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United States

Nearly 1000 NYers Protest Israeli Attacks on Gaza

- News from around the world -

Publication date: Tuesday 30 December 2008

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Nearly a thousand protesters flooded Rockefeller Center in Manhattan on December 28th in response to the Israeli attacks against Gaza.

[<https://npa31.org/IMG/jpg/nycgazademo2.jpg>]

Photo: www.Solidarity-US.org

The demonstration was called by ANSWER but the visible presence of the far left was dwarfed by Arab and Muslim families, women with baby carriages and teenagers, who packed Fifth Avenue between 50th and 48th Streets and chanted in English and Arabic.

The NYPD was clearly unprepared for the enormity of the crowd and was forced to expand the pen an extra block. This prevented a planned march to the Israeli consulate on 42nd Street and 2nd Avenue.

Throngs of tourists stopped to take photographs as protesters chanted “Free Free Palestine” and “While you’re shopping bombs are dropping.” At least one tourist constructed a make shift sign on a brown paper bag and joined the demonstration.

In Gaza, Casualties Mount

As of the writing of this article, the New York Times reports that the death toll has risen to over 280.

[Electronic Intifada reports that a majority of those killed and injured were civilians](#) and that water wells, mosques, community centers and private homes have been destroyed. The dead include students at a UN school and police trainees. Hospitals, already suffering from supply shortages due to the blockade, are unable to adequately care for the wounded.

International Response

In a typical but still nauseating act of magical thinking, the US government has joined Israel in blaming Hamas for the Israeli attacks.

President-elect Obama didn’t comment, but given his now-notorious speech at the AIPAC event in which he referred to Jerusalem as the undivided capital of Israel, there isn’t much for Palestinians to get excited about come January 20th.

Helpfully, the New York Times reminded readers of the president-elect’s Palestine politics by resurfacing this quotation in today’s paper:

“If somebody was sending rockets into my house where my two daughters sleep at night, I’m going to do everything in my power to stop that,’ Mr. Obama said in July. “And I would expect Israelis to do the same thing.”

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The Egyptian government must be squirming; recently Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni was pictured on television sharing a warm laugh with Hosni Mubarak. According to the New York Times, Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit responded to the attacks by calling on Hamas to renew its truce with Israel.

Even French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner did better than that. According to the New York Times, he commented that "We have entered a new spiral of despair."

No wonder that Egypt, along with Israel and the US, was a major target of demonstrations throughout the Middle East this weekend.

Mainstream Media Response

The New York Times and other mainstream media have echoed the US/Israel line by referring to Israeli "retaliation" and failing to point out that the Israeli blockade – which strangled Gazans by denying medical supplies, cooking oil and flour – was imposed throughout the time that Hamas was essentially adhering to the cease fire.

As usual Ha'aretz, a liberal Israeli daily, pulled off [more thoughtful coverage of the crisis](#) than the New York Times, pointing out, among other things, that Israel purposely led the public to believe that the strike would begin a day later than it actually did.