

OPEN LETTER TO THE VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE CLASS OF 1961

December 12, 2024

Dear brother rats and widows:

For several years, with the help of Larry Respass (VMI '61), I have been attempting to bring back "Old Corps" thinking and management of the Alumni Association. For example, we lobbied for over a year to reinstate proxy voting in lieu of having to be physically present on the day of an Association annual meeting. We also lobbied for access to alumni email addresses in order to be able to inform you of special circumstances like the changes to the bylaws or to ask for clarification on many changes that are going on at the Institute. We were denied access to the email database, that, by the way, does not contain any of your giving history or other personal and/or financial information as falsely alleged by the Alumni Association. We are waiting for the Virginia Supreme Court decision on that matter. I have also taken a personal interest in the anti-Semitic activities at various colleges. I was horrified when I learned from third parties that VMI hired Mr. Phillip Crane '16, to be a VMI Visiting Professor under the Peay Endowment. Mr. Crane while attending Columbia University was implicated to be a leader of one of the participants organizations in that activity.

If you are not aware of the situation Mr. Crane was the Secretary of the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) Palestine Working Group (PWG) from 2022 to 2024 and also a prominent leader in the now notorious campus movement at Columbia that endorsed Hamas and its October 7, 2023 surprise dawn attack on Israel that resulted in the horrific slaughter of over 1200 Israeli citizens including children and infants, mutilation of corpses, the brutal rape of Israeli women and the abduction of over 200 hostages, including women and children, who have been held under cruel confinement. The PWG group signed onto a public statement placing "the weight for the war and casualties" on Israel and other western governments "to include the United States."

When Larry and I learned of this we wrote the Alumni Agencies on November 7, 2024 asking they simply fulfill their published mission "to inform, engage, and inspire support for VMI." [emphasis added] We asked simply for the Alumni Agencies to inform all alumni concerning who vetted this individual. Did VMI hire Mr. Crane with knowledge of his actions at Columbia or was knowledge of his actions on behalf of Hamas withheld? What latitude has he been given as an instructor to support Hamas in his classes and will the Institute balance his voice with one supportive of Israel, a view I expect is held by the vast majority of VMI alumni?

As you see from the attached documents, VMI responded with murky, quibbling language and accusations even to the point of accusing us of spreading false statements. I offer the following documents for your information, consideration and in the interest of full transparency:

- The statement the PWG signed onto under Mr. Crane as its Secretary.
- Our original November 7, 2024 request to Mr. David Prasnicki, CEO of VMI Alumni Agencies.
- Mr. Prasnicki's November 11, 2024 response to our November 7, 2024 request of him wherein he defers completely to the Institute "On your behalf, we have forwarded your concerns to Lt. Col. Sherry Wallace, VMI director of communications and marketing for the Institute." Can we not, as donors, expect the Agencies to comply with the Donor Bill of Rights they claim to follow, "To be informed of ... the way the organization intends to use donated resources, and of its capacity to use donations effectively for their intended purposes"; "...to expect the board to exercise prudent judgment in its stewardship responsibilities"; "To have access to the organization's most recent

financial statements;” and “To be assured their gifts will be used for the purposes for which they were given?”

- Mr. Prasnicky’s November 12, 2024 reply wherein he states their Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with VMI for the Peay Endowment execution “does not allow the cabinet [of the Peay Endowment] to dictate recipients of the funding.” In short, they provide the money **with no oversight**. He states the cabinet members were “briefed on the situation and are satisfied with the response.” But it seems we alumni, and especially donors, are not entitled to know the response.

When confronted by the media, VMI’s spokesperson denied Mr. Crane’s involvement and she refused to accept the evidence provided unless it was notarized. Please view the video at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TyeSokAfayk>. We must also ask if this is the behavior with associated improper wear of the uniform we want representing us and our beloved VMI?

