

# GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY TRAINING & LOBBY DAY



**WASHINGTON DC**  
**FEBRUARY 1 – 2, 2009**



# PRE-TRAINING INFORMATION PACKET

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION  
BACKGROUND READINGS  
FACT SHEETS  
RESOURCES

Print and read before arriving in DC in order to make the most of your experience!

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A PROGRAM OF INTERFAITH PEACE-BUILDERS AND THE U.S. CAMPAIGN TO END THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION  
MORE INFORMATION AT [WWW.IFPBDEL.ORG/GRASSROOTS](http://WWW.IFPBDEL.ORG/GRASSROOTS)  
[office@ifpbdel.org](mailto:office@ifpbdel.org) • 202.244.0821 • [www.ifpbdel.org](http://www.ifpbdel.org)

# Introduction

This *Information Packet* provides you with essential information for the Grassroots Advocacy Training and Lobby Day sponsored by Interfaith Peace-Builders and the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation on February 1 and 2, 2009.

Included is logistical information on the weekend's events as well as background readings and resources for your advocacy. Although many of these resources focus on political engagement and advocacy, the Grassroots Advocacy Training of February 1 has a much broader focus. Workshops will address a variety of topics and you, as a participant, will come away from the experience with a range of skills and a wider conceptual framework through which to approach your activism.

The background readings included here have been hand-selected by IFPB staff and include authors and researchers at the forefront of scholarship in the field. If a particular article moves you, you might want to think about printing several copies to leave at your meetings with congressional representatives or their staff. The packet also includes Fact Sheets and other resources published by the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation. All these resources will be helpful to your thorough participation in the Grassroots Advocacy Training and your success in meetings with your political representatives.

The US Campaign's Congressional Report Card rounds out this packet. Because of space considerations, we have not included the full Congressional Report Card. Before travelling to Washington DC, however, **we strongly suggest that you download the Report card and thoroughly research your representatives voting records.**

**View and download the Congressional report Card at:**  
[www.endtheoccupation.org/downloads/110th\\_report\\_card.pdf](http://www.endtheoccupation.org/downloads/110th_report_card.pdf)

We want to thank the staff and members of the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation and the endorsing organizations: *The Fellowship of Reconciliation (USA)*, *Global Exchange*, and *The Middle East Research and Information Project*.

We look forward to seeing you shortly in Washington, DC.

Sincerely,



Mike Daly



Joe Groves



Jacob Pace

Interfaith Peace-Builders Staff

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# GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY TRAINING & LOBBY DAY



**WASHINGTON DC**  
**FEBRUARY 1 – 2, 2009**



## Schedule of Events

### Locations:

#### Sunday, February 1:

##### **American University - Ward Building, Room 2**

4400 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20016

#### Monday, February 2:

##### **Capitol Hill (Cannon House Office Building / Methodist Building) and Science Club Bar**

Washington, DC

### Events:

#### **SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1**

##### **American University - Ward Building, Room 2**

**9:00 - 9:30 am:** *Registration and Welcome*

**9:30 – 11:15 am:** *Keynote Panel*

##### **US Policy and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**

**Phyllis Bennis** - *Fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies and Steering Committee member of the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation*

**Noura Erakat** - *Legal Analyst and Activist*

**Chris Toensing** - *Director of the Middle East Research and Information Project and Editor of Middle East Report*

Moderated by **Joe Groves** - *Senior Fellow at Interfaith Peace-Builders and Adjunct Professor of International Peace and Conflict Resolution at American University.*

**11:15 – 11:30 am:** Morning Break (light refreshments)

**11:30 am – 1:30 pm:** *Workshop Session 1 (all)*

##### **Engaging Elected Officials for an End to Military Aid and a Just Foreign Policy**

**Josh Ruebner** - *National Advocacy Director at the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation*

**Lora Lumpe** - *Legislative Representative for Conventional Weapons at the Friends Committee on National Legislation*

**1:30 - 2:15 pm:** Lunch Break (*lunch provided for pre-paid registrants*)

**Optional Break-Out Session: *The Interfaith Peace-Builders Delegation Experience***

*Grab your lunch and join IFPB Delegation Coordinator Mike Daly for a briefing on the transformative experience of an Interfaith Peace-Builders delegation to Palestine/Israel.*

**Optional Participant-Led Break-Out Sessions**

*Participants are encouraged to convene self-organized break-out sessions on the topics of their choice during the lunch break. IFPB staff will lead an **Orientation to the IFPB Delegation Experience** and other break-out groups will meet. Participants will have the opportunity to post session topics throughout the morning (more information will be available at the Training).*

**2:30 – 4:15 pm: Workshop Session 2 (choose one)**

**Workshop 2A: Broadening the Mainstream Discourse: Making Change in Your Local Media**

**Michael Brown** - *Interfaith Peace-Builders' Board of Directors*  
**Jacob Pace** - *Communications Coordinator at Interfaith Peace-Builders*

**Workshop 2B: A Civil Society Response to Apartheid: Campaigning for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions**

**Katherine Fuchs** - *National Organizer at the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation*  
**Adam Horowitz** - *Program Director for the American Friends Service Committee's Israel/Palestine Program*

**Workshop 2C: Building Political Change: Advanced Methods for Engaging Elected Officials \***

**Josh Ruebner** - *National Advocacy Director at the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation*

**\* NOTE:** *This workshop will provide further and more in-depth training for those interested in working with elected officials. It **IS NOT** a replacement for "Workshop 1" and will not cover the same material.*

**4:15 - 4:30 pm:** *Afternoon Break*

**4:30 – 6:45 pm: Workshop Session 3 (choose one)**

**Workshop 3A: Coalition Building in Diverse Communities**

**Darryl Jordan** - *Director of the American Friends Service Committee's Third World Coalition*  
**Koyuki Yip** - *Program Director of the American Friends Service Committee's Third World Coalition*  
**Omar Masri** - *National Membership and Outreach Director at the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation*

**Workshop 3B: Faith-Based Organizing: Raising Voices of Conscience in Faith Communities**

**Mark Braverman** - *Executive Director of Friends of Tent of Nations North America, Board member of the Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions USA, and member of the Washington Interfaith Alliance for ME Peace.*  
**Susanne Hoder** - *Founder of the Interfaith Peace Initiative and member of the Divestment Task Force of the New England Conference of the United Methodist Church.*

**Workshop 3C: Online Organizing 101: Applying Online Technologies for Justice in the Middle East**

**Charles Lenchner** - *Editor of "Peace in the Middle East" at [Change.org](http://Change.org) and staff of [Democracyinaction.org](http://Democracyinaction.org).*

**6:45 – 7:15 pm: Final Plenary Meeting and Details for Monday**

## **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2**

**Capitol Hill and Downtown DC** (*various locations*)

**9:00 – 10:00 am: *Press Conference and Congressional Briefing*** (*Capitol Hill Location TBA*)

**Launch of resources on US military aid by the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation**

**10:00 am – 5:00 pm: *Meetings on Capitol Hill***

***Optional Meet-up Location:***

**The Methodist Building, Meeting Room**

100 Maryland Avenue NE (Capitol Hill)

Washington, DC 20002

***Between 10:00 AM and 5:00 PM the meeting room at The Methodist Building will be available for registrants to use for meeting, resting, and storing bags.***

**3:30 pm – 5:00 pm: *Evaluation Session***

**The Methodist Building, Meeting Room**

100 Maryland Avenue NE (Capitol Hill)

Washington, DC 20002

**5:30 – 7:30 pm: *Social Event and Happy Hour Fundraiser***

**Science Club Bar**

1136 19th Street NW

Washington DC, 20036

Sliding scale donation of \$10 - \$50.

***Cap the weekend off with some fun and relaxation. Entertainment, raffle prizes and drink deals. Science Club is in DC's Dupont Circle neighborhood near the Farragut North Metro Station (Red Line).***

## Presenters and Workshop Leaders:

**Phyllis Bennis** is a fellow of the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington and the Transnational Institute in Amsterdam. Her books include *Understanding the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict: A Primer*. She is also author of primers on the US-Iran conflict and the Iraq war in the same series. Earlier books include *Challenging Empire: How People, Governments and the UN Defy US Power*. She serves on the steering committees of the US Campaign to End Israeli Occupation and the United for Peace and Justice anti-war coalition. Phyllis will join the keynote panel on the subject of **US Policy and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**.

**Mark Braverman** is Executive Director of Friends of Tent of Nations North America and a charter member of American Jews for a Just Peace. He is on the Board of ICAHD-USA and is a member of the Washington Interfaith Alliance for Middle East Peace. Mark also serves on the Advisory Boards of Friends of the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center of Jerusalem and Friends of Sabeel, North America. A clinical psychologist and organizational consultant, Mark has traveled twice to Israel and Palestine with Interfaith Peace-Builders delegations and has served as co-leader of one delegation. He is the grandson of a fifth-generation Palestinian Jew, has lived in Israel and has deep family roots in the region. Mark speaks often before diverse groups on his experiences and his work, focusing on his journey as a Jewish American firmly committed to peace and dignity for all peoples of the land, the role of religious beliefs in the current dialogue here in the United States, and education about the facts of and impact of the occupation on both Israelis and Palestinians. He is deeply committed to an interfaith approach to the resolution of the Middle East conflict. Mark will co-lead a workshop on **Faith-Based Organizing: Raising Voices of Conscience in Faith Communities**.

**Michael Brown** is a member of Interfaith Peace-Builders' Board of Directors and has long worked with organizations in Washington, DC advancing a just regional peace. Previously, he was a fellow at the Palestine Center, executive director of Partners for Peace, and Washington correspondent for Middle East International. He lived and worked in the Gaza Strip off and on between 1993 and 2000, first with the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme and later with the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights. His op-eds have been published in the Baltimore Sun, International Herald Tribune, San Diego Union-Tribune, and News & Observer. Michael will co-lead the workshop on **Challenging Mainstream Discourse in Your Local Media**.

**Mike Daly** is Program Coordinator at Interfaith Peace-Builders. He has worked with the organization since 2004. Before coming to IFPB, he studied in Damascus as a Fulbright Scholar, worked as a public relations consultant with the United Nations Development Programme in Ramallah, and completed a year of intensive Arabic at the American University in Cairo. Mike co-led two IPFB delegations (March 2006 and 2008), has presented at numerous conferences and workshops and taken on leadership roles in national, regional and local organizing initiatives and coalitions.

**Noura Erakat** is a Palestinian activist and lawyer. A graduate of Boalt Law School at the University of California, Berkeley, Noura received a New Voices Fellowship to work as the National Grassroots Organizer and Legal Advocate at the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation in 2005. There she developed the Israeli Accountability Campaign which highlighted Israel's impunity using two ATCA suits filed against former Israeli military officials in US federal courts. While at the US Campaign she also developed and published an Anti-Apartheid Framework Training Curriculum. Prior to attending law school, she helped launch the divestment campaign along with Students for Justice in Palestine at UC Berkeley. She has volunteered in Palestinian refugee camps in Bethlehem, Jericho, Beirut and Tripoli and interned at the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel as well as at the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York. Most recently she was a visiting scholar at Georgetown University where she examined the political bias influencing cases involving the Arab-Israeli conflict in US Federal Courts. Noura is an experienced lecturer and has appeared on national and international television programs including Al Jazeera International, MSNBC, HBO's "Politically Incorrect" and Fox's "The O'Reilly Factor." She has also worked as counsel for a United States Congressional Committee. Noura will join the keynote panel on the subject of **US Policy and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**.

**Katherine Fuchs** is National Organizer at the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation and a masters candidate at UNESCO's Chair for the Philosophy of Peace in Castellon, Spain. Before joining the US Campaign Katherine organized and lobbied for Peace Action in Washington, DC and in her hometown of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She has also worked as a community organizer in Wisconsin for fair trade, voting rights, and LGBT equality campaigns. In her personal time, Katherine enjoys gardening and expressionist art. Katherine will co-lead the workshop on **A Civil Society Response to Apartheid: Campaigning for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions**.

**Joe Groves** is Senior Fellow at Interfaith Peace-Builders. He has worked with IFPB since 2001, first as Coordinator for the program under the Fellowship of Reconciliation, then as Co-Director in 2006 - 2008. He has worked on Middle East issues for over 40 years, in the US, Israel and Palestine, and Iraq. He was Professor of Religious Studies and Director of Peace and Conflict Studies at Guilford College and is currently an Adjunct Professor in the International Peace and Conflict Resolution Program at American University. He draws on popular education methods and critical studies to actively involve students in the subjects he teaches. He is a frequent presenter and workshop leader on a variety of issues, including Middle East politics, US movements for justice, and the theory and practice of nonviolence. Joe will moderate the keynote panel on the subject of **US Policy and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**.

**Susanne Hoder** is founder of the Interfaith Peace Initiative, a member of the Providence Committee on Foreign Relations, and a member of the Divestment Task Force of the New England Conference of the United Methodist Church. She is also founder of Hoder Investment Research which coordinates and assembles information on companies supporting the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands. Susanne will co-lead the workshop on **Faith-Based Organizing: Raising Voices of Conscience in Faith Communities**.

**Adam Horowitz** is Program Director for the American Friends Service Committee's Israel/Palestine Program, where he coordinates AFSC's education and advocacy work on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the United States. Adam currently serves on the steering committee of the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation and has been engaged in social change work since 1995, working in Atlanta, New York City and Philadelphia. Before coming to the AFSC, he was active in the Jewish community as board member of Jews for Racial and Economic Justice and a founding member of the organization, Jews Against the Occupation. Adam holds a master's degree in Near Eastern Studies from New York University. Adam will co-lead the workshop on **A Civil Society Response to Apartheid: Campaigning for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions**.

