

BAY AREA WOMEN IN BLACK

U.S. MILITARY AID TO ISRAEL

The US will give \$2.775 billion in military aid to Israel in FY 2010, an increase of \$225 million over this year's budget. This represents more than \$7 million per day. We are providing a direct subsidy to each Israeli worth *about* \$500 per year which is all the more striking when you consider that Israel is a wealthy industrial state with a per capita income roughly equal to South Korea or Spain.

By any measure, our government is giving Israel an automatic earmark and bailout. Israel is by far the largest recipient of US foreign aid since World War II. Over time, the US has been shifting the nature of aid to Israel to increased military support. By 2013 we will be sending Israel \$3.15 billion a year, or an average of \$8.6 million a day, and have agreed to provide that level of aid through 2018. Imagine what that money could do if given to support health care or education in our Congressional District 9!

74% of this aid must be spent to purchase US military goods and services. And unlike most recipients of military aid, Israel deals directly with US military contractors for almost all of its purchases. Thus, when Israel attacks Palestinians, its instruments of destruction are US fighter jets and attack helicopters, US missiles, US-made white phosphorous, US-made Caterpillar bulldozers. Israel's military offensive in Gaza was carried out with weapons, munitions and military equipment supplied by the US and paid for by US taxpayers' money. Our law prohibits aid to a country like Israel which engages in this pattern of violating international human rights laws.

Israel has the right to use the remaining 26% to purchase equipment from Israeli manufacturers, an entitlement not given to any other recipient of US military aid. Israel's arms industry has become one of the strongest in the world, recognized in 2007 as the 8th largest arms supplier to the developing world.

Israel is the first country in the Middle East to develop and acquire nuclear weapons. Our foreign aid law specifically prohibits US aid to nuclear states outside of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Iran has signed it; Israel has not.

The budget also calls for the US to respect Israeli claims on Jerusalem, in opposition to international law. The budget prohibits establishment of US offices, departments or agencies in East Jerusalem for conducting official government business with the Palestinian Authority, and stipulates that US officers should not meet representatives of the Palestinian Authority in Jerusalem. The budget imposes a boycott on the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation, yet no conditions are placed on Israel for development of the peace process or recognition of an independent Palestinian State.

Our US tax dollars are subsidizing one of the most powerful – and brutal — foreign governments, providing over 18.5% of the overall Israeli defense budget. As the major supplier of weapons to Israel, the US has a particular obligation to stop any supply that contributes to gross violations of law and human rights.

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TAKE ACTION NOW

Please join Bay Area Women in Black in asking Congresswoman Barbara Lee to insert the following language into the FY2010 budget line-item for Foreign Military Financing to Israel:

No amount appropriated under this bill shall be disbursed prior to the State Department transmitting to Members of Congress and making public the results of a complete, accurate, and transparent investigation into Israel's possible violations of the Arms Export Control Act during "Operation Cast Lead," as previously requested by Congress in January 2009.

Congresswoman Lee may be contacted as follows:

Washington office: 202-225-2661

Oakland office: 510-763-0373

e-mail address: <http://lee.house.gov>

Bay Area Women in Black are Jews and allies who stand against militaristic and fundamentalist leadership in all countries, including our own. We wear black as a sign of mourning for all the Israeli, Palestinian, Iraqi and Afghanistan lives that have been lost as a result of war, militarization and violence. As part of the international movement of Women in Black, we seek to transform women's mourning for the dead into a powerful refusal of the inevitability of war.

Join us at the Grand Lake Theater every Saturday at noon to register your protest and your presence as we continue to urge the end of the U.S. military and financial support for Israel's disastrous occupation.

The group with flags and signs supporting Israel is San Francisco Voice for Israel (VOI), a local group who oppose Bay Area Women in Black's (BAWIB) criticism of the policies of the Israeli government and military. BAWIB is not anti-Israel. BAWIB believes Israel's occupation is wrong and deprives Palestinians of basic human rights. BAWIB calls for ending the occupation and its violent effects on Israelis and Palestinians. The flyers distributed by VOI do not accurately reflect BAWIB's work.