- The November 26, 2024 Alumni Agencies posting (that was never distributed to Alumni as far as we know) claiming the questions and concerns by alumni, and by inference our letter to the Alumni Agencies contained “a good deal of misleading information” and linking to a statement by Maj. Gen Wins “following an investigation.” Who conducted the investigation? What are the results? What are the facts? Why not send the results to all alumni and issue a public statement to the media, etc.? Why just not have Mr. Crane “clear the air”? Apparently, beyond signing checks we “do not have a need to know”.
- The November 26, 2024 unsigned statement by the Superintendent. Note VMI’s reversal from “he didn’t do it” to justifying his doing it and minimalizing it as “a situation that occurred **over a year ago** when Crane was a graduate student...” [emphasis added]. Of Course, the Superintendent stresses “The vetting process for Peay fellows, like all faculty members, is thorough, and includes criminal background checks, reference checks, and multiple interviews.” Assuming this is true, why won’t the Alumni Agencies simply answer our original three simple questions and provide us that detailed process? For the record, we submitted a FOIA for vetting process and still have not received it. Why is the Board of Visitors silent on this issue when their own Statement of Governance requires, “The Board shall remain transparent in its actions and shall operate openly, to the extent required by law”?

The Superintendent’s November 26, 2024 statement emphatically claims, “.... a letter the PWG [Crane’s group] and 20+ other university clubs signed and made public did not suggest a moral justification for the civilian casualties on 7 October 2023.” Please compare that statement to the self-serving claims of the Columbia agitators particularly, “...the Palestinian struggle for freedom is rooted in international law, under which occupied peoples have the right to resist the occupation of their land. If every political avenue to the Palestinians is blocked, we should not be surprised when resistance and violence break out.” In addition to reviewing the international rule of law, the Law of War, and the Geneva convention, perhaps the Superintendent and the Board of Visitors that supposedly supervises him should look up the definition of “moral justification” (i.e., in law, moral justification may an otherwise illegal act that was morally acceptable under specific circumstances.) and apply that to the indiscriminate killing of thousands of mostly unarmed men, women and children.

- Our December 12, 2024 response to the Superintendent’s November 26, 2024 statement. Is it not well within Peay Endowment and Alumni Agencies donor rights under the Donor Bill of Rights, “To feel free to ask questions when making a donation and to receive prompt, truthful and forthright answers”?

- A letter from Congress to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) requesting an investigation of the alleged repeated credible threats of violence on campus by the coalition of organizations under Columbia University Apartheid Divest (CUAD). As reported by multiple national media outlets, **Crane's group, PWG, is part of CUAD.**

While the Superintendent and the Alumni Agencies continue to sow confusion with a “word salad” of organizations and nuances, **we are providing the relevant documents for your review** in order to allow you to form an independent opinion. However, we respectfully submit that if the VMI BOV fails to conduct a thorough investigation into this matter and undertake an independent audit of a multimillion-dollar fund that appears to lack accountability and a measurable, transparent process—beyond the assertion that "The Dean did it," particularly with regard to the Peay Fellowships—the Board may be neglecting its responsibilities, and could be considered complicit in the situation.

What I cannot provide is a public statement by Mr. Crane describing his actual role in the student unrest at Columbia. He has decided, or been directed by the VMI administration, to be silent on this matter. In the face of the accusations against him, it is therefore not unreasonable for you to assume they are true.

Perhaps the most rational solution came from our VMI cadets themselves when they wrote in the recent issue of *The Cadet* that they are prepared to meet with Mr. Crane to provide his comments. Perhaps that is why Maj. Gen. Wins and his administration are trying to control or shut *The Cadet* down as well.

We encourage all fellow alumni and friends of VMI to circulate this information, to include the media who has our permission to re-print it in completely or in part.

Yours very truly,

Salvatore J. Vitale, Jr, Class of VMI '61



Joint Statement from Palestine Solidarity Groups at Columbia University regarding the recent events in Palestine/Israel: Oppression Breeds Resistance.

The loss of a human life is a deeply painful and heartbreaking experience for loved ones, regardless of one's affiliation. We extend our heartfelt condolences to the individuals and communities at Columbia University affected by the tragic losses experienced by both Palestinians and Israelis. The sting of tears, the weight on our hearts, and the profound sense of loss are universal emotions that connect us all in grief and unify us by experience. As we mourn the loss of lives, let us come together as a Columbia community and fervently advocate for the universal human right to live in peace and seek justice. We also affirm that there can be no future of safety and freedom for all Israelis and Palestinians without holding the Israeli occupation accountable for its actions and putting an end to the untenable status quo of Israel's apartheid and colonial system.

