

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KELLY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. WARNOCK. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following Senate resolutions: S. Res. 645 and S. Res. 646.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. WARNOCK. I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mr. WARNOCK. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

#### ISRAEL

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, as most everybody knows, Iran recently launched several hundred drones and missiles at Israel. Fortunately, there were no fatalities. This attack was Iran's response to an Israeli airstrike on their consulate in Damascus, Syria, on April 1—an attack which killed seven Iranian officials. I applaud President Biden for doing what he can to make sure that this conflict does not get out of hand, does not escalate, and does not create what would be a disastrous regional war.

But while we pay attention to this developing Israeli-Iran crisis, I hope very much that we will not lose sight of the unprecedented humanitarian disaster now taking place in Gaza. We must not lose sight of that disaster.

As I am sure all Americans know, the war in Gaza began on October 7, when Hamas, a terrorist organization, invaded Israel, killed some 1,200 innocent men, women, and children, and took over 230 people into captivity, many of whom are still being held.

It has always been my view that Israel had a right to defend itself, respond to this attack, and to go after Hamas. It is also my view that Israel does not have the right to go to war against the entire Palestinian people, which is exactly what the Netanyahu government is doing.

Let us take a deep breath and understand that what is happening right now in Gaza is horrendous, it is inhumane, and it is in gross violation of American and international law. It is driven by extreme, rightwing Israeli Government officials and a government which is increasingly dominated by religious fundamentalists. That is who is driving this humanitarian disaster in Gaza.

What should be most troubling to the American people is that we as Americans are complicit because it is U.S. taxpayer dollars that have helped create this unprecedented humanitarian disaster.

Let me briefly describe what is going on in Gaza because it is so easy, in a world full of problems—the media focuses on this, focuses on that. Congress focuses on this and that. It is so easy to turn away from the tragedy in Gaza, but we must not do that.

There are about 2.2 million people living in Gaza—2.2 million—mostly poor and struggling people. Before the war—before the war—Gaza was a very poor and desperate area. Let us not forget the important fact that before the war, some 70 percent of young people in Gaza were unemployed. That was before the war.

Since this war began, over 33,000 Palestinians have been killed and 77,000 wounded. Unbelievably, 5 percent—5 percent—of the residents of Gaza have been either killed or wounded in a 6-month period—5 percent of their entire population. Two-thirds of those who have been killed or wounded are women and children.

Since the war began, 1.7 million people—over 75 percent of the population of Gaza—have been driven from their homes. Let me repeat it. Three-quarters of the population have been driven out of their homes. These people—poor, and many of them are children—do not know whether they will ever return; pushed out, not knowing where they are going to go, where they are going to sleep—three-quarters of the people of Gaza.

Over 60 percent—60 percent—of the housing units in Gaza have been damaged or destroyed. This housing destruction is unprecedented in the modern history of the world—60 percent of housing units damaged or destroyed.

But it is not just housing. Israel has systematically destroyed the healthcare system in Gaza. Gaza had 36 hospitals before the war. Now just 11 are partially operational despite the tens of thousands of injuries and hundreds of thousands of ill people. Persistent attacks on healthcare facilities have killed more than 1,200 workers.

I have spoken with several American doctors who have returned from missions to Gaza. They tell of operating for hours on end in crowded hospitals with little electricity or clean water or medical supplies. They have had to perform surgeries—including on children—with no anesthesia. They have to try to sterilize and reuse medical gauze. Thousands of women have had to give birth in these inhumane and dangerous conditions, and healthcare workers report a major increase in miscarriages. It is a healthcare nightmare.

But it is not just housing and the healthcare system that are being destroyed by the Netanyahu government; it is the physical civilian infrastructure in Gaza as well. More than half of the water and sanitation systems have

been put out of commission. Only one of three water pipelines is operating. Clean drinking water is severely limited. Sewage, raw sewage, is running through the streets of Gaza, spreading disease. As we speak tonight, there is virtually no electricity in Gaza.

But it is not just housing and healthcare and infrastructure that are being destroyed. There are 12 universities in Gaza—12 universities. Unbelievably, each and every one of them has been either damaged or destroyed—universities. In addition, primary and secondary schools have also been completely disrupted. Over 600,000 children have no access to education.

As horrible as all of this is, there is something happening now that is even worse, and that is what these photographs speak to. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinian children face starvation. The people of Gaza are struggling to survive from day to day, foraging for leaves, eating animal feed, or splitting the occasional aid packages amongst their family. Even in Rafah, where aid is consistently distributed, people are desperately short of basic supplies, including food and water. In the north, the situation is far more desperate. At least 28 children have died of malnutrition and dehydration already—28 children—but the real toll is likely much, much higher.

Without food and clean water, with sanitation systems destroyed, and with little healthcare available, hundreds of thousands of people in Gaza are at severe risk of dehydration, infection, and easily preventable diseases.

