



CONFERENCE PROPOSALS

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A. Strengthening Existing US Campaign Projects/Proposals

Saturday, July 24th, 2010 3:30-5:30 PM

1. The 3rd Annual Grassroots Advocacy Training and Lobby Day to Challenge Military Aid to Israel and Build a Broad Movement for Palestinian Right

Interfaith Peace Builders

Project Description:

This proposal empowers staff and member groups of the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation to once again work with Interfaith Peace-Builders to hold a 3rd annual Grassroots Advocacy Training and Lobby Day in Washington, DC in the first quarter of calendar year 2011.

In February 2009 and March 2010, IFPB and the US Campaign jointly organized two Grassroots Advocacy Training and Lobby Day (GAT) events in Washington, DC. Each event brought nearly 200 activists from almost 30 states. Each year, participants learned crucial activist skills and held more than 70 meetings with their congressional representatives' offices pushing for an end to US military aid to Israel, humanitarian measures, and a fair application of US foreign policy based on international law.

The Grassroots Advocacy Training and Lobby Day:

- Brings together activists, experts and individuals for workshops and activist skills trainings (on Sunday).
- Includes a lobby day (on Monday), which adds an immediate action component and develops congressional engagement skills and experience.
- Provides an important opportunity to focus movement resources on ending US military aid to Israel.
- Is timed to correspond to the congressional appropriations (budget) process.
- Gives the movement work of the US Campaign a recurring presence in Washington DC at a politically important time in the congressional calendar.
- Facilitates greater collaboration on policy issues among civil society groups within our movement.

This project has a proven track record and growing potential. In 2010, 16 organizations endorsed the Grassroots Advocacy Training and Lobby Day. We hope the 2011 event will be endorsed by even more of our colleagues (including many member groups of the US Campaign). *To see past endorsers and learn even more about the event, see www.ifpb.org/education/grassroots/2010.*

Goals of the proposal and how they will be achieved:

The immediate goal is to build on the momentum of the previous two trainings and organize a successful 3rd Grassroots Advocacy Training and Lobby Day in Washington DC in the first quarter of 2011. The event will focus on ending military aid to Israel by organizing constituent meetings with congressional offices, preparing detailed materials and asks, and training participants in skills and strategies.

We plan to increase participation in the event, work with additional endorsing organizations, schedule more meetings with congressional offices; and increase the strength of our movement by holding expert-led workshops on movement building and activist skills.

The broad goals of the Grassroots Advocacy Training and Lobby Day include:

- Increase the visibility of opposition to US military aid to Israel within the electoral arena and appropriations process by recruiting, training, and providing resources to activists and representatives of member organizations;
- Continue to shift public discourse in the US away from unqualified support for Israel by bringing the growing opposition to US military aid to Israel to the attention of elected officials;
- Facilitate the growth of constituent groups working on policy issues at the congressional district level;
- Support the expansion of the US Campaign's Congressional District Coordinators Network; and
- Strengthen the US Campaign goal of Challenging US Policy in Israel/Palestine.

Resources (monetary, staff time, production and distribution of materials, etc.) that this proposal would require from the US Campaign (please include a budget if applicable):

The GAT requires limited resources from the US Campaign. Campaign staff will work closely with Interfaith Peace-Builders staff in the same manner as the previous two years. Staff will formulate policy asks and produce materials for congressional meetings, lead certain workshops at the training, participate in brainstorms and evaluation sessions, and work with constituents in follow-up to congressional meetings.

The US Campaign will advertise the event and recruit participants from its member groups, email lists and mailing lists. Information and announcements will be sent out early and often and the event will be a part of the US Campaign's program for Challenging US Policy in Israel/Palestine. As in previous years, Interfaith Peace-Builders will share all information and accolades with the US Campaign. We will also use the event to recruit new –and reactivate current—Congressional District Coordinators.

Work that Interfaith Peace-Builders is committed to doing to advance this proposal:

As in previous years, Interfaith Peace-Builders will take the lead on this project. IFPB will be responsible for:

- All logistical organizing (including locations, food, technology, etc);
- The production of main materials (website, packets, schedules, etc.);
- Inviting speakers and providing for their needs;
- Processing registrations;
- Facilitating the scheduling of congressional meetings;
- Advertising and outreach to endorsing organizations and partners;
- Production and dissemination of follow-up materials; and more.

