

III. United States

Americans Call for Ceasefire, Demand the Right To Speak Out

by Daniel Platt

Dec. 9—In an urgent letter dated Dec. 6, directed to José Javier De la Gasca Lopez Domínguez, the current Ecuadorian chair of the UN Security Council, UN Secretary General António Guterres invoked Article 99 of the UN Charter, the first time this article has been invoked since 1971. It states that “the Secretary-General may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security.”

Guterres took this dramatic step to call for the immediate declaration of a humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza. Within 48 hours of Guterres’ action, the ceasefire resolution, introduced by the United Arab Emirates, was debated in the UN Security Council, and in the Dec. 8 vote, the result was 13 in favor, with only the United States voting against it (UK abstained). Following the vote, the U.S. vetoed the resolution. In this, the U.S. government stands alone against the Global Majority, but also against a growing majority of American citizens at home.

After the results were announced, *The New York Times* reported that thousands of pro-Palestinian protesters took to the streets of Lower Manhattan, rallying at numerous locations including City Hall



A ceasefire rally at the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor, organized by Jewish Voice for Peace—NYC, Nov. 6, 2023.

and Wall Street, chanting, “Free Palestine,” calling for an end to the United States’ financial support of Israel, and denouncing the U.S. veto.

Since the U.S., using its Security Council veto, has been the principal agency preventing a ceasefire, the remarkable upsurge of U.S. activism in support of a ceasefire takes on a special significance. There has been a frantic reaction from the neocon establishment, which has sought to characterize calls for a ceasefire as being highly offensive to Jews, to the point of being tantamount to anti-Semitism. However, a wide spectrum of political forces, including many Jewish organizations, have continued undaunted in their demands for a halt to the killing.

Demands for Peace

On Dec. 1, the United Auto Workers, which has more than 400,000 active members, joined other national unions including the American Postal Workers Union, the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America (UE), and the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT) in calling for a ceasefire. “We opposed fascism in World War II, we opposed the Vietnam War, we opposed apartheid South Africa, and we mobilized union resources in that fight. The UAW International

has joined the call for a ceasefire. [We are] calling for an immediate, permanent ceasefire, and [we are] building a global community of solidarity.”

A letter to President Joe Biden was issued on Dec. 5 by interns of the White House and Executive Office of the President, urging the President to declare a permanent ceasefire. This is a group of young people, who are usually unpaid, taking a stand, although they signed their letter anonymously for fear of retaliation. It reads:

“We, the undersigned Fall 2023 White House and Executive Office of the President interns, will no longer remain silent on the ongoing genocide of the Palestinian people. We are Palestinian, Jewish, Arab, Muslim, Christian, Black, Asian, Latine, White, and Queer. We heed the voices of the American people and call on the Administration to demand a permanent ceasefire. We are not the decision-makers of today, but we aspire to be the leaders of tomorrow, and we will never forget how the pleas of the American people have been heard and thus far, ignored.”

The signers stated they were “horrified by the brutal October 7th Hamas attack on Israeli civilians, and we are horrified by the brutal and genocidal response by the Israeli government, funded by our American tax dollars, which has killed over 14,000 innocent Palestinian civilians in Gaza, a large percentage of whom are children.”

“While the Administration expressed support for the humanitarian pause, we maintain that anything other than a complete halt of Israel’s mass slaughter of innocent civilians in the Gaza Strip will simply not suffice. We urge the Biden-Harris Administration to call for a permanent ceasefire now, a release of all hostages including Palestinian political prisoners, and to support a diplomatic solution that will put an end to the illegal occupation and Israeli apartheid, in accordance with international law and for a free Palestine.”

Newsweek reports on the letter’s accusation that the “ongoing violence perpetrated by the Israeli government” is resulting in the targeting of Muslims and Arabs in the U.S., including the shooting of



bit.ly/JProsLetter

three Palestinian students in Vermont and the murder of a six-year-old Palestinian boy in Chicago.

