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Knocking back progress: pacifying the tribes

Israel's army chief of staff, General Dan Halutz, put it bluntly to Hezbollah - Return the 2 soldiers or our military will hit your infrastructure so hard that it will "turn back the clock in Lebanon by 20 years".

So Israel followed the US/UK example of Iraq, devastating the civilian infrastructure. In the name of progress, to reduce terror, in the spirit of democracy, bridges were destroyed, 1300 people were killed and bunker busting nukes were rushed from the US to Israel via the UK.

Does that sound like diplomacy at work?

Four weeks later, as bodies continue to be dragged from the rubble in Southern Lebanon, the estimates are that it will take up to 5 years to rebuild its bombed bridges (120 of those!), runways, fuel containers, substations, homes, TV stations, schools, sports clubs, health centres and the country's largest dairy farm.

Bombing is 'progress'?

Earlier this year Tony Blair said of the war on terror: "It is the age-old battle between progress and reaction". "The war on terror is a battle for the future of civilisation," Cheney said in April 06. "The daily work of democracy itself is the path of progress." said Bush back in 2003, adding that "It teaches cooperation, the free exchange of ideas, and the peaceful resolution of differences."

In Iraq, Afghanistan and Southern Lebanon there is no disputing that our actions (in particular, sanctions in Iraq) have sent the standard of local living spiraling backwards.

So, we haven't brought any recent progress to these places and, in fact, WE are the reactive ones. War in the Middle East is OUR reaction to finding ourselves competing for depleting oil and gas. This is us stuck in the colonising mind set of securing the free flow of cheap natural resources (oil, land, water) to our companies, treasuries, investors and speculators. This is us feeding the monster called civilisation - economic growth ad nauseum - and "to hell with those we trample over en route".

50 years ago, they'd probably have called what we're doing in the Middle East 'pacifying the tribes'. Today our leaders want us to believe that this is 'progress'.



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