

MOTIONS TO DISCHARGE—S.J. RES.
33 AND S.J. RES. 26

Mr. SANDERS. Pursuant to section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act, I move to discharge the Committee on Foreign Relations from further consideration of S.J. Res. 33 and S.J. Res. 26 relating to the disapproval of the proposed foreign military sales to the Government of Israel of certain defense articles and services.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the titles.

The senior assistant executive clerk read as follows:

Motion to discharge from the Committee on Foreign Relations (S.J. Res. 33) providing for congressional disapproval of the proposed foreign military sale to the Government of Israel of certain defense articles and services.

Motion to discharge from the Committee on Foreign Relations (S.J. Res. 26) providing for congressional disapproval of the proposed foreign military sale to Israel of certain defense articles and services.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate debate the motions concurrently with all other provisions from yesterday's order remaining in effect.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, let me begin by telling the American people something that they already know, and that is, as a result of the disastrous Citizens United Supreme Court decision, we now have a corrupt campaign finance system that allows billionaires to buy elections and to influence major pieces of legislation. That, I think, is not a secret to the American people.

If you are a Republican and you vote against the Trump-Musk administration in one way or another, you have got to look over your shoulder and worry that you are going to get a call from Elon Musk, the wealthiest man in the world, and he will tell you that if you vote against what he wants, he will spend unlimited amounts of money to defeat you in the next election. That is not a great secret. That is what Musk has been saying publicly.

If you are a Democrat, you have to worry about the billionaires who fund AIPAC, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. If you vote against Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and his horrific war in Gaza, AIPAC will punish you with millions of dollars in advertisements and other ways to see that you are defeated.

AIPAC's PAC and super PAC spent nearly \$127 million combined during the 2023-2024 election cycle, according to the Federal Election Commission. And I must confess that AIPAC has been successful. Last year, they defeated two Members of the U.S. House who opposed providing military aid to Netanyahu's extremist government.

Now, given all of that, I would hope that Democrats and Republicans who understand that they were elected to

protect the interests of their constituents, not billionaire campaign contributors, would support the ending of Citizens United and would move us toward public funding of elections so billionaires could not continue to control the political and legislative process.

Further, I would hope that both parties would move to end super PAC funding in their primaries, keep the super PAC money, Musk money, AIPAC money out of the Democrat and Republican primaries.

I would hope that that would be the case so that we can, once again, become a government of the people, by the people, for the people, and not a government run by the billionaire class.

ISRAEL

Mr. President, I trust that every American and certainly every Member of the Senate understands that Hamas, a terrorist organization, began this terrible war with its barbaric October 7, 2023, attack on Israel, which killed 1,200 innocent people and took 250 hostages.

The International Criminal Court was correct in indicting the leaders of Hamas as war criminals for those atrocities. Clearly, Israel had the right to defend itself against Hamas.

But most Americans also understand that while Israel had a right to wage war against Hamas, it did not and does not have the right to wage war against the entire Palestinian population, and, tragically, that is exactly what we have seen over the last year and a half.

Let us be clear: Prime Minister Netanyahu's racist and extremist government has waged an all-out, barbaric war against the Palestinian people and made life unlivable in Gaza.

Within Gaza's population of just 2.2 million people, more than 50,000 have been killed and more than 113,000 have been injured, 60 percent of whom are women, children, and elderly people. That is 7.4 percent of the population of Gaza killed or wounded—7.4 percent in a year and a half.

If those same percentages were applied to the United States, in terms of a horrible war where our people were killed or wounded, it would mean that over 25 million Americans would have been killed or wounded.

In total, since this war began, 15,000 children—children—in Gaza have been killed, and today there are some 17,000 orphans. But it is not just the dead and the wounded.

Israel's indiscriminate bombardment has damaged or destroyed two-thirds of all structures in Gaza, including 92 percent of the housing units—as you can see from this photo. Ain't a whole lot left. I don't know why they need any more bombs; they basically destroyed the entire area. Nothing much left to be destroyed.

Almost no part of Gaza has been left unscathed. Most of the population now is living in tents or other makeshift structures. Most of the territory's hospitals and primary healthcare facilities

have been bombed, leaving virtually all Gazans without basic medical care at a time when bombs are flying and people are being wounded, and think about what that means. I have met repeatedly with doctors, American doctors and others, who have served in Gaza, and they are treating hundreds of patients a day without electricity, without anesthesia, without clean water, including dozens of children arriving with gunshot wounds to the head. I have seen the photographs and the videos.

Gaza's civilian infrastructure has been totally devastated, including almost 90 percent of water and sanitation facilities. Most of the roads in Gaza have been destroyed or made impassable. Gaza's educational system has been obliterated. Children are not going to school. According to the World Bank, more than 2,000 educational facilities ranging from kindergartens to universities have been destroyed. Hundreds of schools have been bombed, as has every single one of Gaza's 12 universities. There has been no electricity in Gaza for 17 months, no electricity.

Put simply, Netanyahu and his extremist government have killed or wounded over 7 percent of Gaza's population and has turned Gaza into a wasteland unfit for human life. That is what has been going on over the last year and a half.

In terms of where we are today, right now, the Netanyahu government broke the cease-fire 2 weeks ago, endangering the well-being of the remaining hostages held by Hamas.

Further, in the last 2 weeks, they have intensified their assaults against the Palestinian people. According to UNICEF, since Netanyahu broke the cease-fire, more than a thousand people have been killed, including over 300 children, and more than 600 children have been wounded in the last short period of time.