Organizing the Grassroots Advocacy Training and Lobby Day is equivalent to organizing a small conference. In cooperation with the US Campaign, we have brought nearly 200 people to Washington DC each year. We are confident that we can do so once again, but with your help we can do more!

We welcome as much support from other member groups as possible in order to make the 2011 event larger and more influential. The greatest need is in outreach and recruiting participants. In addition to approving this proposal, your member group can endorse the event and/or send your members or participants from your congressional districts. Contact Jacob Pace at jpace@ifpb.org for more information.

2. Task Force to Conduct a Critical Evaluation of USC Congressional District Lobbying Campaign Efforts

Progressive Democrats of America

Introduction –

The premise of USC CD-level organizing efforts has been that USC and our affiliate organizations can have a significant impact on the policies adopted by our elected Congressional representatives, and on the passage of favorable federal legislation. To date, despite the commitment of considerable USC resources of staff and volunteer time and money, that premise has not been rewarded or realized. In order to achieve our lobbying goals, USC and its affiliates must understand the whys and wherefores of this outcome.

Description of the proposed action –

Formation of a USC Steering Committee Task Force comprised of volunteers from the USC Steering Committee, USC staff, and member organizations to:

- (1) devise an evaluation of USC CD-lobbying efforts;
- (2) conduct the evaluation;
- (3) analyze, process, and report back to the Steering Committee and the membership regarding Task Force findings;
- (4) seek comments, suggestions, and dialogue from the broadest possible USC membership base;
- (5) make recommendations for action.

Goals of the proposal and how they will be achieved –

- (1) Understand and articulate the reasons why USC and USC member organization Congressional lobbying efforts have not yielded the results and outcomes we had hoped to achieve.
- (2) Articulate how to better focus and support the effort USC and USC member organizations devote to Congressional District Lobbying campaigns over the next two years, and specify the resources (of volunteer and staff time and money) we devote to it. Note – this might include a revised (and perhaps revived) USC Congressional District Coordinators' Network; or
- (3) Agree that our resources are better utilized elsewhere at this time.

Resources this proposal would require from the US Campaign –

- (1) 50 hours of Political Director's time through December 31, 2010 (approx 4 hours per week).
- (2) 4 hours per week of intern aide to Political Director through Dec. 31, 2010.
- (3) One or more Steering Committee members' participation – 1 hour per week for 13 weeks.
- (4) Help with dissemination and collection of data as needed.

Work that the proposing group/s (PDA) are committed to doing to advance this proposal –

- (1) The Coordinator of PDA's Israel/Palestine Action Group will serve as a volunteer member of the USC Congressional Lobbying Campaign Evaluation Task Force;
- (2) PDA will provide a correspondence secretary to the USC Task Force;
- (3) PDA will broadly notify its national base regarding the work of the Task Force;
- (4) During the lifetime of the Task Force, the PDA Israel/Palestine Working Group will provide models of ongoing lobbying efforts in at least six select Congressional Districts.

3. One Share Against Apartheid

Chicagoans Against Apartheid in Palestine

Description of the proposed action, event, idea, etc.:

Have all US campaign members with the means open an online brokerage account, such as at zecco.com - so they can purchase one share of any target company which supports the occupation.

Goals of the proposal and how they will be achieved:

US Campaign/CAAP can coordinate getting shareholders or their proxies to attend shareholder meetings, propose shareholder resolutions, and participate in direct actions inside of shareholder meetings, as was recently done at the Caterpillar shareholder meeting in Chicago.

This effort would be sure to bring more media attention to BDS, the occupation, and Israeli apartheid. It would also lend support to institutional investors such as the Methodists or Presbyterians who seek to divest from the occupation.

Resources (monetary, staff time, production and distribution of materials, etc.) that this proposal would require from the US Campaign (please include a budget if applicable):

Minimal staff time and resources, possibly staff travel to various shareholder meetings to help coordinate media, protests, inside actions

Work that the proposing group/s are committed to doing to advance this proposal:

- Help interested individuals and groups open a brokerage account
- Assist in getting shareholders and their proxies tickets to shareholder meetings
- Assist in matching shareholders with activists to attend the meeting
- Assist in writing shareholder resolutions.

