



# Cut Ties with War Profiteers!

## Resist US-Led War Movement Campaign Concept Paper

### **Background**

War ravages the people of Earth. There is no way to calculate how many deaths result from direct conflict, especially as leading military forces label civilian deaths as “enemy combatants”. It is estimated that there are over 26 million refugees in the world displaced by war and militarization in their home countries. Almost 55 million people were living in internal displacement because of this reason by the end of 2020. Famines from militarized blockades and destruction of local food systems kill hundreds of thousands, with Yemen alone at over 130,000 deaths from starvation since the US-backed Saudi blockade. The US military clocks in as the world’s largest environmental polluter and one of the largest carbon emitters.

But as American monopoly capitalist John D. Rockefeller put it, “The way to make money is to buy when blood is running in the streets.”

Transnational weapons companies (W-TNCs) are corporations with global operations overseeing and gaining profits from the industrial mass production of high-tech weapons of war, even if a percentage of their production is in non-weapons material (such as civilian aircraft or engines). They are private and sometimes state-owned companies, though all of them exist to profit from arming and re-arming state militaries to use in their wars against other countries or their own people. In short, war brings the demand for what they supply.

Imperialist and neocolonial states alike make use of these weapons to assert and defend their violent rule. Sales and “military aid” packages are encouraged for fascist governments that use them against their own people in ways that serve imperialist foreign policy. In a self-fulfilling cycle, W-TNC products are used in wars of aggression in order to lay claim to more land and labor power for control of more production, including the production of even more weapons.

In 2020, the combined profits of the top 5 W-TNCs (Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon, Northrop Grumman, General Dynamics) equaled over \$250 billion. Added to this is in 2021 is almost \$12 billion in US taxpayer-provided military assistance, alongside the whopping \$138 billion of all US weapons exports the same year. \$105 million of this went to just 5 people, the CEOs of top 5 companies. It is therefore clear who is profiting from US-led wars.

Ending war and militarism involves exposing and opposing those who profit from it. Through this campaign, the Resist US-Led War Movement will expose the war profiteering of W-TNCs



and oppose them by isolating them from the institutions that give them financial and ideological support.

### **Objectives**

- Expose the business activities, oligarchic behavior and militaristic outlook of W-TNCs and the realities of their products' use in wars of aggression and oppose these through locally, nationally and internationally coordinated campaigns
- Lead and coordinate actions to institutionally isolate W-TNCs as a means to more effectively target the users of W-TNC products, the government and military forces of US-led war
- Build unity between localized W-TNC campaigns to launch coordinated actions, and between W-TNC campaigns and other campaigns related to US-led war (border militarization, occupations, prisons and political prisoners, overseas bases and military exercises, environmental justice, military spending, etc.)

### **Campaign Conduct**

Campaigns against W-TNCs can take many forms. This overall campaign is designed to coordinate the work of Resist members around the world leading decentralized **localized campaigns** in a way that solicits support from other Resist members' campaign base and, wherever possible, concentrate **joint actions** against W-TNCs and the institutions that support them nationally and internationally. In this way, we can make united blows against a shared target.

Local Resist members are encouraged to start their own localized campaign linked to any of the major W-TNCs (see list at the bottom of this doc). Non-Resist members are encouraged to enjoin the work of their pre-existing campaigns to this campaign network as well. See the Localized Campaign Guide below.

Through its global committees and regional chapters, Resist will coordinate regular meetings where representatives of localized campaigns can report on their work, hear progress of other campaigns and propose joint actions to be taken either in support of their local campaign or against a specific target that is national and/or international in scope (such as a prop action against company whose weapons were proven to have been used in an attack against civilians). There will also be regular information researched and disseminated for members on the global situation of US-led war and the monopoly weapons industry to provide ever-evolving content for localized campaigns and joint actions.

Localized campaigns should include **actionable activities** to mobilize members and their base to confront their target. These activities could include anything from petitions to signing open



letters, writing letters to the editor, confrontational direct action or anything that requires someone to contribute their voice to a demand in some way.

There should also be **propaganda** and **political education** components to ensure consistent exposure of W-TNCs' role in the larger picture of US-led war.

Resist global committees and regional chapters will ensure that tools for these are regularly updated for new and existing members alike.

**Relationship between local and national/global leadership of the campaign**

| Local  | National / Global   |
|--|---|
| <b>Directly reach local stakeholders</b><br>(tuition-paying students, tax-paying residents, workplace employees, foundation recipients, etc.)          | <b>Solicit action from sympathetic supporters</b><br>(out-of-state people who care about isolating W-TNCs worldwide)  |
| <b>Lead the fight against localized targets</b><br>(universities, banks, government offices, W-TNC offices and manufacturing sites)                    | <b>Organize and coordinate national / global joint actions linking localized targets to a bigger blow against overall targets</b> (linking local institutional targets tied to one specific company, i.e. Boeing, Lockheed Martin; linking multiple actions against bank branches against the company itself) |
| <b>Launch and expand local chapters of Resist</b> and/or unite organizations to join Resist's network to continually carry out the localized campaigns | <b>Build national and global regional committees of Resist</b> to continually carry out the national / global coordination of overall company targets   |

**Identifying Campaign Targets**

Below is information on possible targets for localized campaigns and joint actions for institutionally isolating W-TNCs.

