile tears and always trying to put the blame for what they do on others such as their conspiracy weavers tried to do about who did 9/11/2001 attack on the World Trade Center, etc. Screaming against what they call wrongful occupations when they are guilty of occupying Byzantine territory, Palestine which belongs to the Israelites [see Numbers the 34 th. Chapter in any Bible for proof of this, and their outright greed as they have over 98% of the Middle East, but still greedily want the less than 2% belonging to their sister tribe Israel] - its time we get real and put an end to this so the world can stop experiencing continuous Ishmaelite induced strife such as shooting rockets at Israel.

Solution, dissolve this false religion and rid the earth of at least 90% of the violence. But of course the politicians will not do what is needed since as Jeremiah 10:23 says, "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Authorized King James Bible; AV). To read detailed information, go to the following article:

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- » [RE: IGNORE THE RELIGIOUS TROLL.](#) Posted by: Gisele

#### **So what? Who cares?**

Posted by: shiftjammer on Feb 13, 2009 6:13 AM

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Current rating: [1](#) [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

Come on do u think for a second that Hamas would not use any weapon it could get. If, and I said this a thousand times. If Hamas would try to build there own country an not fire rockets into Israel. Then nothing would have happened in the first place. Everything that has happened to the Palestinians is their own fault. How anyone can blame Israel for defending itself. Well anyone who does is an IDIOT! P.S. I'd love to get one of those Dime weapons myself. That would be soooooooooo cool.

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- » [RE: So what? Who cares?](#) Posted by: robert.noll
- » [you love Israel?](#) Posted by: weathered
- » [RE: you should be an "interrogator"](#) Posted by: twoten
- » [RE: So what? Who cares?](#) Posted by: Gisele
- » [RE: So what? Who cares?](#) Posted by: mkdelta69

*This comment has been removed from the site due to non-compliance with AlterNet's community policies.*

- » [RE: absolutley disgusting](#) Posted by: clvngodess

#### **War criminals**

Posted by: Erin on Feb 13, 2009 6:31 AM

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Current rating: [5](#) [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

The U.S. and its handmaiden, Israel, are both war criminals and should be put on trial and then convicted and punished. They are the two biggest bullies in the world!!

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### Hysteria and Psychotherapy

Posted by: zepher on Feb 13, 2009 7:26 AM  
Current rating: 4 [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

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Reading for a lifetime about Jews and Palestinians killing each other, the hysteria is shining very brightly these days (use of white phosphorus??). The fact that my country is providing Israel these weapons of horror like "focused lethality" and white phosphorus, causes me to think mandatory mass psychotherapy is needed for the sociopaths in Israel and in America. The most recent sado-horror weapon is sickly made by the US AirForce and Lawrence Livermore Labs in California. Guess they have all watched too much ... "how many ways can I kill or torture other humans" TV and Gaming. Isn't there some sane morality out there to bring these criminals to the dungeons they deserve?

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### Weapons That Limit Collateral Damage Are Bad?

Posted by: gradioc on Feb 13, 2009 8:38 AM  
Current rating: 2 [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

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DIME weapons, as the article states, are specifically designed to limit damage to a small area and reduce civilian casualties. How does this get twisted into an evil plot? White phosphorus, when used as a smokescreen, is specifically NOT prohibited by the Geneva Conventions. There is legitimate controversy over Deleted Uranium Ammunition, but it is not illegal either. The whole point of the article seems to be making things that are not illegal SOUND illegal. I was thrilled to see some one acknowledge that Hamas' missiles into Israel DID constitute a war crime. Where were the cries for justice over that? Not here, that's for sure. After all, those poor Hamas warriors only managed to kill a few Israelis with the inferior weapons this horrible blockade limited them to. That's hardly worth noting.

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» [The art & science of deceit](#) Posted by: weathered

» [RE: Weapons That Limit Collateral Damage Are Bad?](#) Posted by: mkdelta69

### syed salamah ali mahdi

Posted by: salamah on Feb 13, 2009 9:29 AM  
Current rating: 4 [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

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90% of the violence in the World is because of Islam, Muslims and the Ishmaelites! Nice to know this! The amount of violence over the past 600 hundred years were also because of Islam, Muslims and the Ishmaelites, like the colonizing of most of the World. The two World Wars were also caused by Islam, Muslims and Ishmaelites. The Jews were thrown out of Judaea & Samaria in the 1st Century AD by Islam, Muslims and Ishmaelites. And it was not Islam, Muslims and Ishmaelites who gave refuge to the Jews, who fled Spain, in North Africa and Turkey. It was again Islam, Muslims and Ishmaelites who sent the Jews, the Gypsies and Poles to gas chambers in Germany. Finally, it's Islam, Muslims and Ishmaelites who landed in Palestine from Europe and occupied it at gun point, cleansed it racially, killed, burnt and spilled much blood and have not stopped ever since! Yes, I agree with two of the commentators preceding me on the absolute and urgent need for Islam to be banned, Muslims to be killed and Ishmaelites be declared as slaves of the Israelites because Ishmael was a son of Abraham by a slave woman gifted to Abraham by the Ruler of Egypt, Hagar!

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» [RE: syed salamah ali mahdi](#) Posted by: mkdelta69

» [Jews can get very nasty with....](#) Posted by: David/Daoud

### Fascist Zionists

Posted by: mkdelta69 on Feb 13, 2009 10:59 AM  
Current rating: 5 [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

US Brig. General William Looney, Washington Post is the only one of the few war criminals to be honest about war crimes. Zionist war criminals are cowards hiding behind lies.

'If they turn on the radars we're going to blow up their goddamn SAMs (surface-to-air missiles). They know we own their country. We own their airspace... We dictate the way they live and talk. And that's what's great about America right now. It's a good thing, especially when there's a lot of oil out there we need.'

- US Brig. General William Looney, Washington Post

'That is, the crazy Hitler speaking his heart out in front of the people who claim to be the custodians of democracy without anybody feeling ashamed of what the Looney Brigadiers are saying!) 'The greatest crime since World War II has been U.S. foreign policy.'

- Ramsey Clark, Former U.S. Attorney General

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### Is it all due to too much inbreeding?

Posted by: linookser on Feb 13, 2009 11:22 AM  
Current rating: 1 [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

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Does anyone ever wonder if all this insanity is due to too much inbreeding?

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» [RE: Is it all due to too much inbreeding?](#) Posted by: robert.noll

### Israel's enabler

Posted by: 876 on Feb 13, 2009 12:29 PM  
Current rating: 5 [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

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American society is truly deranged, that they devote their resources to developing destructive weapons, even celebrate them of television shows (Future Weapons, Discovery Channel), that they have legions of Jesus loving lunatics who cheer the slaughter of Muslim people on, then blather about the trouble with Muslims, that they support and sponsor war criminals of the worst, most heinous and brutal kind then invade nations for harboring phantom terrorists that don't exist and to top it off, that they are so psychotic they see nothing wrong in themselves yet foam at the mouth incessantly over the shortcomings of other people's way of life. America and its population of Christian psychopaths, war mongering Zionists and

imperialists are nothing more than a screaming ominous plague on the earth.

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**And why wouldn't they? After all, the US and Europe are enabling Israel big time !**

Posted by: Jennifer Bedingfield on Feb 13, 2009 1:12 PM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: 5 [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

Stop giving Israel WMDs and they won't have a laboratory to experiment with !

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