Biden’s increasingly anxiety-ridden re-election campaign had hoped that the youth vote might come to his rescue in a close race against Donald Trump, but Biden’s green light for Israel’s war could short-circuit that stratagem. The *Washington Post* published an [article](#) on Nov. 22 titled “Biden’s Resistance to Ceasefire Could Alienate Youth Voters in 2024.”

An “[Open Letter](#) from Professionals at Jewish Organizations to President Biden and Congress,” signed by hundreds of leaders of Jewish organizations, was made public on Dec. 7. It states:

“We are uniting together in this moment to call for a ceasefire, the release of all hostages, and a commitment towards a long-term political solution that ensures the freedom and collective safety of Israelis and Palestinians. When we read in *Beresheit (Genesis)* that God created human beings in God’s image, we learn that each and every human life is sacred. Jewish tradition teaches that every death is another world destroyed.... Over 17,000 worlds have been destroyed in this war, and many more hang in the balance.

“As a group of professionals from a wide spectrum of Jewish organizations, many of us have devoted our life’s work to building thriving Jewish communities. Our organizations may or may not join the call for a ceasefire themselves, but we feel moved to speak as individuals to demonstrate broad support within the Jewish community for a ceasefire.

“We know there is no military solution to this crisis. We know that Israelis and Palestinians are here to stay—neither Jewish safety nor Palestinian liberation can be achieved if they are pitted against one another. We know that freedom for one people cannot be reached through the oppression and killing of another. We know that Israeli and Palestinian safety is deeply intertwined and that no one wins a forever war. The only way to lasting peace and security is through diplomatic means that move us towards an equal and just future for all.

“We urge President Biden and Congress to work for a ceasefire, the release of the hostages, and a diplomatic

solution that guarantees equality, justice, and a thriving future for all.”

Jewish Voice for Peace Protest Actions

Founded in 1996, Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) describes itself as “the largest progressive Jewish anti-Zionist organization in the world.” Over the years, they have shown a talent for devising actions that penetrate the tightly controlled environment in the U.S. corporate media, whose various organs seek to create the impression that American Jews unanimously support the Likud regime in Israel. JVP responded swiftly to the outbreak of Israel’s assault on Gaza, organizing a series of spectacular protest actions in high-profile locations.

On Oct. 18, JVP and allied groups organized a “Jews against Genocide” rally of 5,000 people from around the country on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. The rally was joined by Representatives Rashida Tlaib, who is Palestinian and was recently censured by congressional neocons, and Cori Bush, who was the original sponsor of [HR 786](#), which calls for a ceasefire. Two dozen shofar-blowing rabbis led almost 500 Jews in a sit-in in the rotunda of the Cannon House Office Building; the street outside the offices was shut down by thousands of other Jewish activists for three hours, as capitol police arrested the hundreds inside the building and elected officials and staffers watched from their windows.

On Oct. 27 a JVP protest demonstration forced the closure of Grand Central Terminal, one of New York City’s major transit hubs. Demonstrators wore shirts reading “Ceasefire Now” and “Not In Our Name,” as they have done in all the JVP pro-ceasefire actions. A similar protest was launched the following week on Nov. 2, when over 500 faith leaders and organizers from JVP-Philly staged a sit-in inside Philadelphia’s 30th Street Station. Over 300 people were arrested, and trains were shut down for hours.

Four days later, on Nov. 6, activists from Jewish Voice for Peace occupied the Statue of Liberty, unfurling banners reading “Palestinians should be free” and “Never Again for *Anyone*” at the base of the New York landmark. They called attention to “The New Colossus,” the beautiful sonnet by Jewish poetess Emma Lazarus, which is inscribed on a plaque displayed on the inner wall of the pedestal. A JVP spokesman said, “Those words compel us to take action to support the Palestinians of Gaza yearning to be free.”



EIRNS/Michelle Erin

Expressing outrage against the mass killing of civilians, especially children, is not anti-Semitic or anti-Israel. Here, a pro-Palestine rally in New York City, Nov. 24, 2023.

