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USA

Bernie Sanders Tries to Stop U.S. Military Aid to Israel, Biden Reaffirms His Support, Protests Continue

- IV Online magazine - 2024 - IV598 - November 2024 -
Publication date: Sunday 24 November 2024

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Senator Bernie Sanders introduced three resolutions in the Senate last week to stop U.S. weapons transfers to Israel. The resolutions to end U.S. support for Israel's genocidal war against Palestinians in Gaza all received between 18 and 19 votes from Democrats and none from Republicans. While less than twenty percent of the one hundred senators, the vote reflected a growing divide in the Democratic Party and demonstrated significant opposition to President Joe Biden and the majority of Democrats who solidly back the Jewish state. Polls suggest that two-thirds of Democrats would like to either stop military aid to Israel altogether or make it conditional on a ceasefire.

As the Democratic Party failed that political and moral test, the International Criminal Court issued warrants for the arrest of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former defense minister Yoav Gallant for war crimes and crimes against humanity, including starvation as a method of warfare, intentional attacks on civilians, "murder, persecution, and other inhumane acts." The ICC also issued a warrant for Hamas commander Ibrahim al-Masri, though he is believed to be dead.

Biden condemned the ICC's actions, stating, "The ICC issuance of arrest warrants against Israeli leaders is outrageous. Let me be clear once again: whatever the ICC might imply, there is no equivalence — none — between Israel and Hamas. We will always stand with Israel against threats to its security."

Also, at this same time, in the U.N. Security Council, the United States cast the only vote against a proposal calling for an immediate and unconditional cease-fire between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip, effectively vetoing the resolution in the 14-1 vote. "We could not support an unconditional cease-fire that failed to release the hostages," said Robert A. Wood, an American ambassador to the United Nations. This was the fourth time that the U.S. blocked a ceasefire resolution in the Security Council.

The week before, the U.N. Human Rights Office condemned the killing of civilians in the war in Gaza, saying that 70 percent of the victims were women and children. It reported that 43,300 people had been killed but that many other dead are buried under the bombed-out buildings. UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk said, "this unprecedented level of killing, and injury of civilians is a direct consequence of the failure to comply with fundamental principles of international humanitarian law."

While Biden's support for Israel remained unwavering, Trump's administration will be even worse. During the presidential debate before Biden dropped out of the race, Trump called for Netanyahu to "finish the job in Gaza." In his first presidential term (2016-20), Trump supported the Netanyahu government, moving the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. He also supported Israeli claims to the Golan Heights and to the West Bank and cut aid to Palestinians. Trump's new ambassador to Israel, Mike Huckabee, is a Christian Zionist who does not recognize the existence of the Palestinian people.

Protests against U.S. support for Israel and against Israel's war against Palestine have continued, though the campus movement was suppressed as students were suspended, expelled, or jailed. But off campus, activities continue. At Travis Airforce Base in northern California, about 50 protestors blocked the entrance to the base, and 28 people were arrested. One activist posted on X, "Americans want peace! STOP KILLING CHILDREN People's Embargo! Stop funding Israel and War crimes."

Under Trump, protestors will face greater surveillance, investigations, accusations of being foreign agents or

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terrorists, and the possible deportation of immigrants. Anti-Zionists will be accused of antisemitism and may be charged with hate speech. Resisting Trump is going to require a new strategy on the left.

24 Novembre 2024

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