4. Gaza Accountability Project

Americans United for Palestinian Human Rights

I. Description of the proposed action, event, idea, etc.

Name of Project: **GAZA ACCOUNTABILITY PROJECT**

To hold the United States and Israel legally and politically accountable for the violations of human rights and international law, war crimes, and possible crimes against humanity that Israel committed in the occupied Gaza Strip during its December 2008-January 2009 war, codenamed “Operation Cast Lead.”

Growing domestic criticism of Israel suggests that the political climate and public opinion have become more open to political and legal accountability for Israel’s actions. US Campaign can take this opportunity to not only contribute to the push for making Israel accountable for its actions but also expand the organization’s activities and visibility.

II. Goals of the proposal and how they will be achieved

The project will have three complementary, and mutually reinforcing components, which together will create a coherent campaign to achieve accountability for one egregious type of human rights violation and/or for the misuse of one type of weapons system:

1. Legal Complaint: The US Campaign, under the guidance of a part-time National Legal Director, will coalesce a group of lawyers to bring litigation in United States courts to hold U.S. weapons manufacturers and/or Israeli political and/or military decision-makers accountable. One possibility is to bring a lawsuit against U.S. weapons manufacturers whose weapons and instruments were used against Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip. Another tort suit could be brought against Israeli political and military officials who were complicit in the human rights violations that occurred in the Gaza Strip under the Alien Tort Claims Act, and perhaps the Torture Victims Protection Act. There may be additional claims raised under common law theories.

2. Lobbying the U.S. government: The US Campaign, under the guidance of the National Advocacy Director, together with national organizations within its coalition and with volunteer lobbyists, will conduct a direct lobbying campaign with the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Congress to recognize and condemn at least one specific Israeli attack as a gross violations of human rights, thereby opening the door for sanctions to be imposed under the terms of the Leahy Law, Arms Export Control Act, and Foreign Assistance Act. Specific lobbying campaigns can be directed toward inserting language in the State Department’s Annual Human Rights Report, the Defense Authorization and Appropriations Acts, Foreign Operations Appropriation Act.

3. Public education/action/mobilization: The US Campaign, under the guidance of the National Organizer, will produce educational and organizing materials in support of the legal and political accountability components of the campaign. The US Campaign will also produce ad campaigns, a stand-alone website, etc. to publicize the accountability campaign. It will organize grassroots advocacy campaigns to support both the legal and political accountability components of the campaign. It will also mobilize its supporters on behalf of this campaign through days of action and working with local member groups to protest the appearance of Israeli political and military decision-makers associated with the human rights abuses detailed in the campaign. The National Media Coordinator will also contribute to the public education aspect of this campaign through earned media, including placing op-eds, issuing press releases, self-producing media, etc.

Expected Results

Over the course of two years, the US Campaign will facilitate the filing of at least two lawsuits in U.S. courts, will organize at least two distinct direct lobbying campaigns, will coordinate two national days of action, and one national speaking tour, in addition to producing educational and organizing materials.

III. Resources (monetary, staff time, production and distribution of materials, etc.) that this proposal would require from the US Campaign (please include a budget if applicable)

Anticipated Budget (Yearly)

Expenses	
National Legal Director (part-time)	25,000
Legal, research fees	10,000
Event Expenses (website, ad campaigns, organizing materials, speaking tours, etc.)	15,000
Total	50,000
Income	
Prior fundraising commitments to project	20,000
Foundation support	15,000
Fundraising campaigns	15,000
Total	50,000

5. Palestinian Membership Task Force

International Solidarity Movement - Northern California

Why is there not greater membership and participation by Palestinian and Arab groups in the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation (USCEIO)? As far as we (NorCal ISM) can tell, the positions and goals of the USCEIO are in complete accord with that of Palestinian organizations with regard to, for example, the Right of Return and Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS).

The Palestinian Membership Task Force Resolution seeks to remedy the apparent deficit in Palestinian and Arab member organizations by conferring with as many such organizations as possible in order to a) determine the reasons for the apparent deficit, and b) take corrective action to attract as many such organizations as possible to the membership of the USCEIO. It appoints a commission for this purpose, to study the question and suggest remedies.

It is expected that the commission established by the resolution will be composed of volunteer members and/or existing paid staff, in which case there will be no additional staff costs. However, this would be a decision for the Steering Committee making the appointments. Perhaps the commission could also include non-members, especially from the Palestinian groups that the USCEIO seeks to attract. To the extent that it includes existing paid staff, such staff would have somewhat less time for other assignments, to an undetermined degree. To the extent that the work of the commission involves travel not already covered by other travel plans, this would be an additional expense. However, it is not certain that such travel will be required.