At around 7:40 a.m. on Nov. 16, JVP protesters blocked all cars heading west on Interstate 80 in San Francisco, hampering access to the Bay Bridge. In a coordinated action, between 50 to 100 protesters stopped their cars on the bridge and chained themselves and their vehicles together. A similar action took place Nov. 26, on the Brooklyn Bridge in New York.

Other Organizations Campaign for Ceasefire

The LaRouche Organization and the Schiller Institute are campaigning not only for a ceasefire, but for the Oasis Plan, Lyndon LaRouche’s 1975 proposal for regional infrastructural development that would provide not merely a lull in the conflict, but a durable resolution for it. At the end of October, The LaRouche Organization released a 24-page [pamphlet](#), “Peace Through Development for Palestine and Israel: The LaRouche Oasis Plan,” which is being distributed by organizers nationally, including personal deliveries to congressional offices. LaRouche activists have made presentations around the country at rallies and demonstrations, at city councils, and on college campuses. Young LaRouche volunteers had a boisterous confrontation with Hillary Clinton at Columbia University in late October. LaRouche supporter Diane Sare, an independent candidate for the U.S. Senate race in New York State, has taken her campaign nationally, making peace a major focus. “Friends of Sare” organizations are in formation in more than 15 states, with ceasefire a leading demand.

On the afternoon of Tuesday, Nov. 28, LaRouche

organizers Joe Jennings and Joel Dejean addressed the public comment session of the Houston City Council, chaired by outgoing Mayor Sylvester Turner. They presented council members with the Oasis Plan pamphlet, along with other documentation. In his remarks to the council in support of the call for a ceasefire, Jennings said,

The resolution before you, now pending in Congress, calls for de-escalation and ceasefire in Israel and occupied Palestine. ...I speak today to advance the discussion toward a durable peace in Southwest Asia based on economist Lyndon LaRouche’s “Oasis Plan” for the region. This plan proposes using peaceful nuclear energy to desalinate water and create artificial rivers, to green the barren areas and expand the land under cultivation, to the benefit of all. ...

LaRouche also discussed the plan with Israeli leader Abba Eban in New York. All responded favorably. In 1993, when then Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat shook hands on the Oslo Accords, LaRouche heralded this breakthrough, and reissued his Oasis Plan to consolidate the peace by expanding the bounty of the region. The World



EIRNS/Michelle Erin

The Diane Sare for Senate campaign conducts an anti-war rally at the British UN Mission in New York City, Nov. 30, 2023.

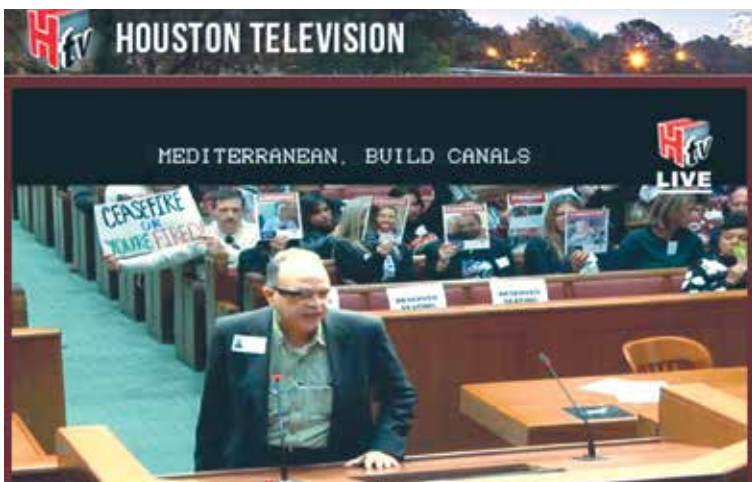
Bank withheld development credits and a young fanatic assassinated Prime Minister Rabin, ending Oslo.

The current temporary ceasefire must become a permanent truce. Peace Through Development must shape our common future. Israel’s and Palestine’s natural partners in this effort should be the five new BRICS nations in the region.

