

# LA Jews for Peace Policy Statement

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## **Russia is Wrong to Deny Ukrainian Sovereignty; Israel is Wrong to Deny Palestinian Sovereignty**

Russian President Vladimir Putin uses his claim that Ukraine has no right of sovereignty to justify Russia's brutal invasion of sovereign Ukraine, just as he used that claim as an excuse for Russia's eight-year occupation of the Crimea and the Donbas. In his February 21 and subsequent speeches, Putin said that "Ukraine was never a true nation" and has no claim to independence, rather it is an integral part of Russia with its "comrades [people], ... relatives, people connected with us [Russia] by blood, family ties."

That claim is rejected by President Biden, the mainstream corporate media, and almost the entire American foreign policy elite.

Israel uses its claim that Palestine has no right of sovereignty to justify its continued occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This claim was most famously stated by Prime Minister Golda Meir in 1969 when she said, "there was no such thing as Palestinians," and repeated numerous times since by many Israeli officials.

Russia's claim and its illegal invasion of the entire Ukraine has brought the world to the brink of war.

The Israeli claim underlies its refusal to negotiate a two-state solution with Palestinians as foreseen in the 1993 Oslo Accords, and its 55-year occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip that Israeli and international human rights NGOs characterize as apartheid.

Both Russian and Israeli claims are historically wrong. Ukraine and Palestine are culturally, linguistically, economically, and religiously distinct from Russia and Israel respectively, and also distinct from surrounding states.

The United States is imposing tough economic sanctions against Russia and its leaders for the illegal invasion. But the United States does not sanction Israel; in fact it more-or-less supports Israel's ongoing occupation with an annual gift of billions of dollars of military aid.

This hypocrisy and double standard of international politics should not stand. The United States must impose sanctions against Israel and its leaders for the over 50-year occupation that has been characterized as apartheid, most recently by Amnesty International. A good place to start is to enforce the Leahy Laws that prohibits the U.S. Government from providing foreign aid to countries where those funds are used in the commission of gross violations of human rights. That will likely end the U.S. annual \$4 billion gift of military aid to Israel.