

# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ARAB AMERICANS

1834 K STREET, N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006

Telephone: (202) 347-2429

## STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ARAB AMERICANS BEFORE THE FOREIGN OPERATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

November 5, 1973

Presented by: Dr. Peter Tanous  
President: N.A.A.A.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Sub-committee on Foreign Operations, we are grateful for the opportunity to come before you today, and wish to express our deep concern and strong opposition to the proposals outlined in H.R. 11088, under the title of "Emergency Security Assistance Act of 1973", which, if passed, will grant \$2.2 Billion in military aid to Israel. It is our contention that there is no justification for such an appropriation. How can the Congress insist on a Soviet disengagement in the Middle East, and at the same time consider such a grant for Israeli military aid?

During the period from 1948 through 1971, (before aid figures became classified), Israel received the following funds from U.S. sources:

U.S. Government Economic Aid	\$ 1.8 Billion
Private (tax exempt) Contributions	2.5 Billion
Sale of Israeli Bonds	<u>6.0 Billion</u>
TOTAL	\$ 10.3 Billion (or \$3,500 per Israeli citizen)

The above figures do not include the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Grant for Soviet Jews, in the amount of \$50 million, nor does it include military aid, which in 1973 alone, was in excess of \$500 million.

The \$2.2 billion which the congress is now considering for Israel represents approximately \$1,000 for every Israeli citizen; man, woman and child..or , a contribution from each individual in the U.S. of \$10. Since the U.S. does not have the funds available for this grant, it will have to borrow the money and pay interest at the rate of approximately \$143 million a year. In 15 years, we, the American taxpayer, will have paid our \$2.2 billion in interest and still owe the \$2.2 billion principle.

This appropriation represents an additional drain on our domestic budget, which is suffering now, due to lack of funds. As an example, the following programs were cut from the 1974 domestic budget:

Hill-Burton Program(construction of public or other non-profit hospitals and clinical facilities)	\$ 90 million
Regional Medical programs	60 million
Community Mental Health Clinics	50 million
Training Grants and Fellowships	58 million
Medicare (Medical insurance for the elderly)	1.600 billion
Public Assistance	1.200 billion
Water Pollution Control	3. billion
Education	208 million
Housing Subsidies	304 million

In view of these cuts in our domestic budget, and the proposed \$2.2 billion appropriation for military aid to Israel, we question our fiscal capability to absorb this added burden. Further, we seek answers to the following questions:

1. How much did it cost the taxpayer to have the President declare a state of Emergency War Alert?
2. How much has been contributed in tax-exempt dollars to the UJA in 1973?
3. How much has been raised in this country from the sale of Israeli Bonds?
4. How much has the U.S. given in special grants to Israel, or other Jewish organizations in the U.S.?
5. What was the cost to U.S. taxpayers for the airlift of arms to Israel during the most recent war?
6. In view of the energy shortage we would like especially to know, how many gallons of fuel were used in the airlift?
7. What secret agreements or guarantees for military support has been made by our government to Israel?

Last week, 6 million Jews in the U.S. were being asked by the Israeli Minister of Finance to raise an additional \$642 million by the end of the year to be sent to Israel.

Diplomatic relations have been strained by the U.S. military support for Israel. It has caused a breach between the U.S. and our 14 NATO Allies. Only Portugal offered support to the U.S. during the recent airlift to Israel: and the only nation, besides the U.S., which supported Israel in the latest war, was South Africa, a country which has its own race problems. To date, 34 African States no longer maintain diplomatic relations with Israel. Our position threatens detente with the U.S.S.R., and it has also isolated the U.S. from the world community as evidenced by the fact that the U.S., alone, backs Israel at the United Nations while the rest of the U.N. repeatedly condemns her. The United States joins with other U.N. members in deploring the acquisition of territories through military conquest, yet we violate our principles by giving lip service to our declarations.

Confrontation with Russia becomes more possible every day. The U.S. 6th fleet in the Mediterranean has been increased from 40 or 50 to 60 ships, while the Russian fleet has grown from a normal 50 or 60 to approximately 95 ships.

James Reston, in his column of October 31, 1973, (Washington Evening Star-News), stated, "It is not clear what Nixon's next order would have been if the Soviets had decided to use their airborne divisions to get the Egyptian Army out of the trap. Would we have tried to stop them? Or send American troops in Israel?"

Senator Henry Jackson on Meet the Press, November 4, 1973 stated: "Our local forces are not adequate in the Mediterranean"-----"It is clear now, we are deficient in many areas." Could it be that the good Senator has forgotten that we are so depleted, in part, because of our airlift to Israel of materials taken from U.S. combat units in Europe and at home.