UNICEF says that most of these children were killed while sheltering in makeshift tents or damaged homes. Just in the last 24 hours, 97 more people have been killed in Gaza.

Since Netanyahu broke the cease-fire, even more aid workers, the people whose job it is to try to help people who have been wounded or hurt, more aid workers have been killed, putting the total of over 400—400—aid workers have been killed since the war began.

Earlier this week, the United Nations announced that they have recovered the bodies of 15 emergency aid workers who were killed by Israeli forces while wearing their emergency responder uniforms and then dumped into a mass grave in southern Gaza.

They were buried alongside the destroyed emergency vehicles, clearly marked ambulances, a fire truck, and a U.N. car.

With the resumption of bombing, hundreds of thousands of Gazans are once again being forcibly displaced by bombing and evacuation orders.

This week, Israeli authorities issued displacement orders for most of Rafah, where about 150,000 people were estimated to be sheltering.

Think about what all of this means in human terms. Throughout this war, millions of desperately poor people, the people in Gaza, by and large, are extremely poor. They have been repeatedly driven from their homes. They have been forced to pick their way through a demolished landscape again and again with nothing more than the clothes on their backs.

Families have been herded into so-called safe zones, only to face continued bombardment.

The children of Gaza—Mr. President, this is just one picture—have suffered a level of physical and emotional torture that is almost beyond comprehension and that will clearly stay with each and every one of them for the rest of their lives.

These children are hungry. They are thirsty. It is hard to get clean water. They have been denied healthcare. And they have witnessed the death of their parents, their family members, their homes, and virtually everything around them. And they have been picked up and moved from one place to another. All the while, drones are on top of them, shooting or photographing what they are doing.

Throughout this war, Israel's restrictions on humanitarian aid have left hundreds of thousands of people, including tens of thousands of children, facing malnutrition and starvation—malnutrition and starvation. Children have literally starved to death while aid just sat a few miles away, blocked by Israeli forces.

The U.N., the United States, and every aid organization working in Gaza has been clear throughout this war: Israel's unreasonable and unnecessary restrictions on humanitarian aid have contributed to massive death and profound suffering.

But as bad as the last year and a half has been, at least Israel let some—some, not enough, but some—aid through. But what is happening right now is unthinkable.

Today, it is 31 days and counting with absolutely no humanitarian aid getting into Gaza—nothing—no food, no water, no medicine, no fuel for over a month. That is a clear violation of the Geneva Conventions, the Foreign Assistance Act, and basic human decency.

It is a war crime. You don't starve children. And it is pushing things toward an even deeper catastrophe.

Earlier this week, 25 bakeries supported by the World Food Programme were forced to close because they ran out of flour and cooking gas. The U.N. is still trying to deliver its remaining stocks of food already in Gaza but says "that the situation remains extremely critical since the cargo closure of the crossings almost a month ago."

All of this is unconscionable. What we are talking about is a mass atroc-

ity, and what makes it even worse, and why I am here today and why I have introduced the resolutions that we will soon be voting on, is that we, as Americans, are deeply complicit in all that is happening in Gaza.

This is not some terrible event. This is not an earthquake in Myanmar. It is not something that we had nothing to do with. We are deeply complicit in all of this death and suffering.

Last year alone, the United States provided \$18 billion in military aid to Israel and delivered more than 50,000 tons of military equipment. It is American bombs and American military equipment that are being used to destroy Gaza, kill 50,000 people, and injure over 110,000 people. We cannot hide from that reality.

If we condone the barbarism that is taking place in Gaza today, we will have no standing in the world to condemn the horrors and war crimes that other countries may commit. You are not going to be able to look at China or Russia or Saudi Arabia or any other country and say: Look, how terrible. Look at what they are doing to the children, to the women, to innocent people.

We will have no credibility because they will come back and say: Really? You are really concerned about what China, Russia, Saudi Arabia may be doing? Hey, take a look at what you supported in Gaza and the billions of dollars in aid you gave to Netanyahu's government.

Today is the day to stand up to barbarism in Gaza and to do our best to prevent future barbaric acts all over the world.

It is no secret to anyone how these U.S. weapons have been used. Israel has bombed indiscriminately, killing civilians, journalists—a whole lot of journalists have been killed—paramedics, children, and humanitarian workers in record numbers. They have used massive 2,000-pound bombs in densely populated Gaza, despite the fact that studies show that 90 percent of victims of explosive weapons used in a populated area are civilians. These bombs have a blast radius of more than 350 meters, yet Israel has dropped them into crowded apartment buildings, killing hundreds of civilians, to take out a handful of Hamas fighters.

All of that is illegal and immoral and against American law.

The Foreign Assistance Act, which is what we are talking about today, and the Arms Export Control Act, what we are talking about today, are very clear. The United States cannot provide weaponry to countries that violate internationally recognized human rights or block U.S. humanitarian aid.

According to the U.N., much of the international community, and every humanitarian organization on the ground in Gaza, Israel is clearly in violation of these laws. Under these circumstances, it is illegal for the U.S. Government to provide Israel with more offensive weaponry. It is simply against our laws.

Despite all of that, in the last month, the Trump administration has announced its intention to transfer some \$12.5 billion more in offensive weapons—not defensive weapons, offensive weapons—to Netanyahu's government, in clear violation of U.S. law. And that is why we are here today.

Joint resolutions of disapproval—which is what we are dealing with right now—are Congress's tool to enforce American law. Today, we will vote on two resolutions to block two of the most egregious of these Trump administration offensive arms sales, which would provide almost \$9 billion more in heavy bombs and other munitions to Netanyahu, including more than 35,000—35,000—massive 2,000-pound bombs that have killed so many civilians.

