

Good afternoon. My Name is Paul Shannon and I am representing the American Friends Service Committee in support of House Bill 2349

This bill would require divestment of the Massachusetts pension plan from all stocks and other obligations of companies selling weapons to Saudi Arabia – unless such companies announce within 30 days that they will not renew or enter into new arms contracts.

The four largest such companies are Raytheon, Boeing, General Dynamics and Lockheed Martin. As of this past summer the pension plan held \$193 million in the securities of these 4 companies, a big number but a tiny fraction of the plan's total portfolio.

These companies each sell the Saudis massive quantities of expensive guided bombs and other high tech weapons that play a key role in the thousands of deaths and physical destruction responsible for a raging cholera epidemic and widespread starvation in Yemen.

As you know, the war in Yemen is a tragedy of epic proportions that reputable aid organizations have declared to be the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

This disaster is primarily the result of Saudi bombing of civilian gatherings, hospitals, water and sewage facilities, food warehouses and roads combined with a frequent naval and air blockade.

U.N. humanitarian chief Mark Lowcock warned the U.N. Security Council that millions of Yemenis are on the verge of famine and 3 million have fled their homes. Save the Children found that between April 2015 and October 2018 about 84,701 Yemeni children under the age of 5 have died of untreated cases of severe malnutrition – and the deaths keep piling up in 2019.

Saudi Arabia could not carry on its air war without without the weapons that U.S. arms manufacturers happily sell them by the billions of dollars.

Senator Markey has called for a halt to all arms sales to the Saudi Kingdom and Senator Warren has criticized President Trump for refusing “to halt arms sales to Saudi Arabia in part because he is more interested in appeasing U.S. defense contractors than holding the Saudis accountable for the murder of a Washington Post journalist or for the thousands of Yemeni civilians killed by those weapons”.

Raytheon is, of course, headquartered in Waltham and has manufacturing plants and other major facilities in 8 other cities and towns. Its weapons, technology, deepening relationship with the brutal Saudi regime have helped make war crimes possible in Yemen. The war in Yemen lays at our doorstep here in Massachusetts.

Raytheon bomb parts have been identified at civilian sites attacked by the Saudis. Raytheon hails its 50-year relationship with the medieval Saudi kingdom and is now establishing its subsidiary, Raytheon Arabia, in Riyadh.

And a new agreement allows Raytheon to team up with the Saudis to build high tech bomb parts for the company's Paveway guided bombs **in Saudi Arabia itself.**

More weapons sales to the Saudi-led coalition will doom Yemenis to more death, starvation and disease.

H 2349 offers the legislature the opportunity to stand up for the people of Yemen. It is an opportunity to tell Raytheon, Boeing, Lockheed and General Dynamics that they must end their military support for the uniquely brutal Saudi regime. And it sends a message to the Saudis that they must end their assault in Yemen.