"When we revolt it's not for a particular culture. We revolt simply because, for many reasons, we can no longer breathe" - Frantz Fanon

We cannot view the recent actions of Palestinian fighters in isolation. Gaza is an [open-air prison](#) that lacks the essential necessities such as food, clean water, medicine, and electricity. Palestinians in Gaza have endured five brutal wars and prolonged inhumane siege for 16 years depriving them of their most basic rights. The United Nations issued a [warning](#) in 2012 that Gaza would become unlivable by 2020 due to Israel's siege. Yet, here we are in 2023, and the whole world is SILENT while Palestinians live in an open air prison and continue to suffer as a result of the siege and wars applied by a series of fascist, racist, and colonial Israeli governments.

Before the latest surge in violence, Israeli soldiers and settlers had already killed more than 250 Palestinians, including at least 47 children, across the occupied Palestinian territories just this year. Extremist Israeli colonial-settlers have also ramped up their attacks on Palestinians in the occupied West Bank. What is also tragic is the blindness and deafness of the international community to the situation for over 75 years persistently turning a blind eye to decades of Palestinian oppression. Ignoring this grim context will undoubtedly contribute to further bloodshed and the cycle of murder.

The weight of responsibility for the war and casualties undeniably lies with the Israeli extremist government and other Western governments, including the U.S. government, which fund and staunchly support Israeli aggression, apartheid and settler-colonization. This issue of why this occurred now is not about timing. This is about root causes and a fundamental issue with Israeli occupation and the deprivation of human rights, including the lack of respect for the Palestinian people's legitimate right to self-determination. Every single political avenue available to Palestinians has been blocked, including the International Court of Justice.

First, we condemn the discrimination against Palestinians evident in Barnard College's email and Columbia's school of General Studies emails which were sent to the student body over the weekend as each school only addressed Israeli students alone, and not Palestinians. We see this as an attempt of a complete erasure of Palestinians and the decades of suffering occupation, ethnic cleansing, and colonization. We urge Columbia University to stand against such discrimination and issue a statement supporting all students.

Second, we urge Columbia University to stand firmly for accountability and end its ties with apartheid Israel, including discontinuing the Columbia Global Center in Tel Aviv and the Dual Degree Program with Tel Aviv University. The Columbia community must reassess its relationship with Israel in light of our core values of justice, peace, and human rights.

Finally, we remind Columbia students that the Palestinian struggle for freedom is rooted in international law, under which occupied peoples have the right to resist the occupation of their land. If every political avenue available to Palestinians is blocked, we should not be surprised when resistance and violence break out. The international community is quick to affirm Israel's right to protect itself but does not extend this same right to Palestinians. Israel does not have the right to defend its occupation, its apartheid state or its siege of Gaza. As an occupying power, the state of Israel has a responsibility to protect civilian life under its own occupation. The international judicial system must intervene and hold all parties, including the state of Israel, accountable for the violations it commits. We urge Columbia students to stand up for justice.

The list of signatories has been temporarily removed because of Columbia's abject failure and inability to protect its students from doxing and harassment. More than 20 student organizations at Columbia have signed this statement.

November 7, 2024 via email

Mr. Prasnicki,

In recent days, VMI has faced stinging media criticism for hiring a visiting scholar under the auspices of the Peay Endowment. The scholar, Phillip Crane, VMI'2016 and a recent graduate of Columbia University, was a prominent leader in the now notorious campus movement at Columbia that endorsed Hamas and its October 7, 2023 surprise dawn attack on Israel that resulted in the horrific slaughter of over 1200 Israeli citizens including children and infants, mutilation of corpses, the brutal rape of Israeli women and the abduction of over 200 hostages, including women and children, who have been held under cruel confinement.