**Darryl Jordan** is Director of the American Friends Service Committee's Third World Coalition. Darryl will co-lead the workshop on **Coalition Building in Diverse Communities**.

**Charles Lenchner** is editor of "Peace in the Middle East" at [Change.org](http://Change.org) and staff of Democracyinaction.org, where his work focuses on helping nonprofits use the internet for organizing, advocacy and fundraising. He is a former Israeli refusenik, a veteran of the Israeli and Jewish peace camps, and a participant in interfaith and intrafaith dialogue efforts. He brings 20 years of experience working with nonprofit organizations in Israel, Palestine and the US to his work. Charles will co-lead the workshop on **Online Organizing 101: Applying Online Technologies for Justice in the Middle East**.

**Lora Lumpe** is Legislative Representative for Conventional Weapons at the Friends Committee on National Legislation where she lobbies and campaigns for more responsible US arms export policies. She coordinates the US Campaign to Ban Landmines on behalf of FCNL and represents FCNL on the steering committee of the global campaign to achieve a universal Arms Trade Treaty. Before joining FCNL's staff, Lora served for six years as a consultant to Amnesty International USA. She has also worked in various capacities for the Open Society Institute, Small Arms Survey, the United Nations, AFSC, Swiss Government, the Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO), and numerous other organizations. Lora founded and directed the Arms Sales Monitoring Project at the Washington, DC-based Federation of American Scientists (FAS) and is a former editor of FAS's quarterly journal, the *Chemical Weapons Convention Bulletin*. She is the author of *The Arms Trade Revealed: A Guide for Activists and Investigators* (Washington, DC: FAS, 1998) and *Small Arms Control—Old Weapons, New Issues* (London: Ashgate, 1999) and the editor of *Running Guns: The Global Black Market in Small Arms* (London: Zed/New York: St. Martins, 2000). She has published numerous book chapters, conference papers, and opinion pieces. Lora will co-lead the workshop on **Engaging Elected Officials for an End to Military Aid and a Just Foreign Policy**.

**Omar Masri** is National Membership and Outreach Director at the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation. Omar will co-lead the workshop on **Coalition Building in Diverse Communities**.

**Jacob Pace** is Communications and Grants Coordinator at Interfaith Peace-Builders. Jake joined the organization in 2007 after first traveling to the region with an IFPB delegation in 2003. He previously worked with Partners for Peace, the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation and the Resource Center for Nonviolence in Santa Cruz, California. He spent more than a year in Israel/Palestine between 2003 and 2005 working with the Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem in Bethlehem and the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights in the Gaza Strip. His work experience has focused particularly on media advocacy and grassroots organizing. He co-lead an IFPB delegation in August 2008. Jake will co-lead the workshop on **Challenging Mainstream Discourse in Your Local Media**.

**Josh Ruebner** is the National Advocacy Director of the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation. Josh is a former Analyst in Middle East Affairs at the Congressional Research Service (CRS), a non-partisan federal government agency which provide Members of Congress with policy analysis. He holds a graduate degree in International Affairs from Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. Josh will co-lead the workshop on **Engaging Elected Officials for an End to Military Aid and a Just Foreign Policy** and the workshop on **Building Political Change: Advanced Methods for Engaging Elected Officials**.

**Chris Toensing** is editor of *Middle East Report* and director of the Middle East Research and Information Project. Toensing has written for the *Los Angeles Times*, *The Nation*, *The Progressive* and other US newspapers and magazines, and has appeared hundreds of times on radio and TV programs to discuss Middle East politics. He holds an MA in Near Eastern Studies from Princeton University. An Arabic speaker, Toensing also lived in Egypt for three years. Chris will join the keynote panel on the subject of **US Policy and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**.

**Koyuki Yip** is Program Director of the American Friends Service Committee's Third World Coalition. Koyuki will co-lead the workshop on **Coalition Building in Diverse Communities**.

## Directions and Maps:

The following information provides directions and maps to each location at which Grassroots Advocacy Training and Lobby Day events will take place.

### Sunday, February 1:

All Events will take place at

#### **American University - Ward Building, Room 2**

4400 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20016

**NOTE: If traveling via public transportation, please leave ample time to arrive at the Ward Building before 9:30 AM on Sunday, February 2.**

*The Ward Building is on the southeastern corner of campus near Ward Circle and the corner of Nebraska Avenue and Massachusetts Avenue.*

### Public Transportation:

American University is accessible via the Washington DC Metrorail and university shuttle services. Detailed information on accessing American University by Metro or by car is available below or at [www.american.edu/maps/](http://www.american.edu/maps/)

#### **Metrorail:**

American University is served by the **Metrorail Red Line (American University-Tenleytown Station)**. Travel Times from downtown DC range from 20 minutes to 45 minutes. For a metro map and train times see [www.wmata.com](http://www.wmata.com).

#### **American University Shuttle Service:**

American University operates a *free shuttle service* to the main campus from the **American University-Tenleytown Station** (the stop is located adjacent to the Metrorail station beside Hollywood Video and is marked by signs inside the station). Travel time to the main AU Campus is approximately 15 minutes. **On Sunday, shuttles run every 15 minutes beginning at 8:00 AM.**

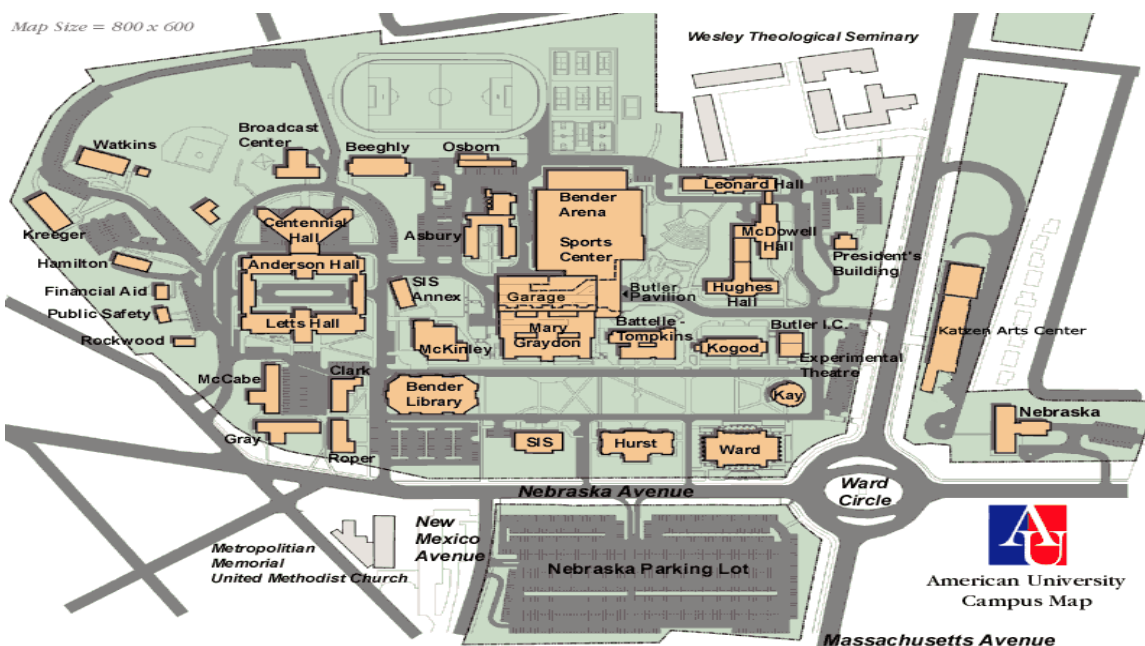
#### **Metrobus:**

American University is served by Metrobus. Travel Times from downtown DC can vary/ Check weekend schedules and your specific itinerary at [www.wmata.com](http://www.wmata.com).

### Driving:

Detailed information on accessing American University by car is available at [www.american.edu/maps/](http://www.american.edu/maps/).

**Parking is free on weekends** and ample parking is available in the *Nebraska Lot* directly across Nebraska Avenue from the Ward Building (see [map](#)).



## Monday, February 2:

Events will take place at

**Capitol Hill** (Cannon House Office Building / Methodist Building) and **Science Club Bar**

**NOTE:** Capitol Hill locations are best accessed by the Washington DC Metrorail from either **Union Station (Red Line)** to the North or **Capitol South Station (Blue/Orange Lines)** from the South. Check weekend schedules and your specific itinerary at [www.wmata.com](http://www.wmata.com).

### Specific locations:

#### Cannon House Office Building

Independence Avenue at First Street SE

**Event:** Congressional Briefing, 9:00 - 10:00 AM

The Congressional Briefing will take place in the Cannon House Office Building (exact room TBA). Cannon HOB is most easily accessed from the Capitol South Metrorail Station. Check schedules and your specific itinerary at [www.wmata.com](http://www.wmata.com).

#### The Methodist Building - Meeting Room

100 Maryland Avenue NE (Capitol Hill)

**Event:** Lobby Day Evaluation Session, 3:30 - 5:00 PM

Between 10:00 AM and 5:00 PM the meeting room at the Methodist Building will be available for registrants to use for meeting, resting, and storing bags.

**The Methodist Building is accessible by Metrorail from Union Station (Red Line).** Check schedules and your specific itinerary at [www.wmata.com](http://www.wmata.com).

#### Science Club Bar

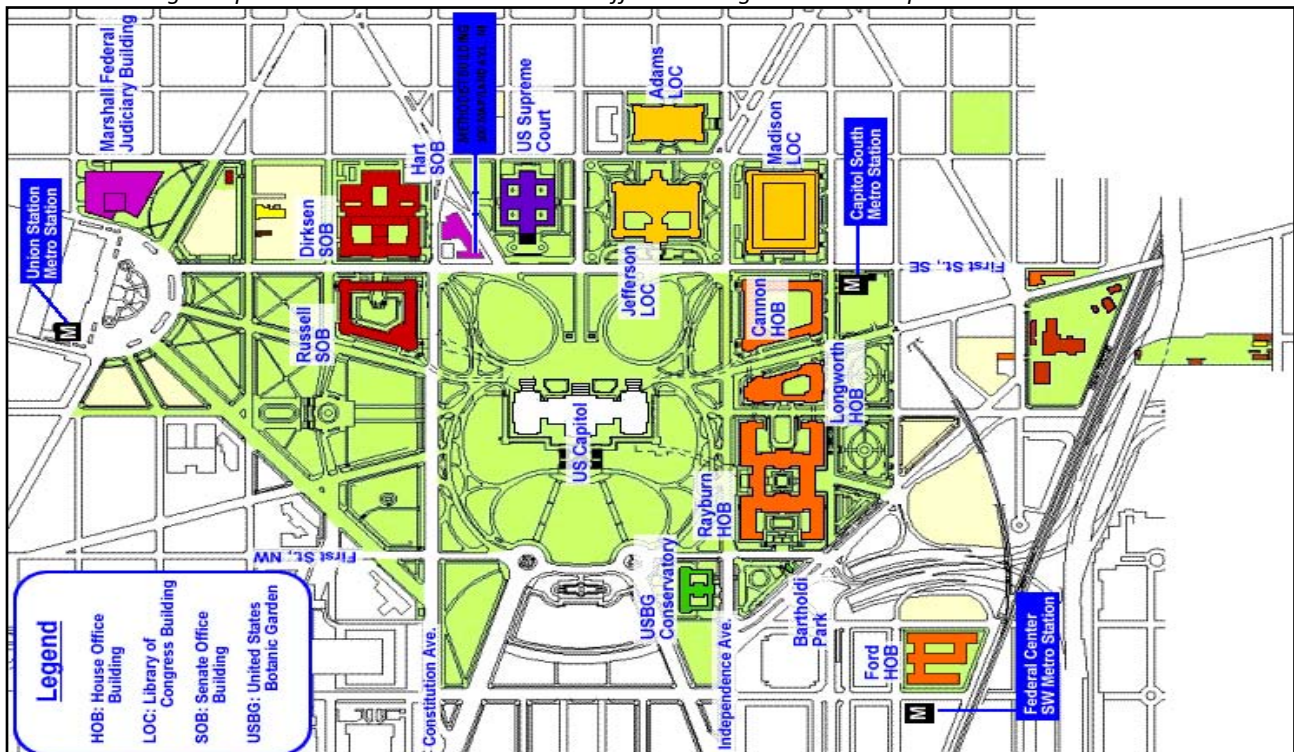
1136 19th Street NW

**Event:** Social Event and Fundraiser, 5:30 - 7:30 PM

**Science Club is in DC's Dupont Circle neighborhood near the Farragut North Metro Station (Red Line).** Check schedules and your specific itinerary at [www.wmata.com](http://www.wmata.com).

#### Map of Capitol Hill (from [www.aoc.gov/cc/cc\\_map.cfm](http://www.aoc.gov/cc/cc_map.cfm))

The Methodist Building is in pink between the Dirksen Senate Office Building and the US Supreme Court.



# GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY TRAINING & LOBBY DAY



**WASHINGTON DC**  
**FEBRUARY 1 – 2, 2009**



## TAKING POLITICAL ACTION: MEETING WITH YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

Meeting and establishing a relationship with your members of congress is one of the most direct ways to engage US policy in the region. You don't have to be in Washington DC to meet with your representatives. In fact, it is generally easier, and can be more productive, to meet your senators or congresspeople in your home district. It is not always possible to meet with your member of congress directly. If your member is busy, ask to meet with his or her Foreign Policy Staff or Senior Staff.

The tips below provide some guidance for meeting with your representatives. These tips are based on those distributed by the *US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation*, and have been further augmented by Interfaith Peace-Builders' experience.

### Before the Meeting

#### 1. Consider Bringing a Group of People

You can meet with your representatives alone, however, you may want to consider organizing a small group of people to attend the meeting with you.

