

## ***ISRAELI WAR ON GAZA***

As representatives of Long Island peace and justice organizations, we demand an immediate and sustained ceasefire in Gaza; an end to the Israeli blockade of humanitarian aid reaching Gaza; and suspension of U.S. support for Israel in the form of weapons and munitions.

U.S. military support of Israel makes the U.S. complicit in a war that has led to the deaths of (currently) at least 33,686 people – mostly civilians and over 12,000 children – during more than six months of war between Israel and Palestinian militants, as well as the deaths and injuries of international healthcare and humanitarian workers.

Last week, USAID Administrator Samantha Power said it is “credible” that famine is already taking place in Gaza because Israel has prevented food and safe water from reaching the Palestinian people. Children are dying of starvation!

On February 11, 2023, Veterans for Peace, a 39-year-old organization composed of war veterans and other opponents of war, sent a letter to Secretary of State Antony Blinken and the Inspector General of the U.S. State Department. This letter demanded that the Department of State immediately suspend ongoing shipments of U.S. military weapons and munitions to Israel because these transfers are in apparent violations of the following U.S. laws/policies:

**The Conventional Arms Transfer Policy** (Biden Administration National Security Memorandum NSM-18 February 23, 2024), which prohibits U.S. weapons transfers “when it’s likely” they will be used to commit genocide, crimes against humanity and grave breaches of the Geneva Convention.

**The Foreign Assistance Act** forbids the provision of assistance to a government which “engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights.”

**Arms Export Control Act** says countries that receive U.S. military aid can only use weapons for legitimate self-defense and internal security.

**The U.S. War Crimes Act** forbids grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions, including willful killing, torture, or inhuman treatment willfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health, and unlawful deportation or transfer, perpetrated by Israel Defense Forces.

**The Leahy Law** prohibits the US Government from using funds for assistance to units of foreign security forces where there is credible information implicating that unit in the commission of gross violations of human rights.

**The Genocide Convention Implementation Act** was enacted to implement U.S. obligations under the Genocide Convention. It provides for criminal penalties for individuals who commit or incite others to commit genocide.

**Senator Schumer, what are you doing to end the slaughter and blockade in Gaza and terminate the transfer of arms to Israel?**

**Senator Schumer, we ask you to sponsor a Congressional investigation into the U.S. government’s violation of the laws/policy listed above.**

**Senator Schumer, have you accepted campaign contributions from The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and/or other lobbying groups that**

**advocates pro-Israel policies to the legislative and executive branches of the United States? And if so, how does acceptance of this money influence your support on measures to increase arms spending and control arms transfers to Israel?**

### ***THE TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS***

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) opened for signature at the United Nations on September 20, 2017, and entered into force on January 22, 2021. The TPNW was carefully crafted to reinforce, complement and build on the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which obligates its parties to negotiate further legal measures to achieve nuclear disarmament. Both treaties are an integral and permanent part of the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, and have the same goal at their core: a nuclear-free world.

The U.S. did not sign and therefore does not abide by the TPNW. The treaty includes a comprehensive set of prohibitions on participating in any nuclear weapon activities. These include not to develop, test, produce, acquire, possess, stockpile, use or threaten to use nuclear weapons.

**Senator Schumer, how do you view the TPNW and what will it take to get the U.S. to ratify it?**

**Senator Schumer, do you agree that the U.S., in failing to sign the TPNW, has violated its commitment as a signatory to the NPT?**

**Senator Schumer, why have you not signed S. 1186? Do you favor the President authorizing a first-use nuclear strike absent Congressional approval pursuant to a Declaration of War?**

### ***THE PENTAGON BUDGET***

The National Priorities Project website reports that President Biden's \$1.6 trillion discretionary spending budget proposal for FY 2025 includes \$1 trillion (or 69 percent of the total) for militarism and its support systems (such as veterans' programs) while \$499 billion (or 31 percent of the budget) accounts for domestic spending programs such as housing, public education, public health and environmental protection.

Militarized funding includes: \$850 billion for the Pentagon; \$34 billion for nuclear weapons; \$11.6 billion in international military aid (so far); \$62 billion in non-emergency funding for the Dept. of Homeland Security; and \$113 billion for Veterans' Affairs Medical Programs. And it **doesn't** include war spending!

**Senator Schumer, what new strategies can you develop to reduce this overblown defense budget so that more of our tax dollars can be shifted toward funding domestic programs and humanitarian aid at home?**

### ***DEFENSE CONTRACTORS AND THE U.S. CONGRESS***

Weapons manufacturers earn huge profits from war while producing and selling products that attack and kill not only combatants but also non-combatants. Dubbed "Merchants of Death" in

the 1934 book of that same name, these corporations “purchase” preferential treatment in the awarding of lucrative government defense contracts (as well as input on foreign policy, including decisions to go to war) through large contributions they make to the campaigns of members of Congress.

The following are defendants in an investigation being conducted by the Merchants of Death People’s War Tribunal (<https://merchantsofdeath.org>). The Tribunal alleges these four are guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity:

Lockheed Martin

Boeing

General Atomics

Raytheon

**Senator Schumer, a January 5, 2023, article in *Open Secrets* reports that you topped the list of 45 senators who received campaign contributions from the defense sector and requested and secured military construction earmarks for those contributors in the omnibus spending bill of 2022. Have you received campaign contributions from the defendants in the Merchants of Death investigation (i.e., Lockheed Martin, Boeing, General Atomics and Raytheon)?**

We thank Mike Iannelli for bringing our concerns to Senator Schumer and eagerly await the Senator’s response.

Sincerely,

The Long Island Alliance for Peaceful Alternatives

The North Country Peace Group

Pax Christi Long Island

The South Country Peace Group

Veterans for Peace Li Chapter

Long Island Activists

The Long Island Progressive Coalition

Suffolk for A Ceasefire