The details of this appalling attack are well known and not even disputed by Hamas. The implications of Crane's employment to teach "International Politics" in these circumstances are particularly alarming because he now has a platform to promote a narrative at VMI that endorses the righteousness of the campaign against Israel supported by Iran and its affiliates without an effective counterbalance to that narrative.

The Mission statement of the Alumni Agencies insists that it exists "to inform, engage, and inspire support for VMI." If that statement is more than just a slogan to impress potential supporters of the nobility of the Agencies' activities, this is a critical moment that calls for the Agencies to inform the broad base of alumni concerning the details of the appointment so that we are all on the same page about it. We personally are concerned it will cause significant damage to the image of VMI and the Peay Endowment if the details are as reported in the press unless someone speaks out.

We think it particularly suitable that the Agencies promptly perform this mission because alumni have been encouraged to believe that appointments of scholars using funds of the Endowment are scrupulously vetted by the Agencies and VMI as an inducement to contribute. Individual alumni lack the resources to independently inform themselves surrounding Crane's appointment by VMI. The Agencies, on the other hand, is uniquely qualified to be a bridge between our members and the Institute. The Agencies has the ear of the administration, supported Crane's selection and persons nominated by the Agencies participated in the decision to employ Crane. Among the questions the Agencies should, therefore, address is whether VMI hired Mr. Crane with knowledge of his actions at Columbia or was knowledge of his actions on behalf of Hamas withheld? What latitude has he been given as an instructor to support Hamas in his classes and will the Institute balance his voice with one supportive of Israel, a view I expect is held by the vast majority of VMI alumni? (We have set out below a link to an example of the attention the media is giving to VMI's role in this matter). There also remains the question as to whether there is another", as yet unpublished, side of the story.

We urge the Agencies to swiftly, transparently and publicly address these concerns and with alumni. Also, we would very much like you to inform us promptly how you intend to act on our request.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter and we look forward to your response.

Yours very truly,

Salvatore J. Vitale, Jr, Class of VMI '61

William "Larry" Respass, Class of 1961

[VMI visiting professor led Columbia University group that blamed Israel for Oct. 7 \(cbsaustin.com\)](https://www.cbsaustin.com)

On Monday, November 11, 2024 at 04:28:07 PM EST, David L. Prasnicki <dpras@vmiaa.org> wrote:

Sal,

Thank you for your email. You raised concerns shared by others in their desire to support VMI. Like all VMI personnel matters, we refer alumni questions to the Institute, given their sensitivity and issues related to public disclosure. On your behalf, we have forwarded your concerns to Lt. Col. Sherry Wallace, VMI director of communications and marketing for the Institute.

Feel free to follow-up with her at wallacesl@vmiaa.org.

Thanks again.

David Prasnicki

David L. Prasnicky

From:dpras@vmiaa.org

To:sal vitale

Cc:Larry New Respass

Tue, Nov 12 at 7:58 AM



Sal,

Thanks for your interest. I am happy to explain the process. The VMI Foundation raises funds for the Peay Endowment for Academic Excellence. The endowment has oversight from the PEAE cabinet who until recently was chaired by John Jumper, succeeded by Tom Slater. When developing the budget, based on the fund raised, a certain amount of funding is designated to the PEAE initiatives and allocated to the Dean's budget.

It is the Dean's responsibility to staff and assign all aspects of the PEAE to Peay Charis, Peay Scholars, or Peay Fellows, which are reported back to the cabinet. The MOU does not allow the cabinet nor the agencies to dictate recipients of the funding.

You can be sure that cabinet members such as Tom Slater, John Jumper and Jim Rogers and been briefed on the situation and are satisfied with the response.

“A good deal of misleading information regarding a VMI alumnus and visiting faculty member has been circulating in a few alumni circles.”



Members of our Boards,

A good deal of misleading information regarding a VMI alumnus and visiting faculty member has been circulating in a few alumni circles.


The Institute recently issued a statement following an investigation.

We are committed to keep members of our boards informed as information is available. Please forward this statement as you see fit or when receiving inquiries regarding this situation.

Thank you for your service.