Your group should be diverse and represent a wide swath of your representative's constituency. Identify people in your community working on your issue and work together to set up a meeting. Representatives of ethnic or religious communities may be willing to accompany you to the meeting. Bringing more than four or five people can be hard to manage, however, so keep it small.

#### 2. Do Your Research

Research your representative's politics and voting record on Israel/Palestine. You can find his or her voting record on the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation's [Congressional Report Card](#) (for the user name enter "report" and for the password enter "card"). Use your representative's voting record to craft talking points for your meeting.

Also identify which committee(s) and which caucuses your representative sits on and study what issues currently are pending before Congress and the committee(s). This information can be found at <http://thomas.loc.gov>.

#### 3. Identify Your Goal

Decide what you want achieve. Do you want your member of congress to vote for or against a particular bill? Introduce or co-sponsor specific legislation? Asking your legislator or his or her staff member to do something specific will help you know how successful your visit has been. Discussing your representative's past voting record is also important and will give you good background for future meetings.

#### 4. Rehearse Your Talking Points and Messages

Meet well ahead of time with everyone who is participating and plan out your meeting. Choose one individual to be your spokesperson. Choose an order of who will speak and which person will discuss which issues. Rehearse your talking points and messages well. It is best to keep your message focused on 1-3 main points. You will need to be brief and clear as **you generally will have only 10-15 minutes for the meeting.**

Practice. You may want to have someone role play the Member of Congress or staff person and ask difficult questions. Anticipate the kinds of questions you may be asked from both supporters and opponents and be prepared to answer such questions in the meeting.

#### 5. Provide a Personal Story or Real-Life Illustration from your Delegation

Personal stories are more easily remembered than statistics. As necessary, briefly cite evidence or statistics to support your position, however, be careful not to overwhelm the representative or staffer with too many statistics or references to studies (this kind of information will be in the materials you leave behind or can be sent with your thank-you note). Also,

keep your personal story brief. Discuss how the policy change will have an impact on your community or the communities you met with in Israel/Palestine (for instance, you may want to focus on what local educational or community initiatives can be funded with the more than \$3 billion of aid sent to Israel annually).

## 6. Prepare a Packet of Materials

It is always good to leave your representative or staff with a small packet of information. Try to keep your packet small and focused on the issues you discuss in your meeting. You may want to use the Institute for Middle East Understanding's [Background Briefings](#) or the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation's [resources](#). Other resources are also available online.

Include information on any local group you are active with on this issue, people you met in Israel/Palestine, copies of relevant legislation, and a flyer for the upcoming IFPB delegation which you can download from [www.ifpbdel.org/resources](http://www.ifpbdel.org/resources). Encourage your representative or staffer to attend a delegation.

## At the Meeting

### 1. Dress for Success and Be on Time

Wear business clothes. For better or worse, you and your message will be taken more seriously by your Member of Congress if you are dressed professionally. Members of Congress and their staff are very busy. Be respectful of their time. Open the meeting by thanking the Member or staffer for his or her time.

### 2. Introduce the Group

Have the lead spokesperson briefly introduce him/herself, your local activist organization (if relevant) and IFPB. Then have the other participants in the meeting introduced themselves and their affiliations. Mention where you live or work in the district or state so the representative is clear you are a constituent.

Bring up any personal, professional or political connections to the elected official that you may have. If the policymaker/staffer has been helpful in the past or has taken action that you appreciate, be sure to say thank you and acknowledge this up front.

### 3. State Accurately how many People you Represent

Don't over-inflate your numbers. Members of Congress will be making their decisions about your request in part on how many people you can mobilize.

### 4. Make your "Ask" up Front

**This is the most important part of the meeting and the reason why you came.** You are asking the Member of Congress to do something for you. Don't be bashful about asking. They are expecting an "ask". An "ask" is something specific, such as "We would like you to sign on to the Rachel Corrie Resolution." It is not general. "We would like you to support a just peace" is not an "ask". Explain why the Member of Congress should support your "ask".

### 5. Be Polite and Listen Carefully

Even if you disagree with the representative or staffer's views and positions, it is very important to be courteous. Be flexible, consider the opposing view, and avoid being argumentative or threatening. Much of advocacy is about building and maintaining relationships over time.

Address Members of Congress correctly by calling them "Senator" or "Representative", unless otherwise directed by the Member of Congress. Take notes to show your representative that you are serious about the meeting and follow-up.

### 6. Be Calm — Don't be Intimidated or Fooled

People wielding power can be scary sometimes. Odds are that you know much more about the issue than does the Member of Congress or his/her staff person. Keep this in mind when making your points.

It is more likely that you will receive a warm and friendly reception - it is in your representative's interest to seem engaged and interested in what you have to say as a constituent. One comment we've heard several times after recent lobbying days goes something like this "I can't believe how nice the staffer was; they listened to me, asked questions, and seemed interested in what I had to say."

Don't be overwhelmed by their interest in you. Try not to let them steer you off your main talking points. Be prepared to meet your goals for the meeting. You want the representative or staffer to not only be polite but to *respond* to your ask. And even when you may have a less tangible goal than supporting a specific piece of legislation, don't let your

representative off the hook. If your goal for the meeting is to build a relationship, make it clear that you expect your representative to engage in dialogue with you and explain past and present positions.

**7. Saying "I Don't Know" can be a Smart Political Move**

You need not be an expert on the topic you are discussing. If you don't know the answer to a question, it is fine to tell your representative that you will get that information for him or her. This gives you the chance to put your strongest arguments into their files, and allows you to contact them again about the issue. Never make up an answer to a question -- giving wrong or inaccurate information can seriously damage your credibility!

**8. Set Deadlines for a Response**

Ask directly, and politely, for the policymaker's views and position on the issue and what he/she plans to do about it. Stay on message and on topic and be sure to make your "ask." However, if the Member truly is undecided, or the staffer is not familiar with the Member's position on the issue, do not force an answer. Often, if an elected official hasn't taken a position on legislation, they will not commit to one in the middle of a meeting. If he or she has to think about it, or if you are meeting with a staff member, ask when you should check back in to find out what your legislator intends to do.

Reiterate your interest, offer to answer any questions or provide additional information, and request a written follow-up letter from the Member once a decision has been made. If you need to get information to your legislator, set a clear timeline for when this will happen. That way, you aren't left hanging indefinitely.

**9. Leave your Contact Information and Get a Card for the Representative or Staffer**

If you leave a business card, make it clear that you are visiting on your own time and not representing your employer, unless you have received such clearance. If you do not have a business card to leave, make sure you give your home/personal contact information so the office can follow-up. Be sure to get a business card from the Member of Congress/staffer so that you know how to reach them. Ask the Member/staffer their preferred mode of communication (e.g. e-mail, fax, voicemail/phone).

**10. Summarize your Requests of the Member of Congress**

Leave the meeting by verbally recapping the commitments you have made to the Member or staffer and the commitments that he or she has made to you. Summarize any responses the Member or staffer has provided to ensure you are clear on where they stand on the issues and recap the Member's or staffer's requests and indicate how you plan to respond. Express thanks and appreciation for their time, interest, and courtesy.

**After the Meeting**

**1. Compare Notes**

Right after the meeting, compare notes with everyone in your group to understand what the elected official committed to do and what follow up information you committed to send.

**2. Send a Thank You Letter**

Each person who took part in the meeting should promptly send a personal thank you letter to the representative. **This letter should be addressed** to the Member of Congress whose office(s) you visited with a cc: to the staffer with whom you met, referencing the date of your meeting, who was in attendance and the issues discussed. Your letter should express appreciation for the time and consideration extended to you during your meeting. Reiterate your request(s) and ask for a written response from the office. Keep in touch with the Member/staffer to maintain and strengthen your relationship.

**3. Follow up in a Timely Fashion with any Requested Materials and Information**

If you e-mail or mail follow-up materials, call the representative or staffer directly to make sure they received it. Schedule a follow-up discussion if appropriate. If the elected official or staff member doesn't meet the deadline for action you agreed to during the meeting, ask him or her to set another deadline. Be persistent and flexible!

**4. Establish a relationship with your Members of Congress and their Staff**

Keep your relationship current by phoning and faxing your representative or staffer when there is pending, relevant legislation. If your initial meeting is in Washington, D.C., be sure to schedule a similar meeting with the staff in the district or state office. Check in with your representative when she or he is at home to reinforce the relationship and follow up on your issues of priority.

## Framing, Principle and Elements: Obama and the Israel-Palestine Conflict

Jeff Halper

December 17, 2008

Writing recently in The Washington Post ("Middle East Priorities," Nov. 21), Brent Scowcroft and Zbigniew Brzezinski, two former US National Security Advisors, a Republican and a Democrat, declared: "We believe that the Arab-Israeli peace process is one issue that requires priority attention [from the incoming Obama Administration]."

Their assessment is correct, of course. Addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an urgent priority. It is a conflict with global ramifications in a part of the world crucial to Western, and especially American, political and economic interests. The Israeli Occupation fuels anger and alienation among Muslims – as well as among peoples beyond the Muslim world, including in Europe – towards the US and its European allies. And the Palestinians are the gatekeepers that cannot be by-passed. No matter what peace plan is devised or how much pressure is exerted on the Palestinian leadership to accept it, until the Palestinian people everywhere, including the refugee camps, say that the conflict is in fact over, it's not over. This is their ultimate clout. Only when a just solution is reached that genuinely addresses their grievances and needs will they signal to the rest of the Arab and Muslim worlds that the time has come to normalize relations with Israel and its American and Western patrons. This reality is obliquely acknowledged by Scowcroft and Brzezinski when they write: "Not everyone in the Middle East views the Palestinian issue as the greatest regional challenge, but the deep sense of injustice it stimulates is genuine and pervasive."

Yet every peace initiative since 1967 has been stymied – let's be honest – by Israel's determination to make permanent its control of the land "between the river and the sea." Why compromise if you can have it all? Israelis today enjoy a high degree of security (Gaza being little more than a nuisance), the settlement project proceeds unhindered, the economy (based on diamonds, arms and security) is sound and their country's international status only rises. The status quo, far better, more predictable and more manageable than any "peace" might be, can be maintained indefinitely, especially given US support which, because of the bipartisan support Israel enjoys in Congress, does not seem threatened by the incoming Obama Administration. The problem is framing. However much Israel undermines what would otherwise be a straightforward negotiating process, it cannot be publicly criticized lest one appears to be "anti-Israel" – or worse. And non-critical engagement with Israel has never succeeded in eliciting a single meaningful concession.

How, then, when the pressing need to resolve the conflict runs head-on into Israel's uncanny ability to derail, delay or defeat initiatives towards peace, can the Israeli veto be neutralized and genuine negotiations leading to a genuine resolution proceed? What is needed is a "package" beginning with an American framing and then proceeding to principles and finally to the specific elements of a solution. The current approach, as exemplified by Scowcroft and Brzezinski's list of technical "elements" that must be addressed, illustrates the backward approach which has led nowhere – though towards the end of their piece they recognize the need for framing.

Just to show how self-defeating the elements-first approach is, let us begin with the four "well known" elements which Scowcroft and Brzezinski suggest as essential for resolving the Israel-Palestine conflict.

(1) Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders with minor, reciprocal and agreed-upon modifications. This is indeed a central element in any two-state solution, but it conceals the dangers inherent in all negotiations between a strong Occupying Power and a powerless people under its control: the likelihood that "minor, reciprocal and agreed-upon" will be defined by the strong side and imposed on the weaker one, to its detriment. Merely the annexation of Palestinian East Jerusalem to Israel, only a "minor" adjustment of just over 1% to the 1967 borders, will rob a Palestinian state of its political, cultural and religious center, not to mention its economic heart. Israel's annexation of its West Bank "settlement blocs," containing fully 80% of its settlers, would involve a "minor" adjustment of only 7-10% of the 1967 borders, but it, too, eliminates a viable Palestinian state.

Reciprocal? Is the exchange of 10% of West Bank land containing East Jerusalem, the settlement blocs, some of Palestine's richest agricultural lands and its water resources for an equivalent amount of land in the Negev desert truly "reciprocal"? Does the notion of reciprocal land exchange include such considerations as the territorial integrity of a Palestinian state, freedom of movement or, in the end, genuine sovereignty? If, for example, Israel was to annex or "lease" the Jordan Valley, which it has always insisted must be done, it could easily "compensate" the Palestinians with another few percentages of land within Israel, but how could that "reciprocal" exchange compensate for the loss of a border with an Arab country, something that would turn a Palestinian "state" into a mere Bantustan?

And "agreed upon," as we have seen in previous negotiations, means little if there is no parity of power between the sides. Only a peace process based on international law, human rights conventions and UN resolutions – all studiously eliminated from negotiations by the US and Israel – will level the playing field. So while Scowcroft and Brzezinski's "element" is indeed fundamental to a just peace, it must be embedded in three other principles that make up the underlying approach and prevent abuse: negotiations based on international law, human rights and UN resolutions; the principle of return to the '67 borders agreed upon before modifications begin, in conformity to UN resolution 242 (and not to Israel's self-serving interpretation of it); and commitment to a viable Palestinian state possessing territorial contiguity, control of borders, airspace, resources and movement of people and goods. Only then will negotiations be able to avoid the pitfalls of power differentials.