Other city government bodies, all around the nation, have seen huge turnouts at public comment sessions, with citizens gathering to plead for a ceasefire. City councils have little input into U.S. foreign policy, but many have passed resolutions, nonetheless. On Dec. 5, a pro-ceasefire resolution was introduced at the San Francisco Board of Supervisors by Jewish Supervisor Dean Preston. There were seven hours of public comment, which was overwhelming in support of the resolution.

The *New York Times* of Dec. 8 [reports](#):

More than a dozen U.S. city councils have now passed resolutions urging Israel to stop shelling Gaza, including several in Michigan, which has a sizable Muslim population, and several in California. Among the biggest cities to do so are Atlanta and Detroit.... “You can see the momentum,” said Eduardo Martinez, the mayor of Richmond, Calif., which was the first city to pass a ceasefire resolution, deploying some of the strongest criticism of Israel and accusing it of “apartheid”



Houston TV

LaRouche organizer Joel Dejean, in public comments before the Houston City Council, called for a ceasefire and warned of nuclear war, unless peace is secured, Nov. 28, 2023.

and “ethnic cleansing.” ... Last month in Los Angeles County, officials in Cudahy, a mostly Latino community of 22,000, passed a resolution condemning the Israeli government for “engaging in collective punishment of Palestinians,” which they deemed a war crime.

In addition, ceasefire resolutions have been introduced into the state legislatures of Texas, Florida, New Jersey, and Wisconsin. A group of state legislators from Delaware, New York, Michigan, Oklahoma and Virginia have launched a [hunger strike](#), demanding a ceasefire.

For seven consecutive weeks, a coalition of groups including Veterans for Peace has demonstrated on Sundays, blocking the entrance to the Scranton Army Ammunition Plant, run by General Dynamics Corp. Scranton, Pennsylvania is the birthplace of President Biden. They call for an end to military shipments to Israeli occupation forces. Veterans for Peace tweeted, “In shutting down the plant, protesters are enforcing the Leahy Law because Biden and Congress are failing to do so with respect to Israel’s attacks against Palestinians. The law prohibits the U.S. from sending weapons to military forces that are grossly violating human rights.”

Code Pink: Women for Peace is an anti-war organization founded in 2002 in reaction to the planned invasion of Iraq. It has collaborated with Jewish Voice for Peace in many of its protest actions. Code Pink’s co-founder, the indefatigable and fearless Medea Benjamin, has personally confronted many of the most detestable U.S. warmongers in very public environments, among them Mike Pompeo and Antony Blinken. During the week of Dec. 4–8, Code Pink has carried out a “Congressional Days of Actions for Palestine,” which has included visits to congressional offices and a teach-in on the influence of the America Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).

Activities on College Campuses

The IDF assault on the population of Gaza has sparked a major resurgence of anti-war protests at American universities on a scale not seen since the Iraq war. AIPAC, which serves as a sort of central

command for the pro-war faction and wields infamous power over the U.S. Congress, moved immediately to characterize these protests as a new and ominous wave of anti-Semitism, a trope repeated *ad nauseum* by some of the leading recipients of AIPAC’s largesse, including Democratic Senator Chuck Schumer and Republican Congresswoman Elise Stefanik, both representing New York. Considerable pressure has been brought to bear upon university administrators to suppress these protests.

The Chronicle of Higher Education [reports](#):

Columbia University suspended Students for Justice in Palestine and Jewish Voice for Peace as



EIRNS/Asuka Burke

The IDF assault on the population of Gaza has sparked a major resurgence of anti-war protests at American universities. Here LaRouche Organization organizing by Columbia University in New York City, Oct. 18, 2023.

official student groups until the end of term. Harvard evicted a student from campus housing for serving as a safety marshal at a recent protest. At the University of Pennsylvania, in response to student protesters projecting phrases like “from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free” and “from West Philly to Palestine, occupation is a crime” onto campus buildings, President Liz Magill issued a statement calling the messages “vile,” “antisemitic,” “reprehensible,” and “hateful,” insisting that they were instances of “cowardice” that had “no place at the university.”