The first resolution, S.J. Res. 33, would block a sale of over \$2 billion for 35,000 MK-84 2,000 bombs and 4,000 I-2000 penetrator warheads.

The second resolution, S.J. Res. 26, would block almost \$7 billion for 2,800 500-pound bombs, 2,100 small-diameter bombs, and tens of thousands of JDAM guidance kits.

All of these systems have been linked to dozens of illegal airstrikes, including on designated humanitarian sites, resulting in thousands of civilian casualties. These strikes have been painstakingly documented by human rights monitors. There is no debate.

And none of these systems are defensive. None of them are necessary to protect Israel from incoming drone or rocket attacks.

For those of my colleagues who may be ambivalent, not quite sure how they want to vote on these resolutions, let me say a word about how the Trump administration is ignoring the law in advancing these arms sales in terms of the process.

Unlike Biden, whose policies on Gaza I strongly opposed—and I stood right here, at this location, strongly opposing what Biden was doing in terms of military aid to Israel. But unlike Biden, President Trump is trying to circumvent Congress with these transfers, ignoring the Foreign Assistance Act by issuing a bogus emergency declaration—an emergency declaration to bypass congressional review.

There is no emergency to justify cutting Congress out of the process. In fact, some of the systems the Trump administration claims are part of this emergency sale have not yet been produced.

And this is also part of a broader Trump administration effort to cut Congress out of the arms sales process.

It is no great secret that Congress is way out of touch with where the American people are on issue after issue—whether it is the economy, whether it is healthcare, whether it is climate—whatever it may be. Everybody knows. Congress is way out of touch, and the billions of dollars that we are providing to the Netanyahu extremist government is just one more example of how

out of touch we are with the American people.

According to a recent Economist/YouGov poll in March, just 15 percent of the American people support increasing military aid to Israel—15 percent—while 35 percent support decreasing military aid to Israel or stopping it entirely.

To my Democratic colleagues, I would mention that in that same poll, just 8 percent of Democrats support in-

creasing military aid to Israel. And, I think, as Democrats have held town meetings over the last year, they have heard from those people. Eight percent of Democrats support what we are doing now, more military aid for Israel. Forty-seven percent support decreasing military aid to Israel or stopping it entirely—8 percent, increasing, Democrats; 47 percent, decreasing military aid.

Among Republicans, 9 percent are for decreasing military aid and 15 percent for stopping all—24 percent for stopping or decreasing all military aid.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed this poll in the RECORD.

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

[From the Economist/YouGov Poll, March 16–18, 2025—1618 U.S. Adult Citizens]

	Total	Gender		Race			Age				Income		
		Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic	18–29	30–44	45–64	65+	<50K	50–100K	100k+
Increasing military aid to Israel	15%	18%	13%	18%	8%	12%	8%	14%	17%	19%	15%	14%	17%
Maintaining the same amount of military aid to Israel	28%	29%	27%	28%	28%	27%	23%	24%	29%	36%	27%	27%	32%
Decreasing military aid to Israel	14%	15%	14%	16%	11%	12%	13%	8%	16%	21%	14%	16%	17%
Stopping all military aid to Israel	21%	24%	19%	21%	20%	24%	31%	29%	16%	10%	20%	26%	18%
Not sure	21%	14%	28%	18%	33%	25%	25%	24%	21%	14%	23%	18%	16%
Totals	99%	100%	101%	101%	100%	100%	100%	99%	99%	100%	99%	101%	100%
Unweighted N	(1,615)	(739)	(876)	(1,090)	(205)	(206)	(314)	(348)	(570)	(383)	(625)	(477)	(358)

	Total	2024 Vote		Reg	Ideology			Party ID			Party ID with Leaners		
		Har-ris	Trump	Voters	Lib	Mod	Con	Dem	Ind	Rep	Lean D	Ind	Lean R
Increasing military aid to Israel	15%	7%	31%	19%	7%	11%	28%	8%	10%	27%	7%	4%	27%
Maintaining the same amount of military aid to Israel	28%	24%	36%	30%	18%	32%	36%	23%	27%	33%	21%	30%	33%
Decreasing military aid to Israel	14%	23%	8%	14%	21%	16%	10%	19%	15%	9%	20%	15%	9%
Stopping all military aid to Israel	21%	25%	11%	19%	37%	17%	14%	28%	21%	15%	29%	16%	16%
Not sure	21%	21%	14%	18%	18%	24%	12%	22%	26%	15%	22%	34%	14%
Totals	99%	100%	100%	100%	101%	100%	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%
Unweighted N	(1,615)	(695)	(573)	(1,455)	(505)	(494)	(506)	(554)	(591)	(470)	(718)	(290)	(607)

(Mr. MORENO assumed the Chair.)

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, according to a J Street poll of Jewish voters in November, 62 percent of American Jews support withholding “shipments of offensive weapons like 2,000-pound bombs until Prime Minister Netanyahu agrees to an American proposal for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza in exchange for a release of Israeli hostages.” And 71 percent of Jewish voters support increasing humanitarian aid to the Palestinians.

Finally, as unbelievably horrific as the situation in Gaza is and has been for the last year and a half, there is another development that could make the situation even worse. It is hard to believe. It really is, but it could. In recent months, President Trump and Israeli officials have openly talked about forcing out—forcibly expelling—the 2.2 million people who live in Gaza, pushing them out to make way for what Trump calls a riviera, some billionaire’s playground.

Now, I think some people who may be watching this think: This can’t be true. You must be kidding. You must be lying. This is inconceivable—pushing 2.2 million desperate people out of where they live to create a playground for billionaires.