Let me repeat once again. As we speak, hundreds of thousands of children are at risk of terrible deaths.

Let us be very clear. The conditions that the people in Gaza are experiencing today are the direct result of Israel's arbitrary restrictions on the aid getting into Gaza. This is not a matter of debate; it is an obvious reality that numerous—numerous—humanitarian organizations have repeatedly confirmed.

Israeli leaders themselves admit it. At the start of this war, the Israeli Defense Minister declared a total siege, saying:

We are fighting human animals, and we are acting accordingly. . . . There will be no electricity, no food, no fuel, everything is closed.

In January, Prime Minister Netanyahu said openly that Israel is only allowing in the absolute minimum amount of aid necessary.

Tragically, the Israeli Government has lived up to those words. For months, thousands of trucks carrying lifesaving supplies have sat just miles away from starving children, prevented from reaching their destination by unreasonable Israeli restrictions and a military campaign conducted with little regard for civilian life. Trucks with food a few miles away from children who are starving—Israel is stopping those trucks.

The world saw evidence of that several weeks ago when seven aid workers

with World Central Kitchen were killed in an Israeli airstrike. But such attacks have been frequent, and Israel has killed more than 200 humanitarian aid workers in 6 months—not just the World Central Kitchen; 200 humanitarian aid workers since this war began.

Israel's blockade of humanitarian aid pushed the United States and the international community to extreme measures, including airdropping supplies and the construction of a port, in order to get food to starving people. That was our appropriate response.

Blocking desperately needed U.S. humanitarian aid is obscene, and it is unacceptable. It is also a violation of American law. The Foreign Assistance Act is extremely clear: No U.S. assistance may be provided to any country that "prohibits or otherwise restricts, directly or indirectly, the transport or delivery of United States humanitarian assistance." That is precisely what Israel is doing, and Israel is clearly in violation of the law.

Following a tense, as I understand it, call between President Biden and Prime Minister Netanyahu 2 weeks ago, Israel committed to a number of steps to improve humanitarian conditions and aid access. These commitments include opening additional border crossings, increasing the number of trucks cleared for entry into Gaza, improving aid distribution within Gaza, and reopening some bakeries and a water pipeline to supply northern Gaza.

Two weeks later, where are we? Well, there has been a slight improvement in the volume of aid getting into Gaza. Since the beginning of April, an average of 181 aid trucks have crossed into Gaza per day. This is marginally higher than was the case over the last several months but far fewer than the 500 trucks per day that went into Gaza before the war and before the devastation of civilian life there.

Unbelievably, Israel continues to block many aid convoys from reaching those areas in Gaza that are most desperate. This morning, I spoke with a humanitarian aid worker who was in Gaza just last week, and he reported to me that humanitarian organizations continue—continue—to face arbitrary Israeli restrictions.

Since the U.N. warned of imminent famine in early February, more than 40 percent of all food missions have been denied. Children are starving. More than 40 percent of food missions have been denied. Last week again, the U.N. reported that 40 percent of aid convoys to north Gaza were denied access.

Israel's violations of international law are not limited to Gaza. They are also breaking the law in the West Bank. Over the weekend, in response to the tragic death of an Israeli teenager, large groups of armed Israeli settlers rampaged through 17 Palestinian villages over 3 days. These vigilantes shot dozens of people, killing four, and burned numerous homes. Videos taken

by human rights groups show Israeli soldiers watching attacks unfold and doing nothing to stop them. To the best of my knowledge, no arrests have been announced as a result of these attacks.

While this was a particularly violent weekend, this is a daily occurrence for Palestinians in the occupied West Bank. Israeli soldiers and settlers have now killed more than 460 Palestinians in the West Bank since October 7, including more than 100 children. That is the West Bank.

What Israel is doing today in Gaza and the West Bank is a defining moment for Americans because we are deeply complicit in everything that is happening. This is not some far-off situation that we have nothing to do with. We are directly complicit. Now, the U.S. military is not dropping 2,000-pound bombs on civilian apartment buildings. That is not what the U.S. military is doing. But we are supplying those bombs to the Israeli Air Force. The United States is not blocking the borders and preventing food, water, and medical supplies from getting to desperate people. That is not what we are doing. But we have supplied billions of dollars to the Netanyahu government, which is doing just that. The United States is not annexing occupied Palestinian land, but it is providing political protection for the Israeli Government as it does so.

Despite the massive financial and military support the United States has provided to Israel for many years, the rightwing, extremist government of Netanyahu has ignored increasingly urgent calls from the United States to end the humanitarian disaster in Gaza, to stop settlement expansion in the West Bank, and to lay out initial steps toward a two-state solution.