The November 10th banning of Columbia University’s Students for Justice in Palestine and

Jewish Voice for Peace student clubs was followed by the November 17th announcement of a Department of Education investigation into seven schools, Columbia University one of them, for potential violations of Title VI—alleged incidents of anti-Semitism or Islamophobia. A rally at Columbia in protest of the banning of the clubs was, as a result of those bans, held on the street in front of Columbia’s main gate, rather than inside the walls of the university. The protest featured a heavy NYPD presence, including a helicopter buzzing overhead, as well as numerous members of the press and off-campus political organizations.

On December 5th, the House Committee on Education and the Workforce played its part in advancing the clampdown on free speech, calling on the presidents of Harvard, MIT, and the University of Pennsylvania to testify to their commitment to fight anti-Semitism on campus. Committee chairwoman Virginia Foxx (R-NC) told the three they would have a chance “to atone for the many specific instances of vitriolic, hate-filled anti-Semitism on your college campuses that have denied students the safe learning environment they’re due.” Foxx told Harvard President Claudine Gay that denouncing Hamas wasn’t good enough, and accused the three administrators of “allowing horrific rhetoric to fester and grow.” MIT President Sally Kornbluth responded that while anti-Semitism must be combatted, the problem could be solved with more free speech. Those seeking to shut down protests are effectively pushing for “speech codes” which will not work, she said. “Problematic speech needs to be countered with other speech and education.” University of Pennsylvania President Elizabeth Magill said recommendations at her school had been implemented to combat bigotry, and create a safe learning environment, but emphasized that schools need “both safety and free expression.”

Hedge fund billionaire Bill Ackman, a Harvard alumnus and donor, has been a major public face of the campus crackdown on social media. His posts on the social media platform X have targeted Claudine Gay, for example, for refusing his invitation to fly her and her staff to Washington, DC to facilitate their watching a “private screening of footage documenting the atrocities committed by Hamas on October 7th,” hosted by Gilad Erdan, Israel’s ambassador to the United Nations. Ackman’s fellow hedge fund billionaires Leon Cooperman and Henry Swieca, both Columbia alumni, have made their own tours of *Fox News* programs to add pressure to Columbia to continue the crackdown.

What Comes Next?

Clearly, activism in support of a ceasefire is viewed as a major threat by the neocons, who are eager to escalate the present war in Gaza into a regional conflagration, to further their larger geopolitical agenda (see *EIR*, Nov. 17, 2023, “[The Bernard Lewis Plan](#).”) They must continue to manufacture consent by the American electorate, or run the risk of some kind of political rebellion that they cannot control, with a presidential election coming next year. A sign of their desperation was the passage on Dec. 5 of a resolution in the U.S. House of Representatives with a 311-14 vote (with 92 voting “present”), a Republican-led measure equating anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism.

Congressman Jerry Nadler (D-NY), the senior Jewish member of the House Representatives [stated](#) emphatically,

The resolution suggests that ALL anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism. That is either intellectually disingenuous or just factually wrong. And it unfairly implicates many of my orthodox former constituents in Brooklyn, many of whose families rose from the ashes of the Holocaust.... the authors, if they were at all familiar with Jewish history and culture, should know about Jewish anti-Zionism that was, and is, expressly NOT anti-Semitic. This resolution ignores the fact. ...[And that] adherents of the pre-state Jewish labor movement have held views that are at odds with the modern Zionist conception. ...

I should also note that there are those who try to smear even progressive pro-Israel supporters with the inappropriate label of “Israel hater” or “anti-Zionist.” Under this resolution, those who love Israel deeply but criticize some of its policy approaches could be considered anti-Zionist. That could make every Democratic Jewish member of this body—because they all criticized the recent Israeli judicial reform package—de facto anti-Semites. Might that be the authors’ intention?

Though non-binding, the resolution is calculated to boost the neocons’ campaign to suppress anti-war protests on college campuses and in other public venues. If Americans can be forbidden to speak out against genocide, it bodes ill for the future of the U.S. and the world.

Daniel Burke contributed to this article.