But a few years ago, as some may recall, Trump’s son-in-law Jared Kushner said that he felt—Jared Kushner—“Gaza’s waterfront property could be very valuable,” floating the idea of redeveloping it. I think that many people at the time thought that was a weird

and terrible joke. But it turns out that his father-in-law, Donald Trump, took it seriously. Here is what Trump has said repeatedly in recent months:

The U.S. will take over the Gaza strip and we will do a job with it.

We’re going to take over that piece that we’re going to develop it.

I do see a long-term ownership position. . . . Everybody I’ve spoken to loves the idea of the United States owning that piece of land.

I guess he didn’t speak to too many Palestinians who live on that land.

On Truth Social, Trump wrote:

The Gaza Strip would be turned over to the United States by Israel at the conclusion of fighting.

What about the Palestinians who have lived in Gaza for their entire lives? Trump said:

I don’t think people should be going back to Gaza . . . They lived like you’re living in hell. Gaza is not a place for people to be living.

Gaza could become, again, Donald Trump:

The Riviera of the Middle East, this could be something that could be so [valuable] this could be so magnificent.

Yes, throw 2.2 million people who have suffered incalculably; throw them out of the land in which they live in order to create a billionaire’s playground.

There is a name and a term for forcibly expelling people from where they live. It is called “ethnic cleansing.” It is illegal. It is a war crime.

Mr. President, the United States must not continue to be complicit in

the destruction of the Palestinian people. History will not forgive us for this. The time is long overdue for us to tell the Netanyahu government that we will not provide more weapons of destruction for them. Instead, we must demand an immediate cease-fire, surge in humanitarian aid, the release of the hostages, and the rebuilding of Gaza for the Palestinian people.

For all of these reasons, I urge my colleagues to vote yes on these two resolutions which would prevent illegal and immoral arms sales to Netanyahu, would uphold congressional power and the rule of law, and would protect innocent life.

I will yield to the Senator from Maryland, Senator VAN HOLLEN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I rise to support the Sanders resolution and to oppose the transfer of over \$8 billion of U.S. taxpayer-financed bombs and other offensive weapons to the Netanyahu government as it continues to block all humanitarian aid to civilians in Gaza, which is a clear violation of international and American law, and as it promotes the reprehensible Trump plan to push 2 million Palestinians out of Gaza.

There is no doubt that Israel has the right to defend itself. In fact, I would argue, the duty to defend itself in the aftermath of the brutal Hamas attack of October 7, 2023, that murdered over 1,200 individuals and took over 250 hostages.

Hamas is a despicable terrorist organization and there must be no more October 7s. This act of terrorism was the worst act of violence and attack on the Jewish community since the Holocaust. And that pain endures, especially as not all of the hostages have returned. It has been 544 days, and we must bring home every remaining hostage.

I have met with their families, both here and in Israel, and their emotional pain and anxiety are unbearable. Israeli and Palestinian families across the region face the reality—the brutal reality—of this hostage crisis and the devastation that this war brings every day in Gaza.

Yet through his actions, Prime Minister Netanyahu and his extremist rightwing government have made it very clear that ending the fighting and securing the release of the remaining hostages is not their principal objective. It is very well understood in Israel that Netanyahu's priority is not bringing them home; his priority is own political survival. Like the mother of one of the hostages who was protesting just last week said:

The hostages are held captive by Hamas, and the entire Nation of Israel is held captive by Netanyahu.

Prime Minister Netanyahu has locked arms with the most extreme elements of his coalition, people like Finance Minister Smotrich and Minister of National Security Ben-Gvir, people who have made their political careers based on inciting hatred against Palestinians, against Arabs, against Muslims. And in Ben-Gvir's case, also associating with groups that espouse the expulsion of Christians. Together, they have readily embraced the twisted, shameful, illegal, and immoral plan advanced by Donald Trump to push 2 million Palestinians out of Gaza.

According to Trump, the United States would “take over and own Gaza.” And at least, initially, he didn't rule out using military force to do that.

Netanyahu and the far right in Israel embraced the Trump plan from the start. Prime Minister Netanyahu called it “remarkable” and “the first good idea” he had heard. On March 30, he said:

We will implement the Trump Plan. . . . This is our strategy.

Shortly after the Trump plan was announced, Smotrich called it an excellent idea, and he said:

With God's help, I will work with the Prime Minister and the cabinet to develop an operational plan to implement this as soon as possible.

Ben-Gvir echoed that support, noting:

We have a huge opportunity and we must not miss it. Even before October 7, I encouraged emigration and they mocked me. . . . It is time to implement and promote it.

Remember, Ben-Gvir left the cabinet in January because he was opposed to the cease-fire and the return of hos-

tages agreement. Now that Netanyahu has abandoned the cease-fire agreement, Ben-Gvir has returned to the cabinet, again, as Minister of National Security. And listen very carefully to what Netanyahu's Minister of Defense Katz said recently:

Gaza residents, this is a final warning. The first Sinwar destroyed Gaza and the second Sinwar will bring its complete ruin. Soon, the evacuation . . . from combat zones will resume, and what follows will be far more severe.

He said, referring to the civilian residents of Gaza:

You will pay the full price. Return the hostages and remove Hamas—the alternative is total devastation.

You should listen very carefully to those words because he is threatening the civilian population of Gaza. That is collective punishment, and that is the Trump-Netanyahu plan.

