

Cease-Fire Now! What I Said to the UN Security Council. Col. Ann Wright

Wars will never end as long as weapons transfers into the conflict area continue.

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Not many people [have the opportunity to provide an oral](#) and written statement to the United Nations Security Council. I had my chance on December 11, 2023, when I was asked as a retired U.S. Army colonel and a former U.S. diplomat to speak on weapons transfers in the Russia-Ukraine war.

I introduced myself as a U.S. taxpayer who was fed up with my tax money being used by the powerful and wealthy U.S. arms industry authorized by the U.S. government for sale to countries that are killing innocent civilians.

My statement to the Security Council was simple. Wars will never end as long as weapons transfers into the conflict area continue. I noted, as the Security Council well knows, that civilians will be the primary victims of the transfer of weapons.

I cited the two wars to which the U.S. is providing weapons: Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Gaza.

I took the opportunity to look across the horseshoe U.N. Security Council table and say to the Alternate Representative of the U.S. for Special Political Affairs in the U.N. and Alternate

Representative of the U.S. for Special Political Affairs in the Sessions of the General Assembly of the U.N. **Robert Wood** that I was horrified by “shameful” U.S. veto of the cease-fire resolution for Gaza the previous Friday, December 8, 2023. At that point over 18,000 Palestinians had been killed by massive Israeli bombing using U.S.-provided 2,000-pound bombs, U.S. hellfire missiles, and other U.S.-provided weapons.

Two weeks later, on December 22, 2023, after five days of wrangling with the U.S. on the wording of another resolution, the U.N. Security Council adopted [a watered-down resolution](#) that calls for immediately speeding up aid deliveries to starving civilians in Gaza. The United States refused to agree to a tougher demand for an “urgent suspension of hostilities” between Israel and Hamas. It abstained in the vote, as did Russia, which wanted the stronger language. The resolution was the first on the war to make it through the council after the U.S. vetoed two earlier ones calling for humanitarian pauses and a full cease-fire.

The U.S. has provided Israel \$317 billion in military aid, making it the largest recipient of U.S. foreign assistance since World War II. The U.S. gives Israel \$3.3 billion annually. The Biden administration wants to send another \$10 billion to Israel.

As of late October, two months ago, [the U.S. had delivered](#) 36,000 rounds of 30-millimeter cannon ammunition, 1,800 M141 bunker-buster munitions, at least 3,500 night-vision devices, ammunition for AH-64 Apache helicopter gunships including about 2,000 Hellfire Laser Guided missiles, 57,000 155-millimeter High Explosive artillery shells, 20,000 M4A1 rifles, 5,000 PVS-14 night vision devices, 3,000 M141 hand-held bunker-buster munitions, 400 120- millimeter mortars, 75 of the Army and Marine Corps’ new Joint Light Tactical Vehicles, and 312 Tamir missile interceptors for the Iron Dome.

On the issue of the profitability of weapons transfers particularly in the Ukraine-Russia war, the topic I had been invited to speak on, I reminded the Security Council that in a December 7, 2023, press conference with the new U.K. **Foreign Secretary David Cameron**, [Secretary of State Antony Blinken said](#) that over the last two years, the United States has provided \$70 billion to support Ukraine and European allies have provided more than \$110 billion.

Blinken also said,

“If you look at the investments that we’ve made in Ukraine’s defense to deal with this aggression, 90% of the security assistance we’ve provided has actually been spent here in the United States with our manufacturers, with our production, and that’s produced more American jobs, more growth in our own economy. So, this has also been a win-win that we need to continue.”

I reminded the Security Council that the win-win is not for civilians in conflict areas. The win-win is for the military industrial complex and the politicians and retired government officials who are offered senior positions in companies immediately after their retirements!

And it’s certainly *not* a win-win for the innocent civilians who are killed in these conflicts.

At the end of my statement, I appealed to countries to *not* torpedo peace talks as the U.S. and the U.K. have done to efforts by Germany, Turkey, and Israel to bring the Ukraine-Russia war to an end.

In closing, I read part of a poem that describes how some parents in Gaza have resorted to writing their children's names on their legs to help identify them should either they, the parents, or the children be killed in Israeli bombing.

It was written for the children of Gaza but is applicable to children in all conflict areas—in Ukraine, in Russia, in Israel, in Yemen:

Write My Name on My Leg, Mama.
By Zeina Azzam
Write my name on my leg, Mama
Use the black permanent marker
with the ink that doesn't bleed
if it gets wet...
Write my name on my leg, Mama
and on the legs of my sisters and brothers.
This way we will belong together
This way we will be known
as your children.
Write my name on my leg, Mama
When the bomb hits our house
When the walls crush our skulls and bones
our legs will tell our story, how
there was nowhere for us to run.

On behalf of the people of the world who want to live in peace and safety, I said to the U. N. Security Council: "Stop the Killings! Cease-fires now!"

After the statement I gave in the U.N. Security Council, I doubt that I will be invited back to give another, as I feel quite certain the U.S. would Veto the invitation.

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Featured image: A screengrab shows Retired Army Colonel Ann Wright speaking at the U.N. Security Council on December 11, 2023. (Photo: U.N./Screengrab via CodePink)

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