Resolution

WHEREAS the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation (USCEIO) cares deeply about and seeks to end injustices against Palestinians caused by Israel and its supporters, and

WHEREAS the USCEIO deplores Israel's violations of Palestinian human rights, including the right of all refugees to return to their homes, as called for in United Nations Resolution 194, and

WHEREAS the USCEIO is a signatory to the 2005 Palestinian call by the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee (BNC) for a complete economic boycott of Israel and to the 2008 call by the Palestinian Academic and Cultural Boycott Initiative (PACBI) for a complete academic and cultural boycott, and

WHEREAS the USCEIO seeks to be in accord with the positions of Palestinian and Arab organizations and to work together with them for justice in Palestine (the region currently including Israel, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem) and for changes in U.S. policy toward that end, and

WHEREAS the USCEIO recognizes the importance of the participation of Palestinian and Arab organizations in the USCEIO and is concerned about a perceived deficit of such organizations in the membership of the USCEIO and of more active involvement in the USCEIO by existing Palestinian and Arab member organizations,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the USCEIO hereby establishes a commission, whose membership shall be appointed by the Steering Committee of the USCEIO, to confer with existing Palestinian and Arab organizations in the U.S., including those who are and are not members of the USCEIO, to determine the possible impediments to greater

membership of such organizations in the USCEIO and to greater involvement by existing members, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commission will report its findings to the Steering Committee as soon as is practicable, with recommendations for remediation, including the drafting of any resolutions that can be considered at the 2011 annual convention of the USCEIO, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Steering Committee, after suitable discussion, deliberation and possible revision, will report its findings and recommendations to the membership no later than March 31, 2011, and will introduce any recommended resolutions in the 2011 annual convention of the USCEIO, for approval by the membership.

6. New Trend of Nonviolence Activism

Nonviolence International

Description of the proposed action, event, idea, etc.:

In recent years there has been a dramatic increase in the number of people around the world who have taken part in nonviolent political action. It is clear, however, that there is considerable debate about the precise meaning of nonviolence.

Goals of the proposal and how they will be achieved:

For some, nonviolent action is an expedient technique for dealing with conflict or bringing about social change; for others, nonviolence is a moral imperative or even a way of life.

Resources (monetary, staff time, production and distribution of materials, etc.) that this proposal would require from the US Campaign (please include a budget if applicable):

-Power point of actions and what can be done

-Work that the proposing group/s are committed to doing to advance this proposal:

-Commitment to nonviolence at this time, and support those who are using its techniques.

B. Member Group Led Campaigns/Projects

Sunday, July 25th, 2010

9:00 AM-11:00 AM

1. Resolution to Stop Funding from U.S. charities for Illegal Israeli Settlements

Virginians for Middle East Peace and the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee

Resolution

WHEREAS the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation (USCEIO) supports human rights and international law,

WHEREAS at least 40 U.S. based charities have given \$200 million to illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem over the last 10 years,

WHEREAS expansion of illegal Israeli settlements is a clear violation of UN Resolution 242 and Article 49 and 174 of the Geneva Conventions,

WHEREAS funding for illegal Israeli settlements from U.S. based charities represents a clear violation of the tax-exempt purposes set forth by the Treasury Department,

WHEREAS illegal Israeli settlements have a devastating humanitarian impact on local Palestinian communities,

WHEREAS the U.S. based organizations funding settlements are supporting programs and projects which engage in discriminatory practices in violation of American Public Policy and their 501(c)(3) status,

WHEREAS organizations fundraising for settlement development also engage in deceptive fundraising in violation of their 501(c)(3) status,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation officially endorse member group campaigns against U.S. charities that fund illegal Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Virginians for Middle East Peace (VAMEP), the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), and other member groups will produce resources and a long term strategy to address this problem,

Be IT FURTHER RESOLVED that following a review process the US Campaign will make resources produced by VAMEP, ADC, and other USCEIO member groups available on its website (www.endtheoccupation.org).

2. TIAA-CREF: Divest from the Occupation

Jewish Voice for Peace

Jewish Voice for Peace is asking the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation to endorse and publicize the TIAA-CREF campaign. We are also looking forward to working with member organizations that would like to get involved in this campaign.