[View Statement](#)

David Prasnicki
Chief Executive Officer
VMI Alumni Agencies



VMI Alumni Agencies | P.O. Box 932, Lexington, Virginia US

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OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

201 SMITH HALL, LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA 24450-0304

VMI-SUPERINTENDENT@VMI.EDU

November 26, 2024

We are aware of the allegations made against Philip Crane, a graduate of the VMI Class of 2016 and a visiting professor at VMI, by a self-described activist group. Based on our investigation, we believe the allegations about Crane are false.

Crane is a decorated combat veteran, VMI alumnus, and Peay Endowment fellow. The vetting process for Peay fellows, like all faculty members, is thorough, and includes criminal background checks, reference checks, and multiple interviews. Crane's classroom instruction complies with VMI faculty expectations, and the VMI administration, the dean, and leaders of the Peay Endowment judge Crane to be a positive contributor to the Peay Fellowship program. There have been no complaints about him or his teaching by cadets, faculty, or staff.

The accusations refer to a situation that occurred over a year ago when Crane was a graduate student at Columbia University and a member of an official university club, the Palestine Working Group (PWG). A review of facts found no evidence to support the allegations that he is a "radical anti-American antisemite." Importantly, Crane complied with the law and adhered to the rules of university conduct and first amendment standards of peaceful protest. In addition, a letter the PWG and 20+ other university clubs signed and made public did not suggest a moral justification for the civilian casualties on 7 October 2023.

While the group accusing Crane is free to exercise its first amendment rights, making misleading statements and illustrating them with a photo of a veteran in his military uniform is an insult to him and the brave men and women who serve this country proudly.

Virginia Military Institute is committed to providing an environment that emphasizes the dignity and self-worth of every member of our community. We do not tolerate discrimination, hate speech, or speech that would incite violence or racism of any kind. VMI is a place of leadership and honor, rigorous academic exploration, spirited debate, and civil discourse. VMI does not prevent faculty, staff, and cadets from having difficult debates on controversial topics relevant to the contemporary climate. In fact, we encourage it as a fundamental principle necessary in providing cadets a wide range of ideas and concepts while teaching them to critically examine and evaluate information. Our cadets at this institute are preparing for a lifetime of leadership and service to the nation. Learning about, discussing, and debating worldwide issues is a necessary component in their preparation.

Mr. David Prasnicki
President, VMI Alumni Agencies
December 11, 2024

Dear David,

Although we are not sure why you sent it to us, we acknowledge receipt of the document dated November 26, 2024 printed on stationery of the Office of the Superintendent of VMI and included with your email of December 2, 2024. You characterized it as a “VMI statement on (Phillip) Crane.” However, the document is not signed by anyone nor is it directed to any person or group. It bears no resemblance to a press release or other document indicating it is intended for wide public dissemination. We have inquired of other VMI Alumni and none has received it. A statement is intended for an audience. There appears to be none for this statement. Is it just intended for a file to be taken out for show only if someone questions VMI’s action in hiring Crane?

There is also no indication of who authored or at least authorized release of the statement and nowhere within its bounds is it indicated to be an official statement by VMI. In that regard, we are also mindful that VMI’s Director of Communications and Marketing, Lt. Col. Sherry Wallace, in a public setting, insisted that a document not bearing a person’s signature or other indication of approval cannot be presumed to be its author or authorizing agent. We ask, therefore, is this document in fact an official statement by VMI concerning the hiring of Mr. Crane? Was it authored or at least approved by the Superintendent? If not endorsed by the Superintendent, who did?

If the document is an effort to respond to media criticisms by AIM of the hiring of Phillip Crane to join the VMI faculty, we offer the following critique of it. It does not refute any of the substantive allegations made against Crane and, in fact, contains material misrepresentations and is preposterously hypocritical. The principal allegations made by AIM are that Crane was a leader of a campus group at Columbia University during the period of unrest on that campus in the aftermath of the Hamas attack on Israeli civilians on the dawn of October 7, 2023. The VMI statement does not dispute, in fact it does not even mention, that over 1200 Israelis were killed, including children and women, thousands more were wounded, many survivors of the attack were mutilated and hundreds taken as hostages some of whom are being held by Hamas to this day and some of whom are American citizens.