(2) Sharing Jerusalem as a capital of two states. This is actually an important step forward, but it's certainly not "well known," since the "Clinton Parameters" which guided discussion over Jerusalem, envisioned a divided city. This is, indeed, the way to approach the issue of Jerusalem. But here, too, the devil is in the details. Who defines "Jerusalem"? The Israeli definition incorporates the eastern side of the city, annexed to Israel already in 1967, but plans are almost completed for the further annexation – de facto if not de jure -- of what Israel calls "Greater Jerusalem." Not only will an additional 150,000 Jews be added to the Jerusalem population, but the Palestinians in the city will be isolated from the West Bank, thereby depriving a Palestinian state of its main source of income, tourism, as well as other crucial economic and political resources. Indeed, Israel has defined, for planning purposes, a "metropolitan" Jerusalem that includes Ramallah and Bethlehem, effectively turning those Palestinian cities into economic satellites of an Israeli Jerusalem. Palestinians, on the other hand, while agreeing with Scowcroft and Brzezinski's "element" of a shared Jerusalem, consider it an integral part of their country. This element, then, must also be anchored in a principled approach: Jerusalem should not only be shared but it must be wholly integrated into the political, economic, social and cultural fabric of the Palestinian state, not simply accessible from a few bus routes.

(3) No right of return into Israel, but compensation and agreements with Arab states for the granting of citizenship. Again, a technical "solution" to a problem that will simply not work because it ignores the principle of justice. It is true that, technically, a resolution of the refugee issue may not be difficult. Studies indicate that only 10% of the refugees have a desire to return to what is today Israel, and those are mainly the elderly. Others will return either to a Palestinian state, stay where they are in an Arab country or expect resettlement and compensation in another country. Israel could also allow a limited return: Ehud Barak, when he was Prime Minister, once spoke of 150,000.

But, as Jews well know, victims of an injustice on the scale of the Nakba require more than merely compensation, especially if they are expected to give up their right to return to their country – and they do have an absolute right to return that cannot be taken from them. Two preconditions, symbolic but indispensable, must precede any negotiations. First, Israel will have to acknowledge the right of the refugees' return. Palestinians will not allow their 60-plus year nightmare of suffering and injustice to be dismissed as merely a "humanitarian" problem. By the same token, Israel will have to admit and acknowledge its role in creating the refugee issue in 1948. Victims need the injustice they suffered to be acknowledged if the wounds are to heal and reconciliation take place. (We may even need a Truth and Reconciliation Commission.) Getting Israel to do these two things is the most difficult part of the refugee problem; Israel will resist doing so. But unless this principled approach is adopted, the refugee issue – which is central in the Palestinians' view of the conflict – will never be truly resolved and the conflict never really ended.

(4) A demilitarized Palestinian state, perhaps with NATO and other foreign troops to protect Israel (!) and the Palestinians. This element of Scowcroft and Brzezinski's approach exposes the bias and naiveté of the traditional US position. Why in the world does Israel, a nuclear power with an army that rivals any in Europe, need foreign troops to protect it?! And what of the Palestinians? Even if they also receive some foreign protection, why should they be the world's only demilitarized state and, given Israel's military aggressiveness, will a foreign contingent really protect them against Israel? Once again, principle must precede technical "elements" of a peace agreement. The Palestinians should be guaranteed what every other country has, actual sovereignty, including unmediated borders with its Egyptian and Jordanian neighbors, the essential corollary of national self-determination. Once genuine sovereignty and viability are defined to the Palestinians' satisfaction, and in line with international norms, negotiating the details specified by Scowcroft and Brzezinski can proceed.

Scowcroft and Brzezinski then add one other element to the mix:

(5) The president speaking out clearly and forcefully about the fundamental principles of the peace process [and pressing] the case with steady determination. This, however, is more than an "element." It represents precisely what I have been advocating: the realization that without a declared and principled approach underlying a peace process, we have nothing more than the failed Oslo process, open-ended negotiations towards no clearly defined goal, which, in the end, only permit Israel to entrench its control. And its absence is not simply an oversight; nor is it as easy to articulate as Scowcroft and Brzezinski indicate. The problem has to do with framing.

And here is where a president hits up against Israel's fundamental refusal to enter into a peace process that might actually threaten its hold over the Occupied Territories. A framing based on the principles I enumerated or the elements of a genuine Israeli-Palestinian peace as outlined by Scowcroft and Brzezinski will simply not be accepted by either Israel, its allies in Congress or sectors of the American public Israel is capable of mobilizing. For both the principles and the elements are already framed as "anti-Israel" because they lead precisely to what Israel has avoided these past 40-odd years: a complete dismantling of its Occupation and the rise of a genuine Palestinian state. Any presidential statement, especially if it is forceful, that does not place Israel's Occupation at the forefront is simply not acceptable. And yet, without it, there can be no fruitful negotiations or an end to the conflict.

If framing is the problem, it may also be the solution. If the elements listed by Scowcroft and Brzezinski must be anchored in a set of principles which direct the negotiations, then those principles themselves must be anchored in an American reframing. Obama could by-pass the Israeli framing by taking a lesson from Reagan, who faced a similar problem in 1981 when he sought to sell AWAC surveillance planes to Saudi Arabia. When it became clear that AIPAC might actually muster enough opposition in Congress to block the sale, Reagan pulled rank – which is just what Scowcroft and Brzezinski seem to be suggesting that Obama do. Reagan told Congress: I am the Commander-in-Chief, and I am telling you that this sale is in the vital interests of the United States. Framed like that, Congress could hardly reject the deal. In order for President Obama to "speak out clearly and forcefully about the fundamental principles of the peace process," as he will have to if he wants to enter into meaningful negotiations, he must anchor those principles in American interests. A complete end to Israel's Occupation and the establishment of a truly sovereign and viable Palestinian state next to a secure state of Israel, he must state, is in the vital interests of the United States.

Only that package – identifying the essential elements of a peace agreement, anchoring them in an approach based on overarching principles of justice acceptable to the Palestinians, and then framing it all in terms of American interests in seeing this conflict resolved – will enable a president to finally break through the obfuscation created by the Israeli framing, the major obstacle standing in the way of a just and sustainable resolution of the conflict. But in reversed order: first the framing, which will present the president's case in a coherent and compelling fashion to the public, followed by the principles and then the specific elements. Tiny points in a global conflict, but then again, if Israel has taught us anything these past four decades of fending off attempts to end its Occupation, it is that the devil is in the details.

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# INFORMATION BRIEF

The Jerusalem Fund  
for Education and Community Development



## **President Obama and the Prospects for Israeli-Palestinian Peace: An Analysis** **Ali Abunimah**

*Palestine Center Information Brief No. 169 (17 November 2008)*

President-elect Barack Obama's election victory has revived hopes that stalled Palestinian-Israeli peace negotiations could finally lead to a two-state solution. Few new presidents have been greeted with such optimism and associated high expectations.

However, the chances for progress depend on more than a new American president. There are several interrelated factors: U.S. engagement, the availability of a viable peace agreement, Israeli and Palestinian internal politics and the broader international situation.

An examination of these factors indicates that the optimism is unjustified and that President Obama will not be more successful in bringing about a two-state solution to the conflict. This does *not* however mean that the situation will remain static or that those pursuing a just peace have no recourse for action.

### **Early U.S. Engagement is Not Enough**

Days after Obama's election, Brent Scowcroft, national security advisor to President George Herbert Walker Bush, advised the President-elect to start early on reviving peace negotiations as a way to "psychologically change the mood of the [Middle East] region" and "because the Palestinian issue...gives the members of the region a deep sense of injustice."<sup>1</sup> Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter echoed these views, urging Obama to avoid the mistakes of other presidents who waited until their final year in office to push for an agreement.<sup>2</sup> In a June speech to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the pro-Israel lobby, Obama himself pledged, "to do all I can to advance the cause of peace from the start of my administration."

These voices reflect a consensus that early and sustained U.S. engagement has been the missing ingredient. The problem, however, has never been a lack of U.S. engagement. Rather, it has been too much of the wrong kind. Earlier administrations, whether or not they actively encouraged negotiations, have been deeply involved. Since 1967, the United States has given growing military, economic and diplomatic support to Israel-in effect intervening heavily on one side of the conflict.

Aaron David Miller, a former top State Department official, succinctly summed up the American role in Arab-Israeli diplomacy over the past quarter century as "Israel's attorney, catering and coordinating with the Israelis at the expense of successful peace negotiations."<sup>3</sup> The George W. Bush administration, like that of former U.S. President Bill Clinton, adopted Israeli positions as its own: the permanence of large Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories, opposition to Palestinian refugee rights and support for Israel's demand to be recognized as a "Jewish state," even though 20 percent of Israeli citizens are Palestinians whose second-class status would be legitimized by such recognition.

The outgoing Bush administration took American engagement to unprecedented levels both overtly and covertly. Contrary to the well-crafted public initiatives, like the Annapolis conference and attempts to revive the "peace process," it was the Bush administration's covert activities that had the greatest impact. Intervening directly in Palestinian internal politics, it pushed for Palestinian elections, and then when Hamas won, attempted to overturn the result. The administration helped arm and train Palestinian militias opposed to Hamas and vetoed a Palestinian "national unity government." It has supported the blockade of the Gaza Strip and used financial aid to bolster client Palestinian leaders.<sup>4</sup> While these realities are often ignored, confronting them is nonetheless essential to understanding how American policy would have to change for the United States to play a constructive role in fostering a just, sustainable and agreed peace.

For an Obama administration to live up to the expectations and break with its predecessors would require that the United States: make financial and other aid to Israel conditional on compliance with international law and signed agreements (such as long-ignored United Nations Security Council resolutions requiring Israel to dismantle settlements); stop interfering in Palestinian internal affairs and respect the democratic choices of the Palestinian people; and call for an immediate end to the blockade of the Gaza Strip. It would also require that the U.S. exercise its influence to level the power imbalance in negotiations, rather than weighting the scales even further towards the stronger party. This includes using consistent standards for judging violent acts, negotiating ceasefires and

apportioning responsibility for breaches of ceasefires by Israelis and Palestinians.

## Obama's Approach

To assess the prospects for a change in policy under the Obama administration, there are two relevant questions: first, what are Obama's positions on Palestine-Israel and related regional issues; and second, how much will his actions in office hew to or deviate from these known positions?

Obama set out detailed positions in speeches before AIPAC in March 2007 and June 2008.<sup>5</sup> Key elements are that Obama:

- Supported the Israeli bombing of Lebanon in July-August 2006 and repeatedly in the Gaza Strip as exercises of Israel's right to "legitimate self-defense;"
- Supported Israel's 6 September 2007 air attack on Syria which unsubstantiated reports claimed targeted a weapons of mass destruction related site;
- Opposed the holding of Palestinian elections including Hamas in January 2006;
- Opposed the February 2007 Mecca Agreement establishing a national unity government between Hamas and Fatah peacefully, resolving internal Palestinian differences;
- Supports continued "isolation" of Hamas until it meets political conditions imposed by Israel and the Quartet;
- Stated that "I will always stand up for Israel's right to defend itself in the United Nations and around the world," suggesting continued use of U.S. veto to block United Nations action on the conflict;
- Promised at least \$30 billion of military aid to Israel over the next decade and pledged to push for Israel to gain access to armaments reserved for NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) members;
- Pledged that the United States "should never seek to dictate what is best for the Israelis and their security interests" and "No Israeli prime minister should ever feel dragged to or blocked from the negotiating table by the United States;"
- Stated "Jerusalem will remain the capital of Israel and it must remain undivided;"
- Opposes Palestinian refugees' Right of Return ("The right of return [to Israel] is something that is not an option in a literal sense");<sup>6</sup>
- Stated "Any agreement with the Palestinian people must preserve Israel's identity as a Jewish state;"
- Supported the Bush administration's approach of forming an alliance of "moderates," including Israel, Saudi Arabia and Egypt on one side arrayed against Iran, Syria, Hizballah and Hamas;
- Considers Iran's alleged pursuit of nuclear weapons "unacceptable," supports strong sanctions and divestment and has refused to rule out the use of military force.

Obama has expressed no support for Palestinian "rights" and has never publicly used the type of effusive emotional language identifying with Palestinians' aspirations as he does regarding the Israelis. While repeatedly castigating Palestinians, he has been uncritical of Israel.

Against this record, there were two moments during the campaign that fueled speculation about a more even-handed approach. In March 2007, Obama observed that "Nobody is suffering more than the Palestinian people." However, facing protests from pro-Israel groups, his campaign clarified that he meant "the Palestinian people are suffering from the Hamas-led government's refusal to renounce terrorism and join as a real partner in the peace process."<sup>7</sup>

Obama also attracted attention when he told Jewish community leaders, "I think there is a strain within the pro-Israel community that says unless you adopt an unwavering pro-Likud approach to Israel, then you're anti-Israel, and that can't be the measure of our friendship with Israel."<sup>8</sup> This was interpreted as evidence Obama might prefer a more "dovish" Israeli government. If true, that would only put Obama in the company of earlier U.S. administrations that also unofficially preferred non-Likud-led governments. This also presupposes substantive differences between Likud and other major parties in Israel, which as will be demonstrated, are far from self-evident.

Obama's willingness to talk with Iran has also raised hope of a less confrontational approach. However, even the Bush administration in its final months has shown a willingness to engage with Iran without necessarily abandoning its substantive positions.

During the campaign, Obama actively distanced himself from establishment figures, including elder statesman Zbigniew Brzezinski and Clinton aide Robert Malley, who were accused of being "pro-Palestinian." At the same time, "the advisers most intimately involved in [Obama's] Israel-related policies are veterans of the Clinton administration and come out of a pro-Israel milieu."<sup>9</sup> President-elect Obama's first major appointment of pro-Israel hardliner U.S. House Representative Rahm Emanuel to serve as White House chief of staff confirms this trend.<sup>10</sup>

In sum, Obama's positions are remarkable only for their conformity with long-standing U.S. policies. As Obama told AIPAC in June, "I have been proud to be a part of a strong bipartisan consensus that has stood by Israel in the face of all threats. That is a commitment...both [Senator] John McCain and I share because support for Israel in this country goes beyond party."<sup>11</sup>

What then are the prospects that in office Obama will deviate significantly from these positions? Were he inclined to do so, it would come at the cost of dealing a major blow to his own and his party's credibility on bedrock commitments. Obama's foreign policy team will be drawn from a Democratic Party establishment that is committed to the same consensus. He would also have to buck his own party's congressional leadership. Given that Obama rose to power by earning the support of his party establishment rather than building an alternative coalition, he would risk alienating his political base. Politics do not disappear after an election; another is always around the corner, whether midterms in 2010 or reelection in 2012.