Let us now turn to oil. The oil embargo is now being felt throughout the U.S. Virtually all east coast residual fuel oil and home heating oil comes from overseas. Experts say the U.S. must have at least 250,000 barrels daily of home heating oil from European refineries...all or most of this oil comes from the Middle East. Sen. Henry Jackson cites the plight of a few larger power companies: Consolidated Edison of New York---its principal supplier of 45% of the annual needs may not be able to meet its commitments this winter. Commonwealth Edison in Chicago is already 27 million gallons short, and by the end of 1974 will be 109 million gallons short. Detroit Edison helped fill its need last winter, which was a mild one, with 10 million gallons bought from Canada. This source is now shut off.

Nothing is more certain to perpetuate the oil embargo than a continued one-sided support of Israel. First our economic consultants said that the Arabs would not impose an embargo-----then they said, it would have no impact----then there was no oil shortage----then, we didn't need Arab oil anyway----. How then do we find ourselves in the midst of an energy crisis or a fuel shortage in the U.S. All that is being asked by the Arabs, in exchange for all the oil needed, is "fairness". The withdrawal from occupied territories in accordance with U.N. resolution 242. If we are cold this winter, it will be because we have turned our backs on the Arab's plea for peace with justice in the Middle East.

\$2.2 billion in aid to Israel will not help the present situation in the Middle East. It will only strengthen Israel's defiance and determination to hold on to occupied territories, and is contrary to the efforts of our Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger, in that it will prolong the war, which will increase the loss of life and bring us ever closer to a nuclear confrontation. The present situation has shown that the superiority of one power can no longer be considered a stable balance. Even if we supply all the money for it, balance cannot be guaranteed. The only solution, and it is in the best interest of Israel, is not more and more money for arms...it is a true peace. A peace which is evenhanded and just for all the peoples of the area.

Mr. Chairman, we feel that the U.S. Congress has a role to play in the search for a just peace in the Middle East, and it is for that reason we would like to suggest the following:

1. You vote against H.R. 11088, which would give \$2.2 billion to Israel, and further strain our balance of payments and severely effect our economy.
2. Halt the present transfer of military equipment from U.S. units to Israel.
3. Support S. 2617, a bill to prohibit the use of funds to finance any combat activity by U.S. military forces in the Middle East.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, we wish to state that the same principles that govern our opposing the appropriation for Military Arms for Israel also motivates our opposition to arms for Cambodia. We know from past experiences that it is unwise to engage in long term commitments, and it is more important today, when a wrong decision could engulf us in what could be a war that would destroy all mankind.

Thank you.

THE FOLLOWING IS A RESOLUTION PASSED BY THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST  
IN THE U.S.A.

RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE MIDDLE EAST

Adopted by the Governing Board  
October 15, 1973

The Governing Board of the NCCCUSA -

1. Deplores the outbreak of renewed hostilities in the Middle East which are bringing in their wake added human tragedy and suffering to people who have already had more than their share. We are sorrowed by the loss of life, the continuing and escalating casualty lists, and particularly grieved by the civilian victims of the hostilities. We call upon the American churches to stand ready to respond generously to appeals of Church World Service and the World Council of Churches for the amelioration of human suffering and need on all sides.
2. Urges the U.S. Government to use the full weight of its influence with the parties involved to effect a cessation of hostilities at the earliest possible moment. We continue to believe that the best forum for achieving a cessation of hostilities is the U.N., and that within the context of the Security Council, the great powers ought to work toward this goal.
3. Recognizes that the great powers, particularly the U.S. and the USSR, have contributed to the present conflict, especially through arms supplied to the belligerents. We are disturbed by reports of a continued flow of arms and weapons to both sides and call upon the U.S. government to use the present spirit of detente existing with the USSR to effect an immediate mutual cessation of arms shipments and other military assistance, either directly or indirectly, to the belligerents.
4. Reaffirms our previous position of July 7, 1967 Resloution "indispensable to peace in the Middle East is acceptance by the entire international community of the State of Israel." Equally indispensable is the recognition of the right of Palestinian Arabs to a "home acceptable to them which must now be a matter of negotiation." (Policy Statement, May 2, 1969). The present fighting (viewed by some as an issue of national surbibal and by others as a definition of national boundaries), must be seen as destructive of the minute beginnings that may have been made in bringing greater understanding of the Middle East problems. Particularly disheartening is the repeated rebuff of diplomatic efforts of the Secretary General of the United Nations to effect a settlement, as well as failure of initiatives taken by the U.S. government.
5. Continues to look to the United Nations as the primary instrument for achieving and maintaining peace in the Middle East and urges the U.S. government to make the fullest use of the U.N. in this capacity. The Security Council Resolution 242 of Nov. 22, 1967 is the only declaration which all States concerned have in varying ways accepted. New efforts to reach an agreed upon means for implementation of this resolution and to provide for the realization of the right of self-determination of the Palestinian Arabs are urgently required.
6. Calls upon our member churches and their communities to listen with patience and love to those who feel directly involved, and to raise their voices in support of any actions that will enhance the well-being of the people of the Middle East and contribute to shalom-sala'am-peace for the whole world.

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Based on Policy Statement on the Middle East - May 2, 1969