Mr. President, American taxpayers should not be paying for this reprehensible plan. And let me be clear, that is what these bombs and offensive weapons are supporting. It is not about providing for Israel's defense, like Iron Dome, which I have and will continue to support. Instead, these offensive weapons are furthering the extremist goals of Donald Trump and Netanyahu. It surely is not “America First” to use billions of dollars of American taxpayer money to pay for bombs and other weapons to facilitate such a grotesque, illegal, and immoral plan.

You know, it is often said that Israel and the United States have a set of shared values that bind us together. Those values have included a belief in democracy, a respect for the rule of law, support for freedom and universal political rights. I believe those remain the shared values between the people of the United States and the people of Israel.

But that cannot be said of either Donald Trump or Netanyahu. They have zero respect for those values. They have a different world view. They both see themselves as above the law. Trump and Netanyahu have both demonstrated an utter contempt for an independent judiciary. Here at home, Donald Trump is calling for the impeachment of judges that uphold the rule of law and illegally bullying law firms and institutions that don't bend to his will. In Israel, Netanyahu and his rightwing government just implemented changes to weaken the independence of the judiciary. And when Trump called for impeaching judges here, this is what Netanyahu said:

In America and in Israel, when a strong rightwing leader wins an election, the leftist Deep State weaponizes the justice system to thwart the people's will. They won't win in either place! We stand strong together.

Both Trump and Netanyahu have also worked to replace people of independence and integrity with political puppets. Netanyahu is in the process of trying to fire the head of Shin Bet, Ronen Bar, while he was presiding over an investigation into potential finan-

cial ties between Netanyahu's office and Qatar.

Here at home, of course, Trump fired the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, installed a completely unqualified Secretary of Defense, and has fired at least 17 independent inspectors general across the Federal Government. Trump and Netanyahu don't believe in checks and balances. They believe in unchecked power for themselves, like other autocrats, Erdogan in Turkey or Orbán in Hungary.

Let's be clear that Donald Trump is pursuing policies in Israel that are not pro-Israel. They are pro-Netanyahu and pro-Smotrich and pro-Ben-Gvir.

Donald Trump said on the campaign trail he was going to stop the war in Gaza. He took credit for securing the January cease-fire and the exchange of those hostages at the time. That was phase one—phase 1 of the three-stage framework that the Biden team had negotiated. Prime Minister Netanyahu waited until the eve of Trump's inauguration to begin phase 1 so Donald Trump could claim that success. But ever since then, Trump has backed off and stood back as Netanyahu and his rightwing government resumed the bombing of Gaza, imposed an embargo on humanitarian aid for civilians there, and put the lives of all the remaining hostages at risk.

Indeed, it has now been 32 days since Netanyahu cut off all humanitarian assistance and electricity to civilians in Gaza. That is a blatant direct violation of Israel's duty under both international law and under American law. Indeed, section 620I of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act, also known as the Humanitarian Aid Corridor Act, prohibits the transfer of any offensive weapons by the United States to any country that fails to “facilitate and not arbitrarily deny, restrict, or otherwise impede, directly or indirectly, the transport or delivery of U.S. humanitarian assistance.”

Well, for 32 days, we have seen a blockade of humanitarian assistance. It is also a violation of the assurances that the Netanyahu government gave to the United States just last year—which I actually witnessed the signatures—where it said that it would facilitate the delivery of U.S.-supported humanitarian aid in Gaza.

So the Netanyahu government is flouting those commitments. Just this week, the United Nations' World Food Programme, WFP, said all 25 of its bakeries had been shuttered in Gaza. And meanwhile, the Trump administration says nothing and does nothing. What happened to the man who pledged to bring peace to the Middle East?

After cutting off humanitarian aid, the Netanyahu government resumed its bombing campaign in Gaza and unleashed strikes where the initial one killed 430 people in one of the most lethal days of the entire world.

Here is the headline of a March 27 story in the Israeli newspaper Haaretz:

In one of the Gaza war's most horrific nights, the Israeli Army killed nearly 300 women and children.

A surgeon from the United Kingdom who was on the ground said:

What stunned doctors was the number of children. Just child after child, young patient after young patient.

We all know that Hamas has no regard for Palestinian civilians and puts civilians in danger. But that does not absolve the Netanyahu Government of the duty to reduce civilian harm, and it is violating that duty. Indeed, as I read, the Minister of Defense has said there will be “total destruction.”

The death toll in Gaza has now surpassed 50,000, and more than half of those killed are women and children. Palestinian civilians—many of them who recently put themselves at great risk to protest against Hamas—are trapped.

The recent Netanyahu bombing campaign has also taken a severe toll on medical and first aid workers inside Gaza. As the newspaper Haaretz and others have reported, 15 Palestinian paramedics, including a U.N. worker, were killed as they traveled in their ambulances within the last 2 weeks. Jonathan Whittall, the head of OCHA, said the aid workers had been killed “one by one” and that the IDF bulldozers then buried them and the ambulances in the sand. To date, over 400 aid workers have been killed since the war started.

Following the deaths of seven World Central Kitchen aid workers, almost a year ago, the Netanyahu government said they would improve efforts to protect aid workers, but those promises have been forgotten. Just a few days ago, the IDF hit an International Committee of the Red Cross, or ICRC, office in Gaza, and while that strike did not result in casualties, it was another reminder of the Netanyahu government's total disregard for the safety of these humanitarian operators.

Speaking of the ICRC, throughout the war, the Netanyahu government has suspended all humanitarian visits by the ICRC to Palestinian prisoners in both the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and it has yet to resume that access despite reports of the terrible abuses at Sde Teiman. This is a prison. These abuses were revealed by Israel's own security service, Shin Bet, as well as Israel's NGOs and media.