None of this means that major change is impossible. But it does suggest it is difficult and unlikely that Obama will expend the enormous political capital necessary when he himself has publicly rejected the common view that "the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the root of all trouble in the [Middle East] region."<sup>12</sup> His agenda will be dominated by the deepening economic crisis in the U.S. and globally and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Change, if any, is likely to be slight and therefore insufficient to significantly advance a viable two-state solution.

### **The Unavailability of an Agreement**

Obama's task would be much easier if Israelis and Palestinians had already bridged central issues dividing them. However, despite a year of intense U.S.-supported negotiations, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni could point to no specific substantive progress at a joint meeting with the international Quartet this month. The Quartet's final declaration made the best of a bare cupboard stating that "[w]ithout minimizing the gaps and obstacles that remain," Abbas and Livni "shared their assessment that the present negotiations are substantial and promising and they have succeeded in putting in place a solid negotiating structure for continued progress in the future."<sup>13</sup>

The Quartet's focus on process could barely mask the reality confirmed in statements by Israeli and Palestinian officials over several months that virtually no progress has been made on core issues such as borders, Jerusalem, refugees and settlements. The parties have barely moved on these issues and in some areas have regressed from positions established at the unsuccessful July 2000 Camp David summit. In the occupied West Bank there has been eight more years of relentless Israeli settlement construction compounded by the construction of Israel's Wall annexing large areas.

Obama inherits a situation where the consensus supporting the two-state solution is much weaker than in 2000 and a process lacking credibility and support among large segments of the Israeli and Palestinian populations.

### **The Israeli Political Scene**

Israelis will elect a new government in February 2009. A conventional view is that prospects for successful peace negotiations depend on the currently dominant Kadima faction, headed by Foreign Minister Livni, prevailing over the Likud party led by former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "Livni represents the Israeli willingness to continue with the peace process," wrote one Israeli commentator, whereas Netanyahu would be on a "collision course" with an Obama administration presumed to be highly motivated to solve the conflict.<sup>14</sup> Yet, any Israeli government emerging from the elections is likely to follow a roughly similar course.

Supposedly committed to the two-state solution, Livni recently confounded expectations of an ambitious peace agenda by pointedly rejecting comments by outgoing Israeli Prime Minister and Kadima leader Ehud Olmert that Israel had to withdraw almost to the 1967 boundaries.<sup>15</sup> Livni, it is to be recalled, failed to form a coalition following Olmert's resignation because she could not attract a key partner unless she guaranteed there would be no negotiations on Jerusalem.

Livni also warned the incoming Obama administration not to take an active role in the peace process. "You [the new administration] don't need now to do anything dramatic about it. The situation is calm. We have these peace talks," she said before Jewish leaders in New York. Livni also told the Quartet, "We don't ask you to intervene. Please, this is bilateral. We don't want you to try to bridge gaps between us. Don't put new ideas on the table." She also reaffirmed her opposition to the return of Palestinian refugees, "not even for one of them."<sup>16</sup>

Netanyahu, while nominally opposed to a Palestinian state, may take a similar approach as during his earlier term between 1996-99 when despite predictions he engaged in the process even while stalling on substance. Indeed this month, Netanyahu "pledged to continue negotiations with the Palestinians if he wins February elections, backing away from earlier hints he would abandon U.S.-backed peace talks." At the same time, Netanyahu "gave no indication he would make significant concessions."<sup>17</sup>

Thus, the Israeli elections will not change the reality that there is no major party and no conceivable ruling coalition that will be able to meet the minimal conditions for a two-state solution. All Israeli parties are on the ideological defensive; they have no legitimate and practicable path to preserve a Jewish state as Palestinians under Israeli control become the majority.

Any Israeli government will pursue a strategy of conflict management, probably including renewing the Gaza ceasefire and going through the motions of negotiation as a means to minimize external pressure. Israel is also likely to mobilize its allies to pressure Obama to maintain a confrontational American stance towards Iran. Already, Israeli officials have been in touch with President-elect Obama through his advisor Dennis Ross to emphasize that Iran remains their primary concern.<sup>18</sup>

### **The Palestinians**

Reconciliation between Hamas and the U.S.-backed Palestinian Authority (PA), led by Mahmoud Abbas and his Fatah faction, has yet to materialize. Hamas pulled out of Egyptian-sponsored talks set for earlier this month, citing continued arrests by PA forces of Hamas members in the West Bank. Hamas has publicly maintained a commitment to restoring a national unity government while Abbas, under continued pressure from Washington, has maintained a confrontational stance towards the Islamist movement.

Abbas asked the Quartet to maintain political, economic and "security" assistance "to the legitimate Palestinian government which has accepted the Quartet principles and PLO commitments." "Legitimacy" here clearly means foreign approval rather than a democratic mandate, which the government appointed by Abbas lacks. A further complication is that Abbas's legal term of office expires in January 2009, and there is little prospect of elections any time soon.

The PA leader's statement to the Quartet suggests a view of the peace process not as means to a negotiated settlement but as a mechanism to maintain external support against domestic political rivals. Any Palestinian party participating in negotiations under such conditions would not-even if it reached agreement with the Israelis-carry with it the necessary Palestinian consensus to make such a deal stick.

Hamas leaders hope the new American administration might engage with them. They have sent conciliatory signals meant to woo the incoming president, including reiterating Hamas's support for a two-state solution.<sup>19</sup> Given Obama's repeated commitments to the Quartet conditions that Hamas first recognize Israel, renounce resistance and abide by signed agreements, whether or not Israel does so, these overtures are unlikely to be sufficient.

Hamas leaders are aware of the precedent where the U.S. began a short-lived dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) only after the latter met political preconditions in 1988. The lesson of that episode and the Oslo period is that there is little advantage to trading political concessions for mere recognition or talks as ends in themselves. It would also only be to Israel's benefit if Palestinian factions began a competition to become the most acceptable face of the Palestinians for a U.S. administration.

Palestinians would be better off focusing on a strategy that is not dependent on nuances in the attitudes of U.S. administrations. This includes reestablishing the political legitimacy and unity of the Palestinian national leadership through revival, reform and democratization of the PLO and mobilizing Palestinian and international grassroots solidarity to support legitimate Palestinian rights and oppose Israeli occupation and other discriminatory practices.

### **Little Change in Policy but Not a Static Situation**

There is a relevant lesson from the global financial crisis. Credit rating agencies gave AAA ratings to securities that turned out to be much riskier. There was a conflict of interest: the rating agencies were paid by the very investment banks that issued the securities. In hindsight, such ratings should have been viewed with much more skepticism.

There is also a large industry that for various reasons views the survival of the "peace process" itself as paramount, regardless of its failures and is therefore unfailingly "optimistic" about its prospects. For Israeli and Palestinian leaders, the process is a means to appear busy, resolving the conflict while staving off political pressure. We cannot also discount the distorting effects of millions of dollars in funding received by organizations tied to the continuation of the peace process. Some analysts inside the peace process bubble discount the importance and influence of all activity outside its confines, too easily dismiss ideas at odds with prevailing orthodoxy and therefore find themselves constantly surprised by developments they did not foresee.

We can expect little change in U.S. policy just because a new administration takes office. This does not mean that U.S. policy will never change. The outgoing administration has adapted its approach to regional shifts of power and other developments beyond its control.<sup>20</sup> At the same time, after fifteen years, the peace process has reached a dead end, and the two-state solution looks unachievable. The new administration will not easily revive it. What then?

Regardless of U.S. policy, regional resistance is likely to persist, frustrating efforts to maintain the status quo or impose a peace that fails to deal with fundamental injustices and inequalities. There have been two Palestinian *intifadas* (uprisings) against Israeli occupation in the past 20 years, and there are warnings of a third. Israel will find it increasingly difficult to justify its policies to global public opinion and will face a growing challenge from the international boycott, divestment and sanctions movement. Efforts to pursue Israelis accused of war crimes in the Occupied Territories through universal jurisdiction will intensify and may begin to bear fruit. Palestinians in Gaza will refuse to remain besieged. Palestinian citizens of Israel will continue their own struggle for democracy.

A recent British government effort to urge the 27 E.U. member states to enforce a ban on imports of products from Israeli settlements suggests that even the most staunchly pro-Israel governments will not forever remain immune to public pressure for policies grounded in international law.<sup>21</sup> During President Obama's term, Palestinians will become the absolute majority population in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza Strip together for the first time since 1948.<sup>22</sup> These trends will require U.S. policymakers to reexamine their responses.

With open discussion so constrained in official circles, this is also a moment when the growing number of academic and civil society conferences, debates and activities aimed at exploring alternatives to the two-state solution can begin to decisively reshape visions of a just, achievable and peaceful future for all the people of the region.

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<sup>1</sup>Speaking on "Fareed Zakaria GPS," CNN, 9 November 2008.

<sup>2</sup>"Obama will waste no time pursuing Middle East peace," *Haaretz*, 12 November 2008 (<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1036762.html>).

<sup>3</sup>Aaron David Miller, "Israel's Lawyer," *The Washington Post*, 23 May 2005.

<sup>4</sup>See for example David Rose, "The Gaza Bombshell," *Vanity Fair*, April 2008 (<http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2008/04/gaza200804>).

<sup>5</sup>See transcript of remarks by Senator Barack Obama, AIPAC Policy Forum, Chicago, IL, 2 March 2007

([http://www.aipac.org/Publications/SpeechesByPolicymakers/Barack\\_Obama\\_-\\_AIPAC\\_Policy\\_Forum\\_2007.pdf](http://www.aipac.org/Publications/SpeechesByPolicymakers/Barack_Obama_-_AIPAC_Policy_Forum_2007.pdf)); and transcript of remarks to AIPAC Policy Conference 2008, Washington, DC, 4 June 2008 ([http://www.aipac.org/Publications/SpeechesByPolicymakers/PC\\_08\\_Obama.pdf](http://www.aipac.org/Publications/SpeechesByPolicymakers/PC_08_Obama.pdf)). The following points are drawn directly from these speeches except where otherwise indicated.

<sup>6</sup>Hilary Leila Krieger and Tovah Lazaroff, "Obama: Palestinian refugees can't return," *The Jerusalem Post*, 29 January 2008.

<sup>7</sup>"Obama under fire for comment on Palestinians," Associated Press, 15 March 2007 (<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/17631015/>).

<sup>8</sup>Hilary Leila Krieger, "Obama: Pro-Israel needn't be pro-Likud," *The Jerusalem Post*, 25 February 2008.

<sup>9</sup>Ron Kampeas, "A look at Obama and McCain advisers," Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 28 October 2008

(<http://jta.org/news/article/2008/10/28/110913/mccainobamaadvisers>).

<sup>10</sup>Ali Abunimah, "Obama's ambiguity: What it reveals about Mideast 'peace'," *The Washington Times*, 13 November 2008

(<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2008/nov/13/obamas-ambiguity>).

<sup>11</sup>In his 4 June 2008 speech at AIPAC.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Quartet Press Statement, 9 November 2008 (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2008/nov/111664.htm>).

<sup>14</sup>Amir Oren, "On a collision course with Obama," *Haaretz*, 12 November 2008, (<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1036470.html>).

<sup>15</sup>"Livni distances herself from Olmert comments on '67 borders," *Haaretz*, 11 November 2008 (<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1036355.html>).

<sup>16</sup>Shlomo Shamir, "Livni: Israel not counting on Obama in peace talks," *Haaretz*, 13 November 2008 (<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1037197.html>).

<sup>17</sup>Steve Weizman, "Israel's Netanyahu softens line on peace talks," Associated Press, 10 November 2008.

<sup>18</sup>Helene Cooper, "A World of Advice for Obama on Foreign Policy," *The New York Times*, 13 November 2008

(<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/14/washington/14policy.html?ref=us>).

<sup>19</sup>See "Listen to Hamas," *Haaretz* editorial, 9 November 2008 (<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1035971.html>).

<sup>20</sup>See Ali Abunimah, "The End of the War on Terror and a new New World Order?" Palestine Center Information Brief No. 165, 29 August 2008,

(<http://www.thejerusalemfund.org/images/informationbrief.php?ID=195>).

<sup>21</sup>"Britain tells EU to clamp down on W. Bank imports," *Haaretz*, 4 November 2008 (<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1034159.html>); and Omar Barghouti,

"Boycotting Israeli settlement products: tactic vs. strategy," The Electronic Intifada, 11 November 2008 (<http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article9948.shtml>).

<sup>22</sup>See Ali Abunimah, "Palestinians on the Verge of a Majority: Population and Politics in Palestine-Israel," Palestine Center Information Brief No. 162, 12 May 2008

(<http://www.thejerusalemfund.org/images/informationbrief.php?ID=192>).

## Democrat leaders out of step with voters on Israel's attack on Gaza

Glen Greenwald

January 3, 2009

A new Rasmussen Reports poll -- the first to survey American public opinion specifically regarding the Israeli attack on Gaza -- strongly bolsters the severe disconnect between American public opinion on U.S. policy toward Israel and the consensus views expressed by America's political leadership.