TIAA-CREF: Divest from the Occupation

JOIN US in asking one of the world's largest retirement systems to divest from Israel's occupation of Palestine.

Why TIAA-CREF?

1. TIAA-CREF is big, likely the biggest fund of its kind in the world. If we help them change their policies, this will be a substantial blow to the Occupation.

2. TIAA-CREF is near you. With 60 offices in over 30 states in the US and 15,000 client institutions in the academic, research, medical, cultural and nonprofit fields, chances are that wherever you may be in the country, you will find a network of TIAA-CREF participants close to you.

3. TIAA-CREF cares about socially responsible investment. In 2009, TIAA-CREF divested from companies involved in Darfur. However, it continues to invest in companies that reap profits from the ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and violations of Palestinian rights. Until it divests, TIAA-CREF violates its own ethical principles and is complicit in Israel's breaches of international law and violations of human rights.

Join us in giving TIAA-CREF the opportunity to live up to its motto: TIAA-CREF, Financial Services for the Greater Good.

TIAA-CREF investments

TIAA-CREF is invested in many companies that profit from the occupation. Here are just a few:

CATERPILLAR profits from the destruction of Palestinian homes and the uprooting of Palestinian orchards by supplying the armor-plated and weaponized bulldozers that are used for such demolition work.

VEOLIA profits from the construction and expansion of illegal Jewish-only settlements by operating a landfill in the West Bank, exploiting Palestinian natural resources to serve the settlements, and by contracting for the future operation of an illegal light rail system connecting these settlements with Jerusalem.

NORTHROP GRUMMAN profits from the production of parts for the Apache helicopters and F-16 aircrafts used by Israel against civilians in Gaza during Israel's 2008-09 assault.

ELBIT profits from the production of drones used in targeted killings and from the confiscation of Palestinian land by providing surveillance equipment that is mounted on

the Separation Wall, which was declared unlawful by the International Court of Justice.

MOTOROLA profits from Israel's control of the Palestinian population by providing surveillance systems around Israeli settlements, checkpoints, and military camps in the West Bank, as well as communication systems to the Israeli army and West Bank settlers.

Our campaign seeks to change policy (have TIAA-CREF divest from the Israeli occupation) and in the process build/strengthen our movement.

There are a number of opportunities for action. Here are just a few:

Gathering signatures to a petition to TIAA-CREF. Everyone is welcome to sign, but we particularly encourage TIAA-CREF participants. This would mean researching in your community which universities, schools, hospitals, unions, and nonprofits offer TIAA-CREF retirement and reaching out to people in those institutions. As campus divestment grows, interest in TIAA-CREF will grow too as many universities offer retirement to professors, and in some cases graduate students, via TIAA-CREF.

Compare with Caterpillar campaign: We had little leverage with bulldozer buyers, so all we could do is blame and shame the corporation. In the case of TIAA-CREF, we have ready access to teachers, doctors, nurses, etc. They are in our communities. We can educate them about the occupation, and we can ask them to take a low-risk activity: They would not divest, but rather help us convince TIAA-CREF to divest.

Educating/Mobilizing against our target companies. TIAA-CREF is not a bad actor in the way that Elbit or Veolia are. We've highlighted 5 companies that are bad actors in Israel/Palestine including Caterpillar and Motorola, which have been focal points of the US Campaign in the past. The more that their reputation is contested, the easier it will be for TIAA-CREF to divest.

We encourage local activists to be creative in their thinking and take this work in their own hands:

Elbit pioneered technology on the Separation Wall that it is now using on the wall between Mexico and the US.

How many of you use SuperShuttle when going to the airport? Did you know that SuperShuttle is a subsidiary of Veolia, the very same company intent on operating a new train between Jerusalem and the settlements? Or that Veolia operates the Tovlan Landfill in the occupied Jordan Valley, using captured Palestinian natural and land resources for the needs of Israeli settlements? How about a SuperShuttle boycott?

About Jewish Voice for Peace:

JVP is the largest national Jewish organization that promotes a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on universal human rights that applies equally to Palestinians and Israelis. We have...

- Initiated a world-wide media and letter-writing campaign to free imprisoned 12th grade Israeli conscientious objectors, the Shministim.
- Led a successful global campaign to defend Archbishop Tutu's right to speak, additionally clearing him of false charges in the Jewish press of comparing Israel to Hitler.
- Stood by the Presbyterian Church USA as they considered divesting from companies that profit

from the occupation.

