

LA Jews for Peace Policy Statement

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US Aid to Israel Weakens Democracy Here and There

LA Jews for Peace agrees with a growing number of American elites that it's time for the United States to end its annual gift to Israel of \$3.8 billion in military aid. That has been a goal of peace activists for many years. What is different now is that American elite are starting to recognize that Israel's current extremist far-right government is acting to undermine the US-Israel shared values that are the justification for American aid¹. Without shared values, the US must reassess its relationship with Israel.

American elite including NY Times columnists Tom Friedman & Nicholas Kristof, former Ambassadors to Israel Dan Kurtzer and Martin Indyk, Presidential advisor Aaron David Miller, and J Street President Jeremy Ben-Ami have specifically questioned American military aid.²

US military aid is given to bolster Israel's military might so that Israel will have confidence to take risks to end its occupation of Palestine and make peace with Palestinians. It is past time to recognize that that is not working. The U.S. has had Israel's back almost since the state's founding, from the emergency airlift of military supplies that prevented Israel from losing the 1973 war to current support for Iron Dome that protects Israeli cities from Hamas and Hezbollah rocket fire.

But despite American security guarantees, Israel keeps deepening its occupation to the extent that leading human rights organizations say Israel has transitioned past occupation to apartheid. Clearly Israel takes American diplomatic and military aid as a license to dispossess Palestinians with apartheid.

The deepening occupation underlies Israel's current judicial coup that has divided and weakened the country. And American support for Israel's crimes, most notably building an apartheid regime between the River and the Sea, weakens American prestige and soft power around the world.

A secondary reason to cut aid to Israel is that Israel is a rich country with a GDP per capita within 10% of Canada, Germany, New Zealand, France, U.K., and Japan. Israel can afford to defend itself without American aid. And the United States can use those funds for urgent domestic needs like reducing child poverty.

LA Jews for Peace anticipates that more and more American elites will come to recognize that we share fewer and fewer values with Israel, and that means the U.S. commitment to Israel must be reassessed.

¹ Tom Friedman, July 11, 2023. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/11/opinion/netanyahu-israel-judiciary.html>

² Mitchell Plitnick, July 24, 2023. <https://mondoweiss.net/2023/07/leading-liberal-zionist-voices-call-for-ending-u-s-aid-to-israel/>