Not only does Rasmussen find that Americans generally "are closely divided over whether the Jewish state should be taking military action against militants in the Gaza Strip" (44 percent to 41 percent, with 15 percent undecided), but Democratic voters overwhelmingly oppose the Israeli offensive -- by a 24-point margin. By stark contrast, Republicans, as one would expect (in light of their history of supporting virtually any proposed attack on Arabs and Muslims), overwhelmingly support the Israeli bombing campaign (62 percent to 27 percent).

It's not at all surprising that Republican leaders -- from Dick Cheney and John Bolton to virtually all appendages of the right-wing noise machine -- are unquestioning supporters of the Israeli attack. After all, they're expressing the core ideology of the overwhelming majority of their voters and audience.

Much more notable is the fact that Democratic leaders -- including Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi -- are just as lock step in their blind, uncritical support for the Israeli attack, in their absolute refusal to utter a word of criticism of, or even reservations about, Israeli actions.

While some Democratic politicians who are marginalized by the party's leadership are willing to express the views that Democratic voters overwhelmingly embrace, the suffocating, fully bipartisan orthodoxy which typically predominates in America when it comes to Israel is in full force with this latest conflict.

Is there any other significant issue in American political life, besides Israel, where citizens split almost evenly in their views, yet the leaders of both parties adopt identical positions which leave half of the citizenry with no real voice?

More notably still, is there any other position, besides Israel, where a party's voters overwhelmingly embrace one position (Israel should not have attacked Gaza) but that party's leadership unanimously embraces the exact opposite position (Israel was absolutely right to attack Gaza and the U.S. must support Israel unequivocally)?

Equally noteworthy is that the factional breakdown regarding Israel-Gaza mirrors quite closely the factional alliances that arose with regard to the Iraq war. Just as was true with Iraq, one finds vigorous pro-war sentiment among the Dick Cheney/National Review/neoconservative/hard-core-GOP crowd, joined (as was true for Iraq) by some American liberals who typically oppose that faction yet eagerly join with them on Israel.

Meanwhile, most of the rest of the world -- Europe, South America, Asia, the Middle East, the U.N. leadership -- opposes and condemns the attack, all to no avail. The parties with the superior military might -- the U.S. and Israel -- dismiss world opinion as essentially irrelevant. Even the pro-war rhetorical tactics are the same, just as those who opposed the Iraq war were said to be "pro-Saddam," those who oppose the Israeli attack on Gaza are now "pro-Hamas."

There are certainly meaningful differences between the U.S. attack on Iraq and the Israeli attack on Gaza (most notably the fact that Hamas does shoot rockets into Israel and has killed Israeli civilians and Israel is blockading and occupying Palestinian land, whereas Iraq did not attack and could not attack the U.S. as the U.S. was sanctioning them and controlling their airspace). But the underlying logic of both wars is far more similar than different: military attacks, invasions and occupations will end rather than exacerbate terrorism; the Muslim world only understands brute force; the root causes of the disputes are irrelevant; diplomacy and the U.N. are largely worthless.

It's therefore entirely unsurprising that the sides split along the same general lines. What's actually somewhat remarkable is that there is even more lock-step consensus among America's political leadership supporting the Israeli attack on Gaza than there was supporting the U.S. attack on Iraq.

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## Statement on Gaza Cease-Fire: Our Work Is Not Over

January 19, 2009

This weekend, Israel and Hamas agreed separately to a cease-fire and Israel has begun to withdraw its troops from the occupied Gaza Strip. Since December 27, Israel killed more than 1,250 Palestinians, more than half of whom were civilians according to the UN, medical sources, and human rights organizations, and injured more than 5,000. 13 Israelis were killed, including 10 soldiers, four of whom died in a 'friendly fire' incident. As of this morning, Israel is closing border crossings into the Gaza Strip, thereby preventing the unimpeded access of humanitarian goods in violation of UN Security Council Resolution 1860.

Since Israel's war on the occupied Gaza Strip began, the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation has called for:

1. An immediate and unconditional cease-fire
2. Unimpeded humanitarian access to the occupied Gaza Strip and an end to Israel's blockade of it
3. Accountability for Israel's misuse of U.S. weapons in violation of the Arms Export Control Act and the imposition of the required sanctions for violating this law

Tens of thousands of people in the United States took action—marching in the streets, distributing educational materials, contacting Congress, the White House, and State Department, and making your voices heard in the media—to help bring about this cease-fire.

**While the weapons have fallen silent momentarily, we cannot let up in our activism.** Please visit our "*End Israel's War and Siege on Gaza*" web section for suggested ideas and ways to continue to be involved:

<http://endtheoccupation.org/article.php?list=type&type=256>

In fact, we still have a lot of work to do to ensure that Israel lifts its illegal blockade of the occupied Gaza Strip, which is a form of collective punishment of its 1.5 million residents outlawed by the Geneva Conventions. **Returning to the pre-December 27 status quo in the occupied Gaza Strip is not acceptable.** As the Occupying Power of the Gaza Strip, Israel is obligated under the Geneva Conventions to provide for the well-being of its residents. This includes ensuring full and unimpeded access of humanitarian goods, and opening the borders of the Gaza Strip for normal trade and for freedom of movement. Israel must also be held accountable for its destruction of Palestinian infrastructure and be forced to pay reparations for the human and infrastructural damage it inflicted. These immediate demands must be followed by a diplomatic process with all interested parties which results in an end to Israel's military occupation of the Palestinian Gaza Strip and West Bank, including East Jerusalem, as required by UN Security Council Resolution 242.

Israel must also be held accountable for its violations of the Arms Export Control Act through its wanton killing and injuring of civilians; its targeting of civilian infrastructure such as police stations, schools, universities, mosques, hospitals, humanitarian aid providers, and UN compounds; and its indiscriminate use of white phosphorous and uranium oxide munitions in civilian areas. As we have [documented](#), Israel's war and siege on the Gaza Strip would not have been possible without U.S. weapons provided to Israel with our tax dollars. **It is our job to demand of our politicians that Israel is held accountable for its violations of this law and that sanctions, including ending military aid, are imposed as required by law.** [Rep. Dennis Kucinich](#) has already demanded a State Department investigation into Israel's violations of the Arms Export Control Act and we must collectively build momentum to ensure the investigation is complete and accurate and that Congress acts on the results of the investigation.

Today our office is buzzing with dozens of volunteers from all over the country who have come to Washington, DC for President-Elect Obama's inauguration. We are organizing teams of volunteers to cover the National Mall tomorrow collecting signatures on postcards to end military aid to Israel.

Beginning Wednesday, we will be calling upon you to take action from day one of the Obama Administration to demand an end to Israel's illegal blockade of the occupied Gaza Strip and for accountability and sanctions on Israel for its violations of U.S. law and human rights abuses of Palestinians. In the meantime, please visit our [website](#) for more ways to take action right now:

[www.endtheoccupation.org](http://www.endtheoccupation.org)

## Links to Analysis and Information on the Gaza Crisis

*For further study and more in-depth understanding of recent events, we suggest registrants for the Grassroots Advocacy Training and Lobby Day, read the following articles and reports. These resources can be accessed online through the following links. A short description of each article appears below.*

### **The Gaza Crisis: December 2008**

**Phyllis Bennis, The Institute for Policy Studies**

Link: [www.tni.org/detail\\_page.phtml?act\\_id=19052](http://www.tni.org/detail_page.phtml?act_id=19052)

December 28, 2008: A speaker on the Grassroots Advocacy Training's keynote panel, Phyllis Bennis is a leading analyst of US politics and power in the Middle East. This essay responds to Israel's attack on Gaza and offers suggested talking points as well as an analysis of US complicity and the likelihood of action by the incoming Obama administration.

### **War Diary from Sderot**

**Nomika Zion, The Huffington Post**

Link: [www.huffingtonpost.com/nomika-zion/war-diary-from-sderot\\_b\\_157497.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/nomika-zion/war-diary-from-sderot_b_157497.html)

January 13, 2009: In this post, Nomika Zion, a resident of Sderot, Israel explains what it was like to live in Sderot during the Israeli bombing of nearby Gaza. She argues powerfully that the Israeli military actions have not made her community more secure. Nomika is Program Director of the Van-Leer Jerusalem Institute's Center for Social Justice. As a founder and resident of the urban Kibbutz Migvan in Sderot, Nomika regularly hosts Interfaith Peace-Builders' delegations during their time there.

### **Gaza Blogs: Reports from on-the-ground**

**Various Authors**

December 2008 – January 2009: Gazan bloggers in and out of the Strip continue to write about their experiences. Because Israeli bombing and shelling has greatly damaged power plants, electricity lines and telecommunications systems in Gaza, many bloggers are not able to update their sites regularly. However, some blogs to watch include: [www.a-mother-from-gaza.blogspot.com](http://www.a-mother-from-gaza.blogspot.com); [www.fromgaza.blogspot.com](http://www.fromgaza.blogspot.com); [www.sunshine208.blogspot.com](http://www.sunshine208.blogspot.com); [www.nagvelali.blogspot.com](http://www.nagvelali.blogspot.com); [www.kabobfest.com/2009/01/for-tenth-night-in-row-israeli.html](http://www.kabobfest.com/2009/01/for-tenth-night-in-row-israeli.html).

*Throughout the attacks on Gaza, Israel denied access to hundreds of human rights professionals. Despite their being denied access, Human Rights organizations, reported on the use of US weapons in the attacks. The following reports detail some of these circumstances and Human Rights findings in the immediate aftermath of the bombings:*

### **Israel: Stop Shelling Crowded Gaza City - Effect of 155mm Artillery Indiscriminate in Populated Areas**

**Human Rights Watch**

January 16, 2009

Link: [www.hrw.org/en/news/2009/01/16/israel-stop-shelling-crowded-gaza-city](http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2009/01/16/israel-stop-shelling-crowded-gaza-city)

### **Arms embargo vital as Gaza civilian toll mounts**

**Amnesty International**

January 15, 2009

Link: [www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/news/arms-embargo-vital-gaza-civilian-toll-mounts-20090115](http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/news/arms-embargo-vital-gaza-civilian-toll-mounts-20090115)

### **Israeli army's use of white phosphorus in Gaza is 'clear and undeniable'**

**Amnesty International**

January 19, 2009

Link: [www.amnestyusa.org/document.php?id=ENGNAU200901199045&lang=e](http://www.amnestyusa.org/document.php?id=ENGNAU200901199045&lang=e)

### **Israel and the United States: Up In Arms**

**Frida Berrigan, Foreign Policy in Focus**

January 14, 2009

Link: [www.newamerica.net/publications/articles/2009/israel\\_and\\_united\\_states\\_9985](http://www.newamerica.net/publications/articles/2009/israel_and_united_states_9985)

*"A passionate attachment of one Nation for another produces a variety of evils. Sympathy for the favorite nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest in cases where no real common interest exists, and infusing into one the enmities of the other . . . It leads also to concessions to the favorite Nation of privileges denied to others, which is apt doubly to injure the Nation making the concessions; by unnecessarily parting with what ought to have been retained; and by exciting . . . ill-will . . ."*

—President George Washington, 1796<sup>1</sup>

# Illegal and Ill-Advised

## US POLICY TOWARDS ISRAEL

The United States is providing substantial military, economic, and diplomatic support for Israel's 37-year old illegal military occupation of the Palestinian West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. This enables Israel to suppress Palestinian self-determination and sets the US apart from the international consensus on resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by implementing United Nations resolutions and international law. When did US support start and why does it continue? What specific forms does it take and what are the prospects for change?

### HISTORICAL EVOLUTION

US support for Israel falls into three historical periods: 1948-1967, 1967-1991, and 1991 to the present. During the period between 1948 and 1967, annual US aid to Israel averaged \$63 million, almost entirely economic development assistance and food aid.<sup>2</sup> Immediately after the Israeli military

victories of the 1967 Six-Day War, the US increased the military component of its aid package to account for almost half the total. Subsequently, both the size of the pie and its military slice increased steadily. Between 1971 and 1985, total aid averaged over \$2 billion per year, two-thirds of which was military assistance. By 1985, all military and economic aid—by now some \$3 billion per year—was in the form of grants.<sup>3</sup> It was during this period that the already close relations were transformed into a "strategic relationship," marked by unwavering US support for Israel in international forums. This relationship became more powerful still after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the successful 1991 US military action against Iraq. The Middle East peace process launched at that time sparked hopes for a just settlement. Unfortunately, although the US claimed it was pursuing a just solution to the conflict, in reality the entire "peace process" started at Oslo (1993-99) was fated to fail. Although declaring itself the "honest broker," the US provided Israel with \$31 billion in economic and military assistance loans and grants during the Oslo years, more than 45 times the total aid given Palestinians in the same period.<sup>4</sup> It also continued to shield Israel from international censure by using its veto power in the U.N. Security Council.