The VMI statement acknowledges that, following the brutal attack, a coalition of Columbia student organizations issued an open letter about the attack.¹ Crane was secretary of one of the student groups, the Palestine Working Group, that signed on to that letter. It is beyond dispute that this letter voiced staunch support for the attack. When the details of the attack became better known, many of the subscribers to the open letter withdrew their support but not Crane’s club. However, the VMI statement attempts to whitewash the open letter with the claim that the open letter did not suggest a moral justification for the attack on civilians.

Frankly, the author of this shameful whitewash statement is either unable to comprehend the English language or simply blind to the truth. In the very first paragraph, the open letter attempts to justify the attack on the ground that the right of the Palestinians to resist the Israelis is “enshrined in international law.” We emphatically state that nowhere in international law is there enshrined a right to slaughter, mutilate or

¹ The open letter and a contemporaneous statement by Columbia University supporters of Hamas are referenced with links in an article appearing in the Columbia Spectator, a student newspaper. See [Nearly two dozen Palestinian solidarity groups release open letter, joint statement \(columbiaspectator.com\)](#)

take hostage women, children, or any other noncombatant in the exercise of a claimed right to resist unlawful occupation.

Finally, with respect to hypocrisy, the VMI statement tries to bolster its own integrity by boasting that VMI fosters “spirited debate” on issues of contemporary importance. This boast is particularly shameful considering it comes from an administration that has tried to crush the independent student newspaper, The Cadet, since its resurrection in 2021.

The history of the Roman/Turkish domination of the province of Palestine and its post-World War I history is complex and there is plenty of blame to go around for the long, sad conflict that has attended the emergence of the state of Israel. When we wrote you on November 7, it was not our purpose to argue one way or the other for the Alumni Agencies to take a particular position on the attack by Hamas. We only asked that all alumni be informed about the media controversy surrounding the hiring of Mr. Crane. As of this date we do not see any progress toward that goal. Frankly, it appears that the VMI administration, abetted by the Alumni Agencies, intends to obfuscate, deny and where possible ignore the concerns of alumni. The statement you sent us, if that is in fact VMI’s last word on the matter, bears all the hallmarks of a classic response to organizational criticism it wishes would go away. Everyone involved in public relations knows those hallmarks. Deflect criticism by ignoring requests for a simple explanation of its position, claim that its critics are really the ones acting in bad faith and passionately rebut fictionalized criticism not actually leveled at it.

Nothing has happened since we made our request of you suggest that the Alumni Agencies will carry out its charter obligation to “inform” members. To do an at least adequate job would only require that the AIM statements be sent to all alumni accompanied by VMI’s statement and the open letter to which Crane’s organization subscribed. We are also puzzled why Crane has not publicly spoken. If he is the principled military veteran the VMI statement claims, he should have no difficulty simply stating for the benefit of all alumni that he either fully supports or disavows the open letter. Mr. Crane’s silence is deafening! But it is deafening only to those within earshot. The silence of the Alumni Agencies on this important issue is even more deafening, so deafening that it drowns out Crane’s silence and deprives the body of VMI alumni the opportunity to hear and weigh important issues affecting their alma mater.

The positions nations take on matters of common concern are critically important. In totalitarian states, official positions depend on the whims of autocrats. In democracies they are shaped by elected leaders to reflect the will of informed citizens. Members of the VMI alumni, the citizens of our alma mater, are not able to signal their views because the very organs created to “inform” them flagrantly disregard that duty. That’s a pity.

Salvatore Vitale, ‘61
William “Larry” Respass, ‘61

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 14, 2024

James E. Dennehy
Assistant Director in Charge
Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York
26 Federal Plaza, 23rd Floor
New York, NY 10278

Dear Assistant Director Dennehy,

It's rare for potential perpetrators of violence, particularly school-based violence, to widely and publicly broadcast their intent in such a way as it becomes national news. But that's exactly what the Columbia University Apartheid Divest (CUAD), a coalition of student groups, did on October 8, 2024.¹ These violent threats demand immediate attention and a thorough investigation to prevent any acts of terrorism.