Now, Netanyahu has attacked virtually everyone who questions his conduct in the war in Gaza as pro-Hamas. When his former Defense Minister, Gallant, said that the Israeli military had done all it can in Gaza, he was fired. Netanyahu has even criticized the protests by hostage families, saying that they serve the interests of Hamas—deplorable.

And the Netanyahu government has tried to punish and sanction Israeli newspapers, specifically Haaretz, which I have been quoting from, for reporting the facts about what is happening in Gaza. In fact, Netanyahu's Communications Minister suggested that the law enforcement in Israel should go after them for “dangerous incitement

by the newspaper,” as if people cannot be horrified about what happened on October 7, care about the terrible plight of hostages, and care about Palestinian civilians without being pro-Hamas. Of course, claiming that newspapers and his political opponents are aiding and abetting Hamas is a convenient and deeply dishonest rhetorical tactic. It is the same kind of tactic that Trump uses here at home, threatening and sanctioning newspapers that report inconvenient facts.

As we consider how Trump and Netanyahu are pushing forward their plan in Gaza, we should also pay close attention to what is unfolding on the West Bank, where extremist settlers have been fueling violence and destruction. The Biden administration had put in place an Executive order that sanctioned anybody destabilizing the West Bank. It applied to militant Palestinian groups and to extremist Israeli settlers involved in attacks against Palestinians. Trump revoked it. Last week, in the South Hebron Hills, masked settlers attacked Hamdan Ballal, a Palestinian filmmaker, who, alongside Israeli director Yuval Abraham, produced the Oscar-winning documentary entitled “No Other Land.” The film is about the life and struggles of Palestinians under Israeli occupation in Masafer Yatta, the very place where he was attacked.

Over the last year, we have seen many, many people killed as a result of this violence. You know, if you listen to President Trump's nominee to be our Ambassador to Israel, Mike Huckabee, you would think that the expulsion of Palestinians from their land and Israel's occupation is not a problem. When asked during his nomination hearing what would happen if Israel annexed the West Bank and whether Palestinians would have equal rights as Israeli Jews on the West Bank, he couldn't say. He just said, well, Palestinians would have some “opportunity.”

Let's step back and take stock of where all of this leaves us. As I said at the start, Israel has a right to defend itself. Of course, it does, and the United States will always stand with Israel's right to do so, and the United States has consistently provided Israel with the weapons it needs to defend itself against its many enemies, including Iran, Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis. But there is a big difference—a very big difference—between providing Israel with the ability to vigorously defend itself and the goals of Trump and Netanyahu, as well as those of Smotrich and Ben Gvir, which are increasingly embracing the goals of building a greater Israel by annexing the West Bank and reoccupying Gaza.

Smotrich and Ben Gvir made no secret of that objective. At a large ultranationalist conference held on the border of Gaza, in October of 2024, Smotrich endorsed the idea of rebuilding settlements in Gaza, stating on his way to the event that the strip was

“part of the land of Israel” and that “without settlements, there is no security.”

It is very clear that Netanyahu has hitched his political survival to Smotrich and his whim, and Trump's calls for the displacement of over 2 million Palestinians in Gaza only plays further into their hands.

Just yesterday, Netanyahu and Defense Minister Katz announced that Israel would, as Defense Minister Katz said, “seize large areas” of the Gaza Strip. The response of the Hostages and Missing Families Forum, which represents most of the hostages' families, was swift and clear. They said they were horrified by Katz' statement and asked:

Did you decide that we are sacrificing hostages for capturing land? Instead of getting hostages out in a deal and ending the war, Israel's government is sending more soldiers to Gaza to fight in the same places that they already fought over and over again.

And yet Trump continues to stand with the extremist Netanyahu government and his own reprehensible plan and calls upon American taxpayers to spend billions of dollars to support that plan.

Israel is now operating as the undisputed superpower in the Middle East. It is a nuclear power. Hezbollah is on its back foot. Iran's air defenses have been severely degraded. Assad is, thankfully, out of power in Syria, and Israel has destroyed much of Syria's military infrastructure. So the question is, What does Israel want to do with this power? What are its long-term goals?

The answer from Smotrich and Ben Gvir is to build a greater Israel, one that demolishes the possibility of a future two-state solution, and Netanyahu is in their corner. The annexation of the West Bank and the reoccupation of Gaza will not make Israel safer. To the contrary, it will condemn it to perpetual conflict. The only sustainable way forward is to ensure that the 5 million Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank who have nothing to do with Hamas can live with dignity and have their human rights respected. That is the only way to ensure the long-term security for Israelis and Palestinians alike. That is the only way, colleagues, to prevent the United States from being dragged into permanent conflicts in the Middle East, and that should be painfully obvious to anyone who has followed the history of this region.

I will close where I started. This is not about whether someone is pro-Israel. I believe you can be pro-Israel and anti-the policies of Netanyahu, just as you can be pro-America and oppose the policies of Donald Trump, and that is what this is all about. This is about whether you support the approach that Netanyahu and Trump are taking at this time: Trump's vision of a Gaza cleansed of its Palestinian population and Netanyahu's, Smotrich's, and Ben Gvir's vision of a greater Israel without basic human and political rights for Palestinians.

I will not support that future. I will not vote to support American taxpayer dollars to advance that future. It is not in America's interest nor is it in the interest of Israelis, Palestinians, or anyone else who lives in the Middle East.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes and Senator RISCH for up to 5 minutes prior to the scheduled rollcall votes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I rise today and come here to strongly oppose the two resolutions before the Senate at this moment.