### THE TIES THAT BIND

Some analysts argue that access to—and control of—the vast ME oil reserves are the primary motivation for the strategic US-Israel relationship. Saudi Arabia and Iraq have, respectively, the first and second largest proved oil reserves, a lifeline not just for the US but also the European and Japanese economies.<sup>5</sup> The US has both acted militarily to protect its control over ME oil, and has relied on Israel to serve as its regional gendarme. During the Cold War,

Washington perceived military assistance to Israel as a means of containing Soviet ambitions in the ME.<sup>6</sup> The US has also used Israel as a surrogate to provide military assistance to other parts of the world when the US did not feel free to act, particularly in Latin America and Africa.<sup>7</sup> Today, Israel is partnering with the US to redraw the contours of the ME.<sup>8</sup> Another important factor in the strategic relationship is the vested interest of the US military industry, due to the fact that Israel must spend most US military aid on US weapons. Finally, the pro-Israel lobby on Capitol Hill has helped to ensure that military and diplomatic aid to Israel must not be questioned.<sup>9</sup>

### FORMS OF SUPPORT: ECONOMIC, MILITARY, DIPLOMATIC

The three billion dollars per year Israel receives accounts for a quarter of the total US foreign aid budget. For almost three decades, Israel has been the largest annual recipient of such aid.<sup>10</sup> In fact, since World War II, the US has given more aid to Israel than to any other country.<sup>11</sup> In 2004, the US gave \$480 million to Israel in Economic Support Funds to be used to "promote economic and political stability," but which in fact freed up Israeli state revenues to be applied toward the occupation. The US also parcels out billions in loan guarantees, shields Israeli loans from default, and provides a tax reduction to US citizens who donate to Israeli charities.<sup>12</sup>

The bulk of US taxpayers' aid to Israel is funneled directly to the Israeli army, which administers and enforces the occupation over Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem.<sup>13</sup> For example, of the \$2.58 billion approved by Congress for Israel in 2005, \$2.22 billion is in the form of military assistance grants and loans.<sup>14</sup> Around 74% of this aid must be "recycled" for the purchase of Apache



**END THE OCCUPATION**  
US CAMPAIGN TO END THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION

The US Campaign is a diverse coalition of over 200 groups working for freedom from occupation and equal rights for all by challenging US policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Campaign is based on human rights and international law, providing a non-sectarian framework for everyone who supports its *Call to Action*. Its strategy is to inform, educate, and mobilize the public so as to change the US role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

and Cobra helicopter gunships, F-16 fighter jets, and other sophisticated US weaponry.<sup>15</sup> Caterpillar D-9 bulldozers are used by the Israeli military to illegally and systematically destroy Palestinian homes in the occupied territories,<sup>16</sup> and are responsible for the deaths of US and Palestinian civilians.<sup>17</sup> They are sold through the US Foreign Military Sales Program, then equipped by Israel with “machine guns, grenade launchers, smoke projectors and armored plating.”<sup>18</sup> This military aid violates our own US domestic law, which prohibits military funding of major human rights violators and limits its use to internal security or legitimate self-defense.<sup>19</sup>

Diplomatically, the US and Israel have collaborated to marginalize international law. Within the international community they stand virtually alone in asserting that UN Security Council Resolution 242 does not require full Israeli withdrawal to the 1949 Armistice line (“Green Line”). The US has also disregarded the recent ruling by the International Court of Justice that obligates it not to “recognize” or “render aid or assistance” to the maintenance of the illegal situation created by Israel’s construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.<sup>20</sup> In the U.N. Security Council, the US has repeatedly vetoed resolutions that affirm Palestinian human rights.<sup>21</sup>

Successive administrations have opposed the “internationalization” of the conflict, including attempts to send an international observer force that would provide protection for civilians on both sides of the conflict until Israel withdraws. With regard to cases where Israel most clearly deserves censure, the US still offers some degree of support: contrast Israel’s refusal to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty with the ongoing pressure on North Korea and Iran. Even when the Israeli military has killed US citizens, the United States has failed to adequately investigate.<sup>22</sup>

## CURRENT POLICY

In the aftermath of 9/11, the “War on Terror” has again raised the profile of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. The Bush administration has employed confused and inconsistent rhetoric, pronouncing the inevitability of an independent Palestinian state<sup>23</sup> and demanding that “the occupation must end,”<sup>24</sup> while proclaiming Israeli

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to be a “man of peace.”<sup>25</sup> On April 14th, 2004, President Bush signed a letter to Israel indicating that the US would condone its annexation of settlements in the West Bank, and describing as impractical the Palestinian right of return, a right expressly guaranteed by international law.<sup>26</sup> This is a reversal of decades-long official US policy, and reflects the influence of neo-conservatives within the Bush administration, who see Israel’s territorial expansion as part of their larger ambitions for the ME.<sup>27</sup>

## PROSPECTS FOR CHANGE

Change is not just possible, it is necessary! US policy towards Israel has increased antagonism between much of the world and America, cost innumerable Palestinian and Israeli lives, funded human rights violations, promoted regional instability, and depleted US tax dollars that could have been much better spent on education and health needs at home.<sup>28</sup> Although much of the world, including the Israeli peace movement, identifies the occupation as a root cause of the ongoing conflict, these views rarely find their way into the US mainstream. Consequently, the US public has had no opportunity to understand that the Palestinians are fighting for their freedom and the right to determine their own future—rights guaranteed under international law.<sup>29</sup>

However, things are changing: US citizens are organizing to change US policy by refocusing attention on the occupation as the central obstacle to peace in the Middle East. In order to ensure peace with justice, citizens of diverse backgrounds, races, and creeds—many of them members of the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation—are calling on the US government and private corporations to respect human rights and international law and to stop supporting the Israeli occupation of Palestine. Add your voice to ours today!

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Washington’s Farewell Address, available at <http://www.bartleby.com/43/24.html>.
- 2 Clyde R. Mark, Israel: US Foreign Assistance, Congressional Research Service, IB85066 (updated July 12, 2004).
- 3 Mark, supra note 2.
- 4 The \$695.1 million given to the Palestinians from 1992-2001 was restricted to Palestinian NGOs. US Agency for International Development, Overseas Loans and Grants (“Green Book”), available at: <http://quesdb.cdie.org/gbk/>.
- 5 See CIA World Factbook, “Rank Order—Oil—Proved Reserves,” available at: <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/rankorder/2178rank.html>.
- 6 Clyde R. Mark, Israeli-United States Relations, Congressional

Research Service, IB82008 (updated November 9, 2004).

7 See Israel Shahak, “Open Secrets: Israeli Foreign and Nuclear Policies,” (Pluto Press: 1997).

8 See US-authored policy paper for incoming Israeli Prime Minister Nentanyahu, available at <http://www.israeleconomy.org/strat1.htm>.

9 For further analysis on the strategic relationship, see Naseer Aruri, Dishonest Broker (South End Press: 2003).

10 Mark, supra note 2.

11 USAID, “Green Book,” supra note 4.

12 Mark, supra note 2.

13 At Israel’s apparent request, the US Congress in FY1999 began reducing annual ESF by \$120 million while increasing annual “Foreign Military Financing” by \$60 million. The goal is to eliminate economic aid by 2009. Security Assistance Act of 2000, § 513(c)(2).

14 Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005, Title III (Military Assistance).

15 An astonishing 26% of this money can be used to support the Israeli arms industry, a perk only allowed to Israel. See Mark, supra note 2.

16 Human Rights Watch, “Razing Rafah: Mass Home Demolitions in the Gaza Strip,” p 110 (October 2004).

17 CNN, “Israeli bulldozer kills American protester: Israeli bulldozer runs over 23-year-old woman,” (March 25, 2003). See also [www.rachelcorrie.org](http://www.rachelcorrie.org).

18 Alexa Smith, “Jewish peace group challenges Caterpillar stock business: PC(USA) backs shareholders’ resolution seeking stop to demolitions,” (October 11, 2004), available at <http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2004/04455.htm>.

19 The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 USC. § 2304) states that “No assistance may be provided . . . to the government of any country which engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights . . .”; The Arms Export Control Act of 1968 (22 USC. § 2754) authorizes military sales “solely for internal security, for legitimate self-defense, to permit the recipient country to participate in regional or collective arrangements or measures consistent with the Charter of the United Nations, or otherwise to permit the recipient country to participate in collective measures requested by the United Nations . . .”

20 Legal consequences of the construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, 9 July 2004, paragraph 163(D), pages 63-64. At a State Department Noon Briefing on July 9, 2004, spokesperson Richard Boucher characterized the ICJ advisory opinion as not “appropriate under international law” because it could “complicate the [peace] process” (available at <http://israel.usembassy.gov/publish/press/2004/july/071103.html>). The US House of Representatives passed a resolution (H.R. 713) on July 15 2004 by 361-45-13 that “deplores” and “regrets” the advisory opinion.

21 Since 1972, the US has vetoed a total of 40 UN Security Council Resolutions critical of Israel. See the Jewish Virtual Library’s collection, available at: <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/UN/usvetoes.html>.

22 The sinking of the USS Liberty by Israel in 1967 has been investigated, but not by Congress. See Admiral Thomas Moorer, Stars and Stripes (January 16, 2004) available at <http://www.usliberty.org/moorer2004.htm>.

23 President Bush Calls for New Palestinian Leadership, President George W. Bush, The Rose Garden, Washington, DC, June 24, 2002, available at <http://www.state.gov/p/nea/rls/rm/11408.htm>.

24 Foreign Policy Address, November 19, 2001, US Department of State Secretary Colin L. Powell Remarks at the McConnell Center for Political Leadership University of Louisville, Kentucky, available at <http://usembassy-australia.state.gov/hyper/2001/1119/epf105.htm>.

25 Peter Slevin and Mike Allen, “Bush: Sharon A ‘Man Of Peace’: Israel ‘Responded’ To Call for Pullout,” Washington Post, (April 19, 2002).

26 “Letter from President Bush to Prime Minister Sharon,” available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/04/20040414-3.html>. The meaning of the letter is clouded by Bush’s comments after a May 6, 2004 meeting with King Abdullah of Jordan that “all other issues” (apart from the “Gaza disengagement”) should be negotiated. See Mark, supra note 6.

27 See, “Empire Builders: Neoconservatives and their Blueprint for US Power,” a special project of the Christian Science Monitor, available at <http://www.csmonitor.com/specials/neocon/neocon101.html>.

28 A 2002 report by the Pentagon’s Defense Science Board concluded that “American direct intervention in the Muslim World has... diminish[ed] support for the [US] to single-digits in some Arab societies. The overwhelming majority voice their objections to what they see as one-sided support in favor of Israel and against Palestinian rights...” available at [http://www.acq.osd.mil/dsb/reports/2004-09-Strategic\\_Communication.pdf](http://www.acq.osd.mil/dsb/reports/2004-09-Strategic_Communication.pdf).

29 See Phyllis Bennis, *Understanding the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict*, p. 23, Trans-Arab Research Institute (2003).

# U.S. Military Aid to Israel—Illegal and Immoral

Can You Think of a Better Way to Spend \$30 Billion over the Next Decade?

## A BRIEF HISTORY

**O**n August 16, 2007, the United States and Israel signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to increase bilateral military aid to Israel to \$30 billion over the next decade, representing a more than 25% increase over the previous FY2008 appropriation.<sup>1</sup>

Even before this increase in military aid, Israel was already the largest recipient of U.S. assistance. According to Congressional Research Service, since 1949, the United States has provided Israel with more than \$53 billion of military aid—a little more than half of total aid to Israel, which stood at more than \$101 billion as of 2007.<sup>2</sup>

Over the past decade, U.S. military aid to Israel increased yearly while economic aid was phased out, implementing a ten-year understanding negotiated between Congress and the government of former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in 1998.<sup>3</sup>

In FY2008—the last year of this ten-year understanding—the United States provided Israel with an estimated \$2.38 billion in military aid while traditional economic aid—known as Economic Support Funds in budgetary language—was reduced to zero (although the United States continued to provide an estimated \$39.7 million to Israel under a different budget category known as Migration and Refugee Assistance).<sup>4</sup>

In his budget request to Congress for FY2009—the first budget year of the new understanding signed in 2007—President George W. Bush requested \$2.55 billion in Foreign Military Financing (FMF) for Israel, a 9% increase over actual military aid given to Israel in FY2007.<sup>5</sup> (FMF is the primary budgetary vehicle through which the United States provides military aid.) Under the terms of the new understanding, annual military aid appropriations to Israel are scheduled to rise to \$3.1 billion by FY2018.<sup>6</sup>

## VIOLATIONS OF U.S. LAWS

**A**ll U.S. aid programs, whether military or economic, have built-in mechanisms to prevent that aid from being used by countries to commit human rights abuses. According to U.S. law, countries that commit human rights abuses with U.S. aid are to be sanctioned and aid is to be cut off.

The Arms Export Control Act (P.L. 80-829) stipulates that countries purchasing or receiving U.S. weapons cannot use them against civilians and must restrict their usage to “internal security” and “legitimate self-defense.”



The US Campaign and many other organizations have documented Israel's repeated uses of U.S. weapons to commit human rights violations against civilians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and in Lebanon. Indeed, Israel could not maintain its illegal 40-year military occupation and siege of the Palestinian West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip without these weapons.

According to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (P.L. 87-195), “No assistance may be provided under this part [of the law] to the government of any country which engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights.” As documented not only by Palestinian, Israeli, and international human rights groups, but by the U.S. government as well, Israel has an atrocious human rights record and therefore should be ineligible for any form of U.S. aid.

## TAKE ACTION

\* Send a postcard, sign a petition, or write a letter to your Members of Congress and the President opposing military aid to Israel.

\* Sign up for an organizing packet to educate and mobilize people in your community on this issue.

\* Organize a meeting of constituents with your Members of Congress to oppose military aid to Israel.

\* Put a flash graphic on your blog or social networking site opposing military aid to Israel.

\* Learn more about U.S. arms laws and transfers of weapons to Israel at the websites of the Federation of American Scientists: [www.fas.org](http://www.fas.org) and the World Policy Institute: [www.worldpolicy.org](http://www.worldpolicy.org)

More information at:  
<http://www.endtheoccupation.org/article.php?list=type&type=208>

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> “Signing of Memorandum of Understanding between Israel and the United States,” August 16, 2007. Available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/About+the+Ministry/MFA+Spokesman/2007/Signing%20of%20Memorandum%20of%20Understanding%20between%20Israel%20and%20the%20United%20States%2016-Aug-2007>.