- Supported Students for Justice in Palestine in UC-Berkeley and UC-San Diego as both campuses considered divestment.
- Brought the topic of Israel's occupation into a US corporate boardroom for the first time with a Caterpillar shareholder resolution filed in partnership with Catholic groups.
- Denounced the Islamophobia of Obsession, a hate- video made by an Israel advocacy group that was distributed to every pastor and rabbi in the U.S.

3. US Boat to Gaza

US to Gaza, Middle East Crisis Response

Description of the proposed action, event, idea, etc.:

US to Gaza plans to launch a U.S. boat, 'The Audacity of Hope,' to Gaza. We expect this boat to set sail this fall, joining a flotilla of ships from Europe, Canada, India, South Africa, and parts of the Middle East.

US to Gaza is an affiliate of the Free Gaza Movement; due to the time constraints given to us, we must raise \$370,000 within the next month. We will use these funds to purchase a boat large enough for 40-60 people, secure a crew, cover the licensing and registering of the boat, and subsidize the cost of sending a U.S. delegation.

Goals of the proposal and how they will be achieved:

The goals of this action are to raise public awareness and to challenge U.S. foreign policy. The U.S. government is complicit through established policies that uncritically support Israel in its brutal attack on the Palestinian people. This flotilla, and the ones that sailed before, call for the universal obligation to uphold human rights and international. Together we can contribute to the great effort to make the link between U.S. government policy and the Israeli blockade of Gaza and the illegal occupation of Palestine.

We will realize these goals by launching The Audacity of Hope with the international flotilla. To date, we have found a fiscal sponsor for tax-deductible contributions and created a website (ustogaza.org) and Facebook and Twitter accounts. The purpose of each of these venues is to bring public attention to U.S. policy in using our tax dollars to promote an apartheid state in Palestine

To that end, we established a Steering Committee, a Board of Advisers from The Free Gaza Movement (people who have had much experience with these flotillas), and a National Network.

Resources (monetary, staff time, production and distribution of materials, etc.) that this proposal would require from the US Campaign (please include a budget if applicable):

We ask that The US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation as well as its member groups endorse the call for a US boat to Gaza. We need help in spreading the word far and wide; we ask all organizations to put a link to our website (ustogaza.org) on their websites and announce this call to their list-serves.

Work that the proposing group/s are committed to doing to advance this proposal:

We have undertaken a major fund-raising campaign and are setting up panels, discussion groups, newsletters, and speaking tours at conferences and other events planned throughout the summer. We are doing media outreach and are preparing our organizational structure to deal with logistics and passenger selection. We are also planning campaigns following the launching and safe return of the US boat to Gaza.

We are committed to joining in the building of the Free Gaza and End the Occupation movement in which the groups of the U.S. Campaign to End the Occupation are spearheading.

4. Move Over AIPAC: Time for a New US Middle East Policy

CODEPINK Women for Peace

COUNTERING THE PRO-OCCUPATION LOBBY'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE WITH POWERFUL ACTIONS AND POSITIVE ALTERNATIVES

Project Description:

This proposal encourages staff and member groups of the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation to engage in and support CODEPINK-coordinated actions and events during the annual AIPAC Conference.

What: A series of coordinated actions and events in DC to push for a Just Middle East policy and declare an end to AIPAC's stranglehold over U.S. policy.

When: May 22-24, 2011, during the next AIPAC yearly gathering in Washington, DC

Who: We will bring together a diverse group of people from around the country, primarily outreaching to those on the East Coast, who are already working to change U.S. Middle East policy or are anxious to get involved. They will include students, Muslim, Jewish and other faith-based groups, Palestine solidarity groups, labor unions. We will also invite activists from the Middle East and other international guests who are leading cutting-edge campaigns in their own countries.

Program: The program will include a daylong conference, actions outside the AIPAC meeting, a billboard campaign, a concert or cultural event, a youth dialogue event, and targeted actions in Congress. The conference will focus on learning lessons from the most effective domestic and international campaigns. There will be sessions on lobbying, boycotts, education, media campaigns, legal challenges, local resolutions/sister cities, accompaniment/solidarity movements.