Just one day after the one-year anniversary of the October 7, 2023, terrorist attacks—in which Hamas terrorists butchered over 1,200 innocent civilians, including American citizens—CUAD published a statement regarding one of its members. The member had made a number of violent threats, including:

- “Zionists don't deserve to live;”²
- “I feel very comfortable—very comfortable—calling for those people to die;”³
- “[T]aking someone's life in certain case scenarios is necessary and better for the overall world;”⁴
- “Be grateful that I'm not just going out and murdering Zionists;”⁵
- “I fight to kill;”⁶ and

¹ Luke Tress, *Columbia pro-Palestinian group endorses violence and walks back apology for student who said 'Zionists don't deserve to live'*, NY JEWISH WEEK, (Oct. 8, 2024, 5:01 PM), <https://www.jta.org/2024/10/08/ny/columbia-pro-palestinian-group-endorses-violence-and-walks-back-apology-for-student-who-said-zionists-dont-deserve-to-live>.

² Collin Anderson, *'I Meant It': Suspended Columbia Student Khymani James Stands By Remarks Fantasizing of 'Murdering Zionists'*, THE FREE BEACON (Oct. 8, 2024) <https://freebeacon.com/campus/columbia-student-group-apologizes-for-apologizing-on-behalf-of-member-who-fantasized-about-murdering-zionists/>.

³ TOI Staff and Agencies, *Columbia protest leader banned from campus for saying 'Zionists don't deserve to live'*, THE TIMES OF ISRAEL (Apr. 27, 2024, 3:51 AM), <https://www.timesofisrael.com/columbia-protest-leader-banned-from-campus-for-saying-zionists-dont-deserve-to-live/>.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ David Propper and Georgett Roberts, *Suspended Columbia student that declared 'Zionists don't deserve to live' stands by hateful remark*, THE NEW YORK POST (Oct. 9, 2024, 12:14 AM), <https://nypost.com/2024/10/09/us-news/suspended-columbia-student-khymani-james-that-declared-zionists-dont-deserve-to-live-stands-by-hateful-remark/>.

⁶ Luke Tress, *Columbia student group retracts apology of member who says 'Zionists deserve to die'*, THE TIMES OF ISRAEL (Oct. 9, 2024, 5:39 AM), <https://www.timesofisrael.com/columbia-student-group-retracts-apology-of-member-who-said-zionists-deserve-to-die/>.

- “If we can agree as a society, as a collective, that people... some persons need to die, if they have an ideology that results in the death of thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions—if there are people like that who exist, shouldn’t they die?”⁷

Regarding these terroristic threats, CUAD initially wrote a statement apologizing for and disavowing such heinous remarks. However, on October 8, 2024, CUAD apologized for the apology, saying its contrition “does not represent ... CUAD’s values.”⁸ In the same statement, CUAD advocated for “liberation by any means necessary, including armed resistance,”⁹ and even wrote, in black and white, “violence is the only path forward.”¹⁰ Notably, earlier in the week, the same group *endorsed* the Hamas-claimed terrorist attack in Tel Aviv, embracing the same language used in its publicly posted threat, calling it “a significant act of resistance.”¹¹ This so-called “bold attack”¹² claimed the lives of seven people.¹³ Among the dead was the mother of a nine-month-old baby who died shielding her child, who himself was rushed to the hospital with injuries.¹⁴

These threats aren’t idle. Last spring, amid significant violence in which the group and its leaders engaged, the director of the Orthodox Union-Jewish Learning Initiative at Columbia and Barnard urged Jewish students to “return home as soon as possible and remain home” because “Columbia University’s Public Safety and the NYPD cannot guarantee Jewish students’ safety in the face of extreme antisemitism and anarchy.”¹⁵

⁷ TOI Staff and Agencies, *Columbia protest leader banned from campus for saying ‘Zionists don’t deserve to live*, THE TIMES OF ISRAEL (Apr. 27, 2024, 3:51 AM), <https://www.timesofisrael.com/columbia-protest-leader-banned-from-campus-for-saying-zionists-dont-deserve-to-live/>.

⁸ CU Apartheid Divest (CUAD) (@ColumbiaBDS), X (Oct. 8, 2024, 12:10PM), <https://twitter.com/ColumbiaBDS/status/1843685444741190018>.