<sup>2</sup> Jeremy M. Sharp, Specialist in Middle East Affairs, Congressional Research Service Report, “U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel,” updated January 2, 2008, Table 5. Recent U.S. Aid to Israel, p. 18. Available at: [http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RL33222\\_20080102.pdf](http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RL33222_20080102.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Serge Schmemmann, “Israelis to Discuss Phasing Out 1.2 Billion U.S. Economic Aid,” *New York Times*, January 27, 1998. Available at: <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9E07E6D7113BF934A15752C0A96E958260&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=all>.

<sup>4</sup> “Summary and Highlights: International Affairs Function 150, Fiscal Year 2009 Budget Request,” U.S. Department of State. Available at: <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/100014.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Sharp, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

# Israel Is Killing Palestinians in Gaza w/ U.S. Weapons

## Take Action to Protest Israel's Misuse of U.S. Weapons

**O**n December 27, 2008, Israel launched a full-scale air and naval attack on the occupied Palestinian Gaza Strip. On January 3, 2009, Israel expanded its attacks on the Gaza Strip by launching a massive ground invasion.

Israel's massive attacks on the occupied Gaza Strip have exacted a terrible toll on the 1.5 million Palestinians living there. As of January 4, Israel's attacks had killed more than an estimated 500 Palestinians and injured thousands.

Israel's attacks come on top of a brutal siege of the Gaza Strip, which has created a humanitarian catastrophe of dire proportions for Gaza's 1.5 million Palestinian residents by restricting the provision of food, fuel, medicine, electricity, and other necessities of life.

**Israel's war and siege on the Gaza Strip would not be possible without the weapons provided by the United States and its veto at the UN preventing the international community from holding Israel accountable for its human rights violations .**

Here is a snapshot of the U.S. weapons Israel is using to kill and besiege Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip:

\* Israel is carrying out its aerial bombardment of the Gaza Strip with U.S.-provided F16 fighter jets and Apache helicopter gunships. From 2001-2006, the United States provided Israel with more than **\$200 million in spare parts for its fighter jets** and more than **\$100 million in spare parts for its helicopter gunships**.

\* In July 2008, the United States provided Israel with **186 million gallons of JP-8 aviation jet fuel** to fly its fleet of F16's and Apaches.

\* Israel is bombarding the Gaza Strip by sea with naval combat ships and on December 30, the Israeli navy intentionally rammed a boat in international waters which was carrying medical supplies to the Gaza Strip, nearly causing it to sink. The passengers of The Dignity included doctors and recent **Green Party Presidential candidate Cynthia McKinney**. In July 2008, the United States signed a contract to transfer **\$1.9 billion of naval combat ships to Israel**.

\* Israeli aircraft and ships fire missiles and bombs provided by the United States. In October 2007, the United States signed a **\$1.3 billion contract with Raytheon to transfer to Israel thousands of TOW, Hellfire, and "bunker buster" missiles**. Israel also is dropping GBU-39 small diameter bombs on the Gaza Strip. According to weapons experts, these bombs contain **uranium oxide** and have left behind radioactive contamination in places such as Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan. In September 2008, **Boeing received a \$77 million contract to transfer 1,000 of these bombs** to Israel.

\* Israel invaded the Gaza Strip by ground using tanks, armored personnel carriers, and other military vehicles with troops wearing night-vision goggles. Since 2001, the United States has given Israel more than **\$300 million in tank components and spare parts and various military vehicles, and nearly \$150 million in night-vision goggles and scopes**.



**I**srael is the largest recipient of U.S. military aid. In August 2007, the United States and Israel signed an agreement to increase arms transfers to Israel to **\$30 billion over the next decade**. President-Elect Obama already has pledged to implement this agreement without any conditions.

All U.S. aid programs, whether military or economic, have built-in mechanisms to prevent that aid from being used by countries to commit human rights abuses. According to U.S. law, countries that commit human rights abuses with U.S. aid are to be sanctioned and aid is to be cut off.

The **Arms Export Control Act** (P.L. 80-829) stipulates that countries purchasing or receiving U.S. weapons cannot use them against civilians and must restrict their usage to "internal security" and "legitimate

self-defense." Israel repeatedly uses U.S. weapons to commit human rights violations against civilians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and in Lebanon. Indeed, Israel could not maintain its illegal 41-year military occupation and siege of the Palestinian West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip without these weapons.

According to the **Foreign Assistance Act** of 1961 (P.L. 87-195), "No assistance may be provided under this part [of the law] to the government of any country which engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights." As documented not only by Palestinian, Israeli, and international human rights groups, but by the U.S. government as well, Israel has an atrocious human rights record and therefore should be ineligible for any form of U.S. aid.

## TAKE ACTION

\* **Take to the streets and make your opposition public.** Hundreds of protests are scheduled to take place across the country. Find one near you or add details of your own protest.

\* **Educate and organize people in your community.** Sign up to organize people in your community to oppose military aid to Israel and get an organizing packet.

\* **Contact the White House, State Dept. and your Members of Congress.** Write a letter and set up a meeting with your Members of Congress to demand an immediate cease-fire, lifting of the siege of Gaza, and investigation into Israel's misuse of U.S. weapons.

\* **Get the message out to the media.** Download talking points and make your voice heard.

\* **Step up the pressure on President-Elect Obama and the new Congress.** Sign our open letter, help us organize on Inauguration Day, and come to our Feb. 1-2 Grassroots Advocacy Training and Lobby Day.

\* **Make a tax-deductible donation to us and give less of your tax dollars to Israel.**

**FOR MORE DETAILS, VISIT:**  
<http://www.endtheoccupation.org>

## US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation: Open Letter to Obama

This open letter, initiated by the US Campaign, and co-sponsored by Interfaith Peace-Builders and 33 other national organizations, ran in Capitol Hill's leading Congressional Quarterly Magazine Special Inaugural Edition the week of January 19, 2009. For a PDF version of the ad see <http://endtheoccupation.org/downloads/cqfullpagead.pdf>

ADVERTISEMENT

# PRESIDENT-ELECT OBAMA: We Need a Change in Israel/Palestine Policy

Dear President-Elect Obama,

Congratulations on your historic election as the next President of the United States. Last year, you pledged to "take an active role, and make a personal commitment to do all I can to advance the cause of [Israeli-Palestinian] peace from the start of my Administration." We are eager to work with you to fulfill this goal.

To do so, your Administration should break with past policies of unconditional support for Israel's illegal military occupation of the Palestinian West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip, and change U.S. policy toward Israel/Palestine to support human rights, international law, and equality.

We agree with Aaron David Miller, a 25-year State Department Middle East negotiator and adviser on Arab-Israeli affairs, who wrote that "For far too long, many American officials involved in Arab-Israeli peacemaking, myself included, have acted as Israel's attorney, catering and coordinating with the Israelis at the expense of successful peace negotiations."

To become an honest and effective broker, your Administration should:

\* **Insist that Israel ends its siege of the Gaza Strip.** Israel has deliberately impoverished the 1.5 million residents of the Gaza Strip and caused a humanitarian catastrophe of dire proportions by prohibiting the delivery of food, medicine, fuel, and electricity. Your Administration should insist on the illegality of collective punishment and support the human rights of Palestinians such as freedom of movement as a first step towards ending Israel's occupation of the Gaza Strip.

\* **Demand a freeze in the construction of settlements and Israel's Wall in the West Bank.** Israel's West Bank settlements, including those in East Jerusalem, are all illegal under international law, and the International Court of Justice ruled in 2004 that Israel's Wall is illegal and must be torn down. Halting this construction should be a first step toward completely dismantling the infrastructure of Israel's occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, which former President Jimmy Carter, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and others have labeled "apartheid."

\* **Hold Israel accountable for its misuse of U.S. weapons.** In 2007, the United States and Israel agreed to increase military aid to Israel by 25% over the next decade, totaling \$30 billion. During the Bush Administration, Israel killed more than 2,000 innocent Palestinian civilians who took no part in hostilities, oftentimes with U.S. weapons in violation of the Arms Export Control and Foreign Assistance Acts. Your Administration should hold Israel accountable for these violations of U.S. law and cut off military aid as required by law, rather than increase it.

\* **End the U.S. veto protecting Israel at the United Nations.** The United States has used its veto power at the UN more than 40 times since 1972 to shield Israel from the consequences of its violations of human rights, UN resolutions, and international law. Your Administration should work with, not in opposition to, the international community so that human rights, UN resolutions, and international law are applied and enforced uniformly.

\* **Base a just peace on human rights, international law, and equality.** Such a policy is the only way to ensure the legitimate security needs of all peoples and can only be achieved by engaging in dialogue with all interested parties. A just and lasting Israeli-Palestinian peace includes the complete end of Israel's military occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip; a resolution to the Palestinian refugee issue consistent with international law and UN resolutions, including the right of return and/or compensation; and full equality for Palestinian citizens of Israel. A policy denying Palestinians these internationally-guaranteed rights will only lead to yet another failed "peace process".



African American Islamic Institute | Americans for a Just Peace in the Middle East | Black Voices for Peace | Code Pink | Committees of Correspondence for Democracy & Socialism | Doctors for Global Health | Episcopal Peace Fellowship | Fellowship of Reconciliation | Friends of Sabeel—North America | International Solidarity Movement, Northern California | Global Exchange | Grassroots International | Interfaith Peace-Builders | Middle East Children's Alliance | Middle East Peace Fellowship | Middle East Policy Advisory Council | Middle East Research & Information Project | Muslim Student Association West | National Hip Hop Political Convention | National Lawyers Guild | Nonviolence International | Peace Action | Presbyterian Peace Fellowship | Unitarian Universalists for Justice in the Middle East | United for Peace and Justice | Voters for Peace | War Resisters League | Women in Black Union Square | Women's International League for Peace and Freedom—U.S. Section

To add your endorsement to this open letter, visit: <http://www.endtheoccupation.org>  
US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation | PO Box 21539 | Washington, DC 20009



## Report Card for 110th Congress, 2007-2008

Last updated on September 4, 2008

The US Campaign publishes an updated Report Card for each Congress. This is an essential tool for meetings with your members of congress. To view the full Report Card and see how your representatives voted on key legislation see [www.endtheoccupation.org/downloads/110th\\_report\\_card.pdf](http://www.endtheoccupation.org/downloads/110th_report_card.pdf)

### Hall of Fame

#### House

Ron Paul (TX-14)	+3
Dennis Kucinich (OH-10)	+3
James Moran (VA-8)	+2
James McGovern (MA-3)	+1
John Olver (MA-1)	0
Lloyd Doggett (TX-25)	0

#### Senate

Dianne Feinstein (CA)	+4
Tom Harkin (IA)	+2
Sherrod Brown (OH)	+2
Patrick Leahy (VT)	+2
Russ Feingold (WI)	+2
Richard Durbin (IL)	+1
Olympia Snowe (ME)	+1
Ted Kennedy (MA)	+1
John Kerry (MA)	+1
Debbie Stabenow (MI)	+1
Ron Wyden (OR)	+1
Sheldon Whitehouse (RI)	+1
Bernie Sanders (VT)	+1

### Hall of Shame

#### House

Brad Sherman (CA-27)	-7
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (FL-18)	-7
Trent Franks (AZ-2)	-6
Tom Lantos (CA-12)	-6
Robert Wexler (FL-19)	-6
Ron Klein (FL-22)	-6
John Linder (GA-7)	-6
Geoff Davis (KY-4)	-6
Vito Fossella (NY-13)	-6
Eliot Engel (NY-17)	-6
Tim Murphy (PA-18)	-6

#### Senate

Sam Brownback (KS)	-3
Lisa Murkowski (AK)	-2
John Kyl (AZ)	-2
Joe Lieberman (CT)	-2
Joe Biden (DE)	-2
Mel Martinez (FL)	-2
Saxby Chambliss (GA)	-2
Johnny Isakson (GA)	-2
Evan Bayh (IN)	-2
Mitch McConnell (KY)	-2
Jim Bunning (KY)	-2
Mary Landrieu (LA)	-2
Dan Vitter (LA)	-2
Norm Coleman (MN)	-2
Harry Reid (NV)	-2
Frank Lautenberg (NJ)	-2
Elizabeth Dole (SC)	-2
Kent Conrad (ND)	-2
Arlen Specter (PA)	-2
Orrin Hatch (UT)	-2

Download the full Report Card, an *essential* resource, at:

[www.endtheoccupation.org/downloads/110th\\_report\\_card.pdf](http://www.endtheoccupation.org/downloads/110th_report_card.pdf)

YOU ARE INVITED!

Join Interfaith Peace-Builders for a

## HAPPY HOUR FUNDRAISER

Grassroots Advocacy Training and Lobby Day Social Event

Monday, February 2

5:30 - 7:30 PM

Science Club Bar  
1136 19th Street, NW  
Washington, DC

Featuring poetry and spoken word by:

Tala Abu Rahmeh  
Tehila

Suggested donation of \$10 - \$50 gets a free drink

Interfaith Peace-Builders invites you to join us for a happy hour fundraiser to benefit our work to support the courageous voices of Palestinian and Israeli peace-builders and bring more US citizens to see the effects of Israel's occupation with their own eyes.

The event will be the culmination of our first Grassroots Advocacy Training and Lobby Day which brings more than 100 people from nearly 30 states to Washington DC to meet with their congressional representatives about US policy in Israel/Palestine. You can help us celebrate their efforts and support our work! (for more information see [www.ifpb.org/grassroots](http://www.ifpb.org/grassroots))

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Interfaith Peace-Builders leads delegations of Americans from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds to Palestine and Israel to listen and learn from human rights and peace activists immersed in the conflict and committed to nonviolent struggle and peace with justice. IFPB delegates hear directly from those most affected by the conflict and learn about the policies which contribute to the ongoing violence. We support delegates as they carry their observations back home, share them with their families and friends, speak to their communities, and express their concerns to their political representatives. IFPB has organized delegations for over 400 Americans since our founding in 2001.

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