



Peace Action Group of the First Unitarian Church
1011 SW 12th Ave
Portland OR 97205

December 6, 2021

Rep. Earl Blumenauer
911 NE 11th Ave. Suite 200
Portland OR 97232

Dear Rep. Blumenauer,

Sen. Sanders and Rep. Ro Khanna wrote the following op-ed, published in The Guardian. Noting the support of Saudi Arabia by the United States and our long involvement, they declare that it is time for American complicity to end regarding the Saudi war in Yemen. They note that the war has created the largest humanitarian disaster in the world today, with millions a step away from starvation. The Saudi bombing campaigns have destroyed hospitals, schools, and housing as well as other vital infrastructure.

Despite Congressional support for an invocation of the War Powers Resolution of 1973 in 2019 (which we are appreciative that you supported, thank you), the American involvement continues. The American military industrial complex continues to profit from the misery of the Yemeni people, a misery which is further deepened because of the economic sanctions imposed by the United States on Yemen. The United States must end the economic sanctions immediately.

The United States must also cease all military aid to the Saudi government, even that which is declared by the United States to be defensive.

We call on you to now also support an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to end all US support for the Saudi war effort. While such amendments have already been passed by both houses of Congress, the time has come for it to be included in the National Defense Authorization Act itself.

There are many reasons for you to vote No on the NDAA and we were disappointed that you voted Yes when you voted earlier this year. We had noted approvingly that for the past several years you have voted no. Certainly, if the conference NDAA bill does not include an amendment to end all military assistance to Saudi Arabia, vote No.

We also hope that you will be much more vocal regarding to issues of the war budget and war and peace, calling for cutting the military budget and moving those resources to be spent on peaceful activities, like housing for the houseless, free education and covering the cost of a Medicare for All expansion of Medicare and Social Security.

Below is the Op-Ed from you colleagues, Sen. Sanders and Rep. Ro Khanna.

Regards,

David Delk, on behalf of all members of Peace Action Group, First Unitarian Church

=====

Saudi warplanes carpet-bomb Yemen with US help. This must end

[Bernie Sanders](#) and Ro Khanna

As published by The Guardian, Fri 3 Dec 2021 06.19 EST

(<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/dec/03/saudi-warplanes-carpet-bomb-yemen-with-us-help-this-must-end>)

The US must end all support for the Saudi war effort in Yemen. It is fueling the largest humanitarian crisis in the world

‘American defense contractors continue to service Saudi planes that are enabling this war and the United States just announced a new arms sales deal with the Saudis.’

Fri 3 Dec 2021 06.19 EST

Last modified on Fri 3 Dec 2021 06.27 EST

The recent [breaching of the United States’ embassy](#) in Yemen’s capital city of Sanaa by rebel forces, and the detaining of Yemeni employees of the embassy, is the latest escalation in a war that has gone on for far too long. It is a war that the United States has supported and remains deeply involved in. It’s time for that complicity to end.

For more than six years, Saudi-led military intervention into Yemen’s civil war on behalf of Yemen’s exiled government against Yemeni rebels has been a key driver of the largest humanitarian disaster in the world. “The country’s economy has reached new depths of collapse, and a third wave of the pandemic is threatening to crash the country’s already fragile healthcare system,” United Nations humanitarian relief coordinator, Martin Griffiths, [said](#) in September, with millions “a step away from starvation”.

Under first the Obama and then the Trump administration, the United States was Saudi Arabia’s partner in this horrific war. In 2019, Congress made history by passing its first War Powers Resolution through both chambers of Congress, pressing Donald Trump to end this support. It marked the first time that Congress invoked the War Powers Resolution of 1973 to direct the president to withdraw troops from an undeclared war.

We were proud to lead this effort. The passage of that resolution has implications far beyond Yemen and opened a much broader and extremely important debate about how and when the United States uses our military to wage war, and the sole constitutional authority of Congress to authorize that use.

We welcomed the Biden administration’s announcement earlier this year that it would end support for “offensive” military operations led by Saudi Arabia in Yemen and name a special envoy to help bring this conflict to an end. But the crisis has only continued. American defense contractors continue to service Saudi planes that are waging this war and the United States just announced new arms sales to the Saudis. We are aware that ending US military support for Saudi Arabia’s brutal assault will not

alone end the multi-sided conflict in Yemen. The Houthis are launching bloody attacks on the central Yemeni city of Marib and launching cross-border attacks on Saudi territory. Violence has also erupted between rival factions in the south of Yemen. A [UN expert panel](#) found that all parties to the conflict may have committed war crimes.

Lifting the blockade must happen immediately and be delinked from final peace negotiation talks

The US may not be able to stop all the violence it helped create, but it can stop enabling Saudi warplanes to bomb Yemeni civilians. Doing so will save lives – not only the Yemenis spared in Saudi bombing runs, but also by utilizing its leverage to pressure Saudi Arabia to lift the blockade on Yemen, which continues to block fuel and other essential imports into the country, pushing millions of Yemenis toward the brink of starvation. Lifting the blockade must happen immediately and be delinked from final peace negotiation talks.

We have proposed an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act to finally end all US support for the Saudi war effort. The House already passed this amendment for the third consecutive year. Given that this amendment simply codifies a prohibition on providing support for the Saudi war that already passed both houses of Congress in 2019 – legislation supported at the time by multiple officials now in the Biden-Harris administration – it is long overdue for this provision to be included in the final defense policy bill that is sent to the president’s desk.

It is essential we pass this amendment to restore US credibility as an arbiter of peace in Yemen. But that alone is not enough. The US must support an international observer mission alongside the Saudi-Yemeni border and spearhead generous development efforts to rebuild Yemen. This aid should be focused on bolstering localized humanitarian and development initiatives like Yemen’s Social Fund for Development. We also must dramatically increase our diplomatic engagement to press Saudi Arabia, the Riyadh-based Republic of Yemen government, and the Houthis to accept the UN’s roadmap as the basis for a compromise that ends foreign military intervention and allow Yemenis to come to an agreement. The war has gone on too long, and it’s time we begin to take bold steps on the path to peace.

- Bernie Sanders is a US senator, and the ranking member of the Senate budget committee. He represents the state of Vermont.
- Rohit Khanna is a US representative from California’s 17th congressional district.