Localized Support:

Leading up to this event, we will cultivate smaller nation-wide, localized actions that work to foster community support for a new Palestine/Israel policy in the United States. In order to do this, we will develop a sample letter addressing the ugly reality behind the U.S.'s current policy as well what needs to change to make sure Palestinians have their right to self-determination. This includes ending the occupation, tearing down the wall, and lifting the siege on Gaza. We will ask CODEPINK and US Campaign members, as well as other allies, to garner support from their community to sign onto this letter, which they can deliver to a local AIPAC branch, a local policy maker, and/or a member of congress. Finally, we will construct a "menu" of additional action options that local groups can organize if they wish to exert further pressure for a just and equitable Palestine/Israel policy. These actions will also allow us to garner media and support, as well as give a way for those unable to attend to participate in this effort. In addition to public actions, the billboards project may be extended to appear locally either through purchase of billboards or guerilla posting.

Draft Agenda:

Saturday, May 21

Gathering of the Minds – a conference on strategies to end the occupation of Palestine:

9:30 - 11:15am Opening Plenary

11:45 am - 1:00pm Breakout Sessions 1

1:30 - 2:45pm Breakout Sessions 2

3:15 - 4:30pm Breakout Sessions 3

5 -6 pm Late Afternoon Plenary

6 – 8 pm Youth dialogue with AIPAC youth and Anti-Occupation youth at Bus Boys and Poets restaurant and performance space (1 block from AIPAC conference)

8 – 10 Cultural evening event (concert, poetry slam, etc.)

Sunday, May 22

8 – 9 am Flash mob action

10 – 12 am Regional and issue discussion sessions; plans for bringing this energy and these ideas back to our local communities

12 – 1 pm Lunch

1 – 4 pm Communal art project outside of AIPAC conference – building a mock wall and other visuals.

4 – 5 pm Closing Culminating Action: Tearing down the wall

Monday, May 23

Daytime: Tour of billboards around Capitol Hill highlighting the need to end US military funding to Israel

6 – 10 pm Creative Action outside the AIPAC gala banquet

Tuesday, May 24

9am-3pm Lobbying Congress and other official meetings

Actions inside Congressional offices during AIPAC lobbying

Background:

When it comes to U.S. policy in the Middle East, AIPAC, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, has been calling the shots for the past decade. AIPAC's unconditional support of Israel's illegal policies—separation walls, settlements, the siege of Gaza—has been tragic for the Palestinians, but also hurts Israel and the United States. The Israelis are forced to live in a constant state of fear and increasing international isolation and disdain. For the United States, the one-sided support for Israel is endangering our troops overseas and tarnishing our reputation worldwide. It's time to break the stranglehold that AIPAC has on U.S. policy. And what better time to make a powerful call for a just Middle East policy than during the AIPAC convention itself? We will put forth the narrative that AIPAC represents the old, worn policy that only perpetuates the cycle of violence while we represent a new, fresh policy that promotes peace, international law and respect for the human rights of all.

Goals of the proposal and how they will be achieved:

The goals of the gathering and actions are the following:

- Strengthen our own network of groups/individuals working for a just Middle East policy
- Show the politicians and the media that the tide is turning, that there is a strong movement for change that they cannot avoid
- Make AIPAC aware that they are no longer the “only game in town” and that they represent the old guard that must change in the changing times
- Build opposition to US military aid to Israel through billboards and lobbying efforts
- Strengthen the US Campaign goal of Challenging US Policy in Israel/Palestine.

These goals will be achieved through actions and events aimed at bringing people together and stimulating discussion, provocative media/ad campaigns, creative direct actions, and cultural events. The goal is not to protest AIPAC or get into direct confrontations with AIPAC members. The goal is to pull the rug out from under the floor of AIPAC, to expose the truth about this lobby group and its occupation policies, and to show how another policy is possible, one based in justice, international law, human rights, respect, love, and dignity. Not only is this policy possible; it is also more strategically advantageous for Congress and the American public to support it. All actions will be non-violent and will include “peacekeepers”.

Resources (monetary, staff time, production and distribution of materials, etc.) that this proposal would require from the US Campaign (please include a budget if applicable):

The US Campaign is asked to cosponsor this action and promote it to member groups and through the national emailing list through several email blasts.