These misguided resolutions, if adopted, would reinstate the failed policies of the Biden administration. Worse, they would abandon Israel, our closest ally in the Middle East, during a pivotal moment for global security.

For years, President Biden wrung his hands and withheld American support for Israel in its time of need. This inaction only prolonged suffering for all sides and put America's commitment in doubt. Despite this, Israel had the courage to confront Iran and its proxies, and it decimated them.

Through President Trump's tough negotiations and Israel's courage, Iran is at its weakest point in decades, and hostages are returning home.

At the same time, Israel is contending with its operations against Hamas, efforts to maintain a fragile cease-fire in Lebanon, and the ongoing threats to Iran.

Now is not the time to deprive our ally of the tools it needs to protect American interests.

I yield to Senator SANDERS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I think Senator RISCH and I live in parallel universes. The universe that I live in is a universe which says, yes, of course Israel has a right to defend itself against the horrific Hamas terrorist attack of October 7, 2023. No one debates that. But Israel did not and does not have the right to go to war against the entire Palestinian people, in violation of international and U.S. law.

It doesn't matter in one sense whether you don't care that 50,000 people in Gaza have been killed or 112,000 women—you don't care about that? Fine. But you should care about American law. What the Foreign Assistance Act says is that the United States cannot provide military assistance to a country which is in violation of U.S. and international law.

When you starve children, you are in violation of international law.

When you have a blockade that does not allow any humanitarian aid to

come into a desperate situation for 31 days, you are in violation of international law.

When you kill 15,000 children and bring about malnutrition and starvation for even more, you are in violation of international law.

What is going on right now is not some abstract horror show. We are complicit. Those are our bombs that have destroyed or damaged 92 percent of the housing in Gaza, our bombs which have destroyed hundreds and hundreds of schools in Gaza, our bombs which have attacked every single one of the 12 universities in Gaza.

What we are standing here today discussing is not just Gaza. If the United States remains complicit in this war, we are telling every other country in the world that international law and human rights are meaningless. You could do whatever you want, and no President will ever be able to condemn any other country for their inhumanity. That is what is at stake today. Do we try to maintain a shred of moral integrity in the world or do we simply say to Netanyahu: Here are some more bombs. Kill some more kids. Kill some more women. Bomb some more hospitals.

Is that what we do?

With that, I would yield to the Senator from Maryland, Mr. VAN HOLLEN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Vermont.

Can I inquire how much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Five minutes and 45 seconds.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. All right.

Listen, I want to emphasize a couple of key points that the Senator from Vermont made.

First of all, as we all know, Israel not only has the duty and the right to defend itself, but it has to make sure that this never happens again.

But I did not hear the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee respond to the key points the Senator from Vermont and I have been making—No. 1, that what is happening right now is a clear violation of American law.

Even if you want to throw international law out the window—and, in my view, we do that at our great jeopardy because the United States has many times invoked international law to advance what we consider to be important rights and interests—it is a violation of the plain meaning of U.S. law because under 620I of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act, also known as the Humanitarian Aid Corridor Act, offensive sales to any country that is preventing the delivery of U.S.-supported humanitarian assistance is not allowed. It says very plainly that we should not transfer any offensive weapons to a country if they are not facilitating and if they are arbitrarily denying and restricting or otherwise impeding directly or indirectly the transfer of humanitarian assistance.

It is indisputable here that for 32 days, all humanitarian assistance to the civilian population in Gaza has been cut off. I haven't heard a response to how that is not a violation of U.S. law.

Beyond that, it was just last year that the Netanyahu government provided the U.S. Government with written assurances that they would allow the delivery of humanitarian assistance into Gaza. Apparently, it doesn't matter anymore because Donald Trump is in the White House, which, of course, brings us to the other point which both the Senator from Vermont and I have emphasized—that the extreme right in Israel has been emboldened even further by the comments made by Donald Trump—the Donald Trump comments that we would essentially push 2 million Palestinians out of Gaza. That has been cheered on by extremists like Ben-Gvir and Smotrich and now adopted and embraced by Netanyahu and his government.

I don't think the American people want to use their taxpayer dollars to supply bombs and other offensive weapons to support that twisted, illegal, and immoral vision of clearing Gaza of 2 million Palestinians.

Yet, as I quoted earlier in my remarks, just today—check it out in the Washington Post and other newspapers—Israel is saying they are going to seize more land in Gaza. The families of the hostages have said that is a really bad idea. Focus on ending the war and getting every hostage returned. That is what we should be focused on.

That is why I support the Sanders resolution, and I oppose spending \$8 billion on bombs and other offensive weapons to support the Netanyahu-Ben-Gvir-Trump vision, which is a terrible future for Israelis and Palestinians alike.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I thank Senator VAN HOLLEN for his extraordinary efforts today and for over a long period of time standing up for justice and morality in the Middle East.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. Has all time expired except for the time I have left?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. No. The other side has 2 minutes.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, first of all, I agree with one and only one thing that my friend from Vermont said, and that is that we do live—at least think—in an alternate, parallel universe.

I am on the Intelligence Committee. I am the most senior Republican on the Intelligence Committee. I have seen the film from what Hamas did on October 7. These were animals. They killed hundreds and hundreds of people. They took hostages. They cut babies out of their mothers. They killed children in

front of their parents. They killed parents in front of their children. They tortured people.

They knew exactly what they were doing, and that was that they were going to get a response from Israel that would be what it is today.

All of this talk that my friends have laid out in front of us—no one in the world is coming to the support of Hamas—no one—with the exception of some misguided people in this organization.