⁹ CU Apartheid Divest (CUAD) (@ColumbiaBDS), X (Oct. 8, 2024, 12:12 PM), <https://twitter.com/ColumbiaBDS/status/1843685943347425316>.

¹⁰ CU Apartheid Divest (CUAD) (@ColumbiaBDS), X (Oct. 8, 2024, 12:18 PM), <https://twitter.com/ColumbiaBDS/status/1843687358325272979>.

¹¹ CUAD, *RESISTANCE REACHES THE CORE OF THE ZIONIST REGIME | REPRESSION WON’T DIVIDE US | MOBILIZE THE MASSES TO ACHIEVE VICTORY*, The Barricade (Oct. 3, 2024), <https://cuapartheiddivest.substack.com/p/resistance-reaches-the-core-of-the>.

¹² *Id.*

¹³ Jerusalem Post Staff, *Seven murdered in Jaffa terror shooting, many more wounded*, THE JERUSALEM POST (Oct. 2, 2024, 9:11 PM) <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-822839>.

¹⁴ Monica Sager, *Tel Aviv Shooting Victim Identified as New Mom Who Died Shielding Infant*, Newsweek (Oct. 2, 2024, 1:02 PM), <https://www.newsweek.com/tel-aviv-mass-shooting-victim-identified-inbar-segev-vigder-1962680>.

¹⁵ Rebecca Massel, *Rabbi advises Jewish students to ‘return home as soon as possible’ following reports of ‘extreme antisemitism’ on and around campus*, THE COLUMBIA SPECTATOR (Apr. 21, 2024, 7:26 PM), <https://www.columbiaspectator.com/news/2024/04/21/rabbi-advises-jewish-students-to-return-home-as-soon-as-possible-following-reports-of-extreme-antisemitism-on-and-around-campus/>.

In light of the considerable violence occurring for which this group is already responsible, and Columbia University's inability and unwillingness to police its own campus¹⁶ necessitating it to request the NYPD intervene,¹⁷ federal intervention is now necessary.

According to "The School Shooter: A Threat Assessment Perspective," a long-standing tool published by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the National Center for the Analysis of Violence Crime, and the Critical Incident Response Group, CUAD's threats—coupled with its past actions—make CUAD's statements "a medium-level threat."¹⁸ As you know, such threats can be identified by such markers as "a specific statement seeking to convey that the threat is not empty," and "veiled reference[s]" to possible preparatory steps.¹⁹ Such threats often "warrant investigation as a possible criminal offense."²⁰

The time to act is now. Rarely has the FBI had such public and obvious evidence of potentially imminent violence. This cannot become another instance in which a terrible case of violence takes place at a school and the FBI issues a statement after the fact that the perpetrators were "on its radar," but did nothing. Put simply, the writing is on the wall and you have no excuse. Do your job.

Sincerely,



Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator



Elise Stefanik
Member of Congress

CC:
Katrina Armstrong
Interim President
Columbia University

¹⁶ Douglas Belkin, *Columbia Failed to Stop Hate, Violence Against Jews on Campus, New Report Says*, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL (Aug. 30, 2024, 4:11PM), <https://www.wsj.com/us-news/education/columbia-university-anti-semitism-report-37d018c8>.

¹⁷ Ayana Archie, *New York police arrest 300 people as they clear Hamilton Hall at Columbia University*, NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO (May 1, 2024, 2:21 PM), <https://www.npr.org/2024/05/01/1248401802/columbia-university-protests-new-york>.

¹⁸ CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE GROUP, NATIONAL CENTER FOR THE ANALYSIS OF VIOLENT CRIME, AND FBI ACADEMY, *THE SCHOOL SHOOTER: A THREAT ASSESSMENT PERSPECTIVE* (1999). <https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/stats-services-publications-school-shooter-school-shooter/view>.

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ *Id.*

Read the article in The Cadet:

<https://cadetnewspaper.com/news/848/questions-raised-about-antisemitic-peay-endowment-professor/>

Watch the video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TyeSokAfayk>