Members of Congress may not know it. We live in a somewhat different world. But the American people have had enough. The American people are increasingly fed up with Netanyahu's war against Palestinians, and they do not want to see their taxpayer dollars spent to support the slaughter of innocent civilians and the starvation of children. That is not BERNIE SANDERS speaking. That is what the American people are saying. A recent Gallup poll showed that just 36 percent of Americans approve of Israel's military action, with 55 percent disapproving. A Quinnipiac poll showed that U.S. voters oppose sending more military aid to Israel by 52 percent to 39 percent. An earlier YouGov poll also showed that 52 percent of Americans said that the United States should halt weapons shipments to Israel until it stops its attacks in Gaza.

That is what the American people are saying. And maybe, just maybe, the Congress might want to listen to the American people rather than powerful special interests.

The New York Times is what I would describe as a pillar of the establishment. This is not a fringe organization.

This is the establishment. And the New York Times, just this Sunday, had an editorial entitled "Military Aid to Israel Cannot Be Unconditional." I would like to read a few paragraphs and then ask unanimous consent that the whole editorial be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the New York Times, Apr. 13, 2024]

# MILITARY AID TO ISRAEL CANNOT BE UNCONDITIONAL

(By the Editorial Board)

The suffering of civilians in Gaza—tens of thousands dead, many of them children; hundreds of thousands homeless, many at risk of starvation—has become more than a growing number of Americans can abide. And yet Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel and his ultranationalist allies in government have defied American calls for more restraint and humanitarian help.

The United States commitment to Israel—including \$3.8 billion a year in military aid, the largest outlay of American foreign aid to any one country in the world—is a reflection of the exceptionally close and enduring relationship between the two countries. A bond of trust, however, must prevail between donors and recipients of lethal arms from the United States, which supplies arms according to formal conditions that reflect American values and the obligations of international law.

Mr. Netanyahu and the hard-liners in his government have broken that bond, and until it is restored, America cannot continue, as it has, to supply Israel with the arms it has been using in its war against Hamas.

The question is not whether Israel has the right to defend itself against an enemy sworn to its destruction. It does. The Hamas attack of Oct. 7 was an atrocity no nation could leave unanswered, and by hiding behind civilian fronts, Hamas violates international law and bears a major share of responsibility for the suffering inflicted on the people in whose name it purports to act. In the immediate aftermath of that attack, President Biden rushed to demonstrate America's full sympathy and support in Israel's agony. That was the right thing to do.

It is also not a question whether the United States should continue to help Israel defend itself. America's commitments to Israel's defense are long term, substantial, mutually beneficial and essential. No president or Congress should deny the only state on earth with a Jewish majority the means to ensure its survival. Nor should Americans ever lose sight of the threat that Hamas, a terrorist organization, poses to the security of the region and to any hope of peace between Palestinians and Israelis.

But that does not mean the president should allow Mr. Netanyahu to keep playing his cynical double games. The Israeli leader is fighting for his political survival against growing anger from his electorate. He knows that, should he leave office, he will risk going on trial for serious charges of corruption. He has, until recently, resisted diplomatic efforts for a cease-fire that might have led to a release of hostages still in the custody of Hamas. He has used American armaments to go after Hamas but has been deaf to repeated demands from Mr. Biden and his national security team to do more to protect civilians in Gaza from being harmed by those armaments. Even worse, Mr. Netanyahu has turned defiance of America's leadership into a political tool, indulging and encouraging

the hard-liners in his cabinet, who pledge to reoccupy Gaza and reject any notion of a Palestinian state—exactly the opposite of U.S. policy.

Thanks in part to the bombs and other heavy weapons supplied by the United States, the Israel military now faces little armed resistance in most of Gaza. But Mr. Netanyahu has ignored his obligations to provide food and medicine to the civilian population in the territory that Israel now controls. In fact, Israel has made it difficult for anyone else to provide humanitarian aid to Gaza. The United States has had to take extraordinary steps, including airdrops and building a pier, to overcome Israeli obstacles to providing humanitarian aid. Last week's attack on a World Central Kitchen convoy in Gaza, which killed seven aid workers and which Israel acknowledged was a mistake, underscores the enormous danger facing the international aid agencies that are stepping in to help.

This cannot continue.

Israel recently announce a pullback of troops from southern Gaza. But this is neither a formal cease-fire nor end to the war, and it is incumbent on the Biden administration to persevere in its efforts to help end the fighting, free the hostages and protect Palestinian civilians.

A growing number of senators, led by Chris Van Hollen, Democrat of Maryland, have been urging Mr. Biden to consider pausing military transfers to Israel, which the executive branch can do without congressional approval. They were right to push for this action.

Last week, Representative Nancy Pelosi was among 40 House Democrats to sign a letter to the president and the secretary of state urging them to ensure that military assistance to Israel is in compliance with U.S. and international law. The mechanism to do that is already in place. In February, Mr. Biden signed a national security memorandum (NSM-20) that directed the secretary of state to obtain "credible and reliable" written assurances from recipients of American weapons that those weapons would be used in accordance with international law and that recipients would not impede the delivery of American assistance. Failure to fulfill those measures could lead to suspension of further arms transfers.