We welcome US Campaign staff and member groups to participate in the organizing or in creating tandem events or actions, though it is not necessary. No financial contribution will be required, though we welcome member groups to fundraise for the billboards in DC. If a lobby initiative were decided upon, coordination with Josh Ruebner would be helpful.

Work that CODEPINK is committed to doing to advance this proposal:

CODEPINK will be responsible for all organizing including:

- Planning direct actions to expose AIPAC
- Coordinating media outreach
- Making visuals for all actions and billboards
- Online promotion and outreach
- Fundraising for the project
- Outreach to ally organizations and faith-based communities
- When possible organizing lead-up events to the annual conference (protests at AIPAC fundraisers, etc.)

We welcome other organizations to coordinate other events and actions during the AIPAC conference and welcome the support and ideas from US Campaign and it's member groups. In addition to approving this proposal, your member group can cosponsor the week of actions and/or send your members or participants to join in DC! Sponsorship entails help with outreach, fundraising and programming. To cosponsor, join the organizing team, or for more info please contact Rae Aibileah at rae@codepink.org or (415) 575- 5555. www.codepink.org

5. Open the Al-Bweira Road

Upper Hudson Peace Action

Description of the proposed action, event, idea, etc.:

Attempt to enter the one-lane, main road connecting the agricultural neighborhood of Al-Bweira to the city of Hebron and you find your way blocked by a large metal gate. Get out of your vehicle, make your way around the gate, walk up the road a short distance and a huge boulder blocks the road. Go around the boulder, walk a little further and you come to a mound of earth and stone more than a yard high blocking the road. Maintained by the Israeli military, this three-part blockade forces the Al-Bweira farm families to drive four to five miles out of their way over rough, rutted roads to get to the city or to bring their crops to market. Merchants bringing needed supplies into Al-Bweira – as well as friends and relatives who want to come and visit -- face the same difficult and costly detours.

Because a significant stretch of the Al-Bweira road borders the illegal Harsina settlement and outpost (both served by another road system), Al-Bweira residents and children walking to and from school are subject to stoning and other forms of harassment by Israeli settlers. The difficulties presented by the road blockade and the separation it engenders make it difficult for those outside the neighborhood to respond to incidents of settler violence.

By virtually cutting Al-Bweira off from the eyes of the city of Hebron, the blockades also facilitate the efforts of settlers to continue expanding their illegal outpost and attempting to establish a new outpost on one of the Al-Bweira hills across the road from the existing illegal outpost.

Goals of the proposal and how they will be achieved:

The objective is to persuade the Israeli government/military to remove the gate, boulder and earth mound blockades from the paved, one lane Al-Bweira road so that: the farm families in this village can again enter and leave the neighborhood without having to use long (4 – 5 miles), rough, rutted and costly detours and so that the eyes of Hebron can see the neighborhood more easily and hinder both settler harassment of families in Al-Bweira and settler theft of Palestinian land.

Resources (monetary, staff time, production and distribution of materials, etc.) that this proposal would require from the US Campaign (please include a budget if applicable):

The US Campaign to End the Occupation will be asked to endorse and send project (to be provided by the Palestinian Rights Committee of Upper Hudson Peace Action) to its member groups requesting that they incorporate Opening the Al-Bweira Road into their mix of 2010 – 2011 actions being undertaken to promote peace with justice in Palestine/Israel.

The Palestinian Rights Committee of UHPA would like to receive from the US Campaign a list of member group contact names and addresses for follow-up after the packet mailing goes out. We hope the US Campaign will send quarterly project update/reminders to the member groups.

Work that the proposing group/s are committed to doing to advance this proposal:

The Palestinian Rights Committee of UHPA will develop project packets containing:
-Al-Bweira Road blockade background information,

- Informative call to action brochures for member groups to distribute,
- Lists of influential individuals and agencies for member groups to contact,
- Talking points for use with American and Israeli political contacts and
- Talking points for letters to the editor and other communications.
- We will add information and links on the web site.
- We will designate a core group of members to field questions and provide needed assistance to US Campaign member groups.
- We will distribute packets or brochures where we table or vigil and at sponsored events.
- Representatives of the Committee will coordinate 'Open the Al-Bweira Road' efforts here with the work of B't Selem, Peace Now's Settlement Watch, Christian Peacemaker Teams and Hebron area UN representatives.
- We will educate other peace and justice groups in upstate NY about the situation in Al-Bweira and attempt to bring them into the campaign.