

Veterans For Peace Appeals to Israeli Soldiers to Lay Down Their Arms

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[War Is a Crime](#)

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Israel's military has in recent days attacked the Gaza strip with drones and F-16s, and has apparently been preparing for a possible ground war. Israel is using weaponry provided by the United States at the expense to U.S. taxpayers of \$3 billion per year. Veterans For Peace member Doug Rawlings addresses the following statement to members of the Israeli military:

"I have been to where you are going. From my heart, I beseech you not to join me. In 1969, I was sent to Vietnam as a reluctant soldier, a draftee, who did not have the courage of my convictions. I chose to follow the orders of my government rather than to follow the dictates of my conscience. It's been over forty years now, and I still remember the faces of the Vietnamese people who were victimized by my lack of moral autonomy. I became one of Pharaoh's army, and, to this day, I have been wading through the miasma of that murderous indecisiveness. Had I heeded Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. instead of General William Westmoreland, I would have refused to serve as a pawn in my government's immoral invasion and occupation of Vietnam.

"Westmoreland was one of many who appealed to some kind of base sense of national self-righteousness that relegated a whole people - the "enemy"- to a form of sub-human existence. He, too, heard from chauvinist generals like yours who demanded that we '...bomb the Vietnamese people back to the Stone Age.' Dr. King, on the other hand, was imploring us to not exploit others, to recognize the sacredness of all people, and to not 'trample over others with the iron feet of oppression.' He recognized that '...peace is not merely a distant goal we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal. We must pursue peaceful ends through peaceful means.'

"You, my friends, have become the means of your government, and it is up to you to say that you would rather be warriors for peace than serve in Pharaoh's legions. Follow the lead of the Dr. Kings of the world, not the generals who are willing to use the blood of others to seek some kind of political goals. Rejoin the 'beloved community' of world citizens who recognize the sanctity of all human life. Reject the immoral orders of those who would send you to do their bloody bidding. Refuse orders to attack Gaza. The world is waiting for the first army of peace-makers to turn back the tide of war. Why not start with you?"

Veterans For Peace is a national organization, founded in 1985 with approximately 5,000 members in 150 chapters located in every U.S. state and several countries. It is a 501(c)3 non-profit educational organization recognized as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) by the United Nations, and is the only national veterans' organization calling for the abolishment of war.

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