NSM-20 did not break ground. Many of its requirements are already law under the Foreign Assistance Act and other measures, and they apply to armaments supplied to other countries, including Ukraine. NSM-20 specifically excludes air defense systems and others used for strictly defensive purposes, but that still leaves many offensive weapons whose delivery the United States could pause. But NSM-20 is notable. It affirms the president's authority to use military aid as a lever in ensuring the nation's weapons are used responsibly.

The administration has tried many forms of pressure and admonition, including public statements, reported expressions of frustration and U.N. Security Council resolutions. None of them, so far, have proved effective with Mr. Netanyahu. Military aid is the one lever Mr. Biden has been reluctant to use, but it is a significant one he has at his disposal—perhaps the last one—to persuade Israel to open the way for urgent assistance to Gaza.

Pausing the flow of weapons to Israel would not be an easy step for Mr. Biden to take; his devotion and commitment to the Jewish state go back decades. But the war in Gaza has taken an enormous toll in human lives, with a cease-fire still out of reach and many hostages still held captive. The eroding international support for its military campaign has made Israel more insecure.

Confronted with that suffering, the United States cannot remain beholden to an Israeli leader fixated on his own survival and the approval of the zealots he harbors.

The United States has had Israel's back, diplomatically and militarily, through decades of wars and crises. Alliances are not one-way relationships, and most Israelis, including Israel's senior military commanders, are aware of that. Yet Mr. Netanyahu has turned his back on America and its entreaties, creating a crisis in U.S.-Israeli relations when Israel's security, and the stability of the entire region, is at stake.

Mr. SANDERS. This is what the New York Times says:

The administration—

Biden administration—

has tried many forms of pressure and admonition, including public statements, reported expressions of frustration and U.N. Security Council resolutions. None of them, so far, have proved effective with Mr. Netanyahu. Military aid is the one lever Mr. Biden has been reluctant to use, but it is a significant one he has at his disposal—perhaps the last one—to persuade Israel to open the way for urgent assistance to Gaza.

Pausing the flow of weapons to Israel would not be an easy step for Mr. Biden to take; his devotion and commitment to the Jewish state go back decades. But the war in Gaza has taken an enormous toll in human lives, with a cease-fire still out of reach and many hostages still held captive. The eroding international support for its military campaign has made Israel more insecure. Confronted with that suffering, the United States cannot remain beholden to an Israeli leader fixated on his own survival and the approval of the zealots he harbors.

New York Times, last Sunday.

Mr. President, the United States has offered Israel unconditional financial support for a very, very long time. In recent years, that has amounted to \$3.8 billion a year, with numerous additional forms of support. Right now, against my vote, Congress is considering another \$14 billion in military aid for Israel, \$10 billion of which is completely unrestricted military funding.

That unconditional support for the Israeli military must end. Instead of begging Netanyahu's extremist government to protect innocent lives and obey U.S. and international law, our new position must be simple and straightforward: Not another nickel for the Netanyahu government if their present policies continue.

The United States must use all of its leverage to secure an immediate cease-fire in Gaza and across the region and demand that the massive amount of humanitarian assistance that is needed to prevent famine and widespread humanitarian suffering is able to flow into Gaza.

Mr. President, history will judge what we do right now. History will judge whether we stand with starving children, whether we uphold America's professed values, or whether we continue to blindly finance the Netanyahu war machine.

I yield the floor.

## MORNING BUSINESS

### ARMS SALES NOTIFICATIONS

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant information is still available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications that have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such an annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DEFENSE SECURITY  
COOPERATION AGENCY,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN,  
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,  
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 24-04, concerning the Air Force's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Iraq for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$140 million. We will issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale upon delivery of this letter to your office.

Sincerely,

JAMES A. HURSCHE,  
Director.

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 24-04

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of Iraq.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:  
Major Defense Equipment\* \$0.  
Other \$140 million.  
Total \$140 million.

Funding Source: Foreign Military Financing.

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase: The Government of Iraq has requested to buy Contractor Logistics Support (CLS) and training in support of its C-172 and AC/RC-208 aircraft fleet.

Major Defense Equipment (MDE): None.

Non-MDE: Included is advising, technical, and proficiency training for Iraqi maintainers and aircrews; CLS; spare and repair parts, components, accessories, and repair and return support; minor modifications and upgrades; subscription services; overhaul and depot level maintenance and maintenance support; U.S. Government and contractor engineering, technical, and logistics support services; and other related elements of logistics and program support.

(iv) Military Department: Air Force (IQ-D-QCK, IQ-D-TLV).

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: IQ-D-QCH.