The Middle East has an opportunity to free itself from Iran's grip, and America will be safer for it. To promote stability in the region and protect our national security, we need to continue to support Israel's successful efforts.

President Trump, Secretary Rubio, and soon-to-be Ambassador Huckabee will work day in and day out to make sure that American interests are protected in Israel, and Congress must do its part. We really must provide Israel with the force they need to resist and eliminate Hamas.

Just before I walked in here, I was handed an official written position of the President of the United States, who urges us to defeat these two resolutions.

In December, this body overwhelmingly opposed similar resolutions in a bipartisan fashion. I hope we can do that again today. As such, I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote no on these two resolutions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, very briefly, nobody is supporting Hamas. Hamas is a disgusting terrorist organization that began the war.

Israel had a right to defend itself against Hamas, but it did not have the right to kill 50,000 Palestinians and wound 112,000, 60 percent of whom are women, children, and the elderly. It did not have a right to bomb every university in Gaza.

As Senator VAN HOLLEN indicated, what we are talking about here is whether or not we support U.S. law. And U.S. law is clear: We cannot supply weapons to a country which is acting in violation of international law. Starving children is a violation of international law.

With that, Mr. President, I would yield the floor and ask for a "yea" vote on these resolutions.

VOTE ON MOTION TO DISCHARGE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is on the motion to discharge S.J. Res. 33.

Mr. SANDERS. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS)

and the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 15, nays 82, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 165 Leg.]

YEAS—15

Durbin	Luján	Schatz
Heinrich	Markley	Smith
Hirono	Merkley	Van Hollen
Kaine	Murphy	Warren
Kim	Sanders	Welch

NAYS—82

Alsobrooks	Gillibrand	Padilla
Banks	Graham	Paul
Barrasso	Grassley	Peters
Bennet	Hagerty	Reed
Blackburn	Hassan	Ricketts
Blumenthal	Hawley	Risch
Blunt Rochester	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Booker	Hoeven	Rounds
Boozman	Husted	Schiff
Britt	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Budd	Johnson	Schumer
Cantwell	Justice	Scott (FL)
Capito	Kelly	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Kennedy	Shaheen
Collins	King	Sheehy
Cornyn	Klobuchar	Slotkin
Cortez Masto	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Cramer	Lummis	Tillis
Crapo	Marshall	Tuberville
Cruz	McConnell	Warner
Curtis	McCormick	Warnock
Daines	Moody	Whitehouse
Duckworth	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Moreno	Wyden
Fetterman	Mullin	Young
Fischer	Murkowski	
Gallego	Ossoff	

ANSWERED "PRESENT"—1

Baldwin

NOT VOTING—2

Coons Murray

The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BUDD). The yeas are 15, the nays are 82. One Senator responded present. The motion is not agreed to.

The motion was rejected.

VOTE ON MOTION TO DISCHARGE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is on the motion to discharge S.J. Res. 26.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second?

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 15, nays 83, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 166 Leg.]

YEAS—15

Durbin	Luján	Schatz
Heinrich	Markley	Smith
Hirono	Merkley	Van Hollen
Kaine	Murphy	Warren
Kim	Sanders	Welch

NAYS—83

Alsobrooks	Britt	Cotton
Banks	Budd	Cramer
Barrasso	Cantwell	Crapo
Bennet	Capito	Cruz
Blackburn	Cassidy	Curtis
Blumenthal	Collins	Daines
Blunt Rochester	Coons	Duckworth
Booker	Cornyn	Ernst
Boozman	Cortez Masto	Fetterman

Fischer	Lee	Schiff
Gallego	Lummis	Schmitt
Gillibrand	Marshall	Schumer
Graham	McConnell	Scott (FL)
Grassley	McCormick	Scott (SC)
Hagerty	Moody	Shaheen
Hassan	Moran	Sheehy
Hawley	Moreno	Slotkin
Hickenlooper	Mullin	Sullivan
Hoeven	Murkowski	Thune
Husted	Ossoff	Tillis
Hyde-Smith	Padilla	Tuberville
Johnson	Paul	Warner
Justice	Peters	Warnock
Kelly	Reed	Whitehouse
Kennedy	Ricketts	Wicker
King	Risch	Wyden
Klobuchar	Rosen	Young
Lankford	Rounds	

ANSWERED "PRESENT"—1

Baldwin

NOT VOTING—1

Murray

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume executive session.

VOTE ON OZ NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Oz nomination?

Mr. HEINRICH. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) and the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 167 Ex.]

YEAS—53

Banks	Graham	Moreno
Barrasso	Grassley	Mullin
Blackburn	Hagerty	Murkowski
Boozman	Hawley	Paul
Britt	Hoeven	Ricketts
Budd	Husted	Risch
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Cassidy	Johnson	Schmitt
Collins	Justice	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lankford	Sheehy
Cramer	Lee	Sullivan
Crapo	Lummis	Thune
Cruz	Marshall	Tillis
Curtis	McConnell	Tuberville
Daines	McCormick	Wicker
Ernst	Moody	Young
Fischer	Moran	

NAYS—45

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Baldwin	Hirono	Sanders
Bennet	Kaine	Schatz
Blumenthal	Kelly	Schiff
Blunt Rochester	Kim	Schumer
Booker	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Slotkin
Coons	Luján	Smith
Cortez Masto	Markley	Van Hollen
Durbin	Merkley	Warner
Fetterman	Murphy	Warnock
Gallego	Ossoff	Warren
Gillibrand	Padilla	Welch
Hassan	Peters	Whitehouse
Heinrich	Reed	Wyden