***Divestment***

W-TNCs work extra hard to maintain influence over large investment institutions. Banks provide large amounts of capital, and so both W-TNC executives and the government officials they are close with work their way onto the boards of the biggest banks and in the social circles of bank owners. Stock traders on the New York, London, Tokyo and other major Stock Exchanges make millions off investing in the weapons industry. Stock prices for the top five W-TNCs increased by close to and even higher than 1,000% during the 20-year US occupation of



Afghanistan. It is no wonder then why many upper class social circles are an eclectic mix made up of weapons producers, government officials, bankers and stock traders all looking to meet their bottom line.

A more subtle form of investment takes place when an asset management company seeks to grow a fund it manages by investing in many different companies, often without the knowledge of stakeholders. This is how pension funds, educational endowments and other funds become invested in W-TNCs, therefore contributing to their profit-making. Asset managers such as BlackRock, State Street and Vanguard are prominent culprits.

While ultimately amounting to a miniscule percentage of their capital, the investments from various public and private institutions that W-TNCs procure play a stronger role in morally justifying their operations. The most common institutions that invest in this way are universities through their endowments and government treasuries through their public funds.

University endowments and public funds (such as pensions) invest in W-TNCs with the intention of growing their assets. But this uses public money that stakeholders like students and public workers have a legal say in. We must demand that these funds be divested from W-TNCs, and therefore divested from war and militarism.

Campaigns can incorporate demands to divest these funds as a means to engage the funds' stakeholders (students, pensioners, municipal or state residents, etc.) in actionable activities.

### ***“Reverse Divestment” (W-TNC educational and community programs and sponsorships)***

The desire of militaries to maximize “command and control” of battlefields leads W-TNCs to push the limits of society’s technological capacity. Computer programmers, software engineers and applied physicists are sought after from the leading universities worldwide to program auto-pilot and targeting systems along with research into artificial intelligence and quantum computing. Additional research into cyberwarfare, hypersonic and directed energy (laser) weapons and space technology demonstrates how W-TNCs in fact lead research of the entire tech sector to ensure imperialists are well armed to stake their claim to the new domains opening up in both digital and outer space.

To ensure the influence of W-TNCs in the world’s leading universities to funnel students into military STEM R+D (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Research and Development), W-TNC executives find their way onto school boards, deanships and teaching positions.

Universities maintain internships and other programs with W-TNCs, often presented as educational opportunities. These must be exposed as part of the school-to-industry pipeline that co-opts STEM education for recruitment into W-TNCs.



In a way, these situations represent an investment of W-TNCs in universities, and not the other way around. The dividends to the W-TNC come in the form of new R+D personnel and a clean public relations image that hides the reality of war profiteering and ensures a steady stream of all strata of workers and managers. This tactic can therefore be thought of as “reverse investment”

Campaigns can incorporate demands to end these programs as a means to engage campus students, faculty and staff in actionable activities

### ***Re-branding***

The above-mentioned reverse investment brands W-TNCs as positive forces in society because of the business and employment opportunities they provide. They are further rewarded for their sponsorships by having philanthropic awards, community events, school and other institutional buildings named after them and other forms of propaganda.

Campaigns can incorporate demands to remove the names and all other references to W-TNCs from any public space they can use as a local, national and international platform.

### ***Arms Sale Monitor***

The Arms Sale Monitor is a project of the Cut Ties with War Profiteers campaign designed to kickstart joint actions against specific weapons sales. These are in response to sales as they are announced with the objective of canceling them through mass mobilization.

All arms sales from US-based companies to overseas militaries are legally required to be publicly announced by the US State Department. After the announcement, there is a period in which they can be challenged by the US Congress. Through this project, an Arms Sale Alert will be put out with a call to action and other information needed for decentralized mass actions demanding the sale's cancellation. Actions will be called for globally, targeting Congress members in the US, US embassies in other countries, W-TNC facilities and other locations worldwide.

Resist will help lead through its global committees and regional chapters to ensure the most effective coordination of actions. Resist committees will lead the monitoring of arms sales and help to identify which ones to target through the campaign based on estimated mobilizing capacity, companies that our current members are focusing their localized campaigns on and what countries our members are focused on that are included in the sale. Resist will also put together the Arms Sale Alerts and develop a plan to coordinate the joint actions themselves.



Actions for the Arms Sale Monitor are designed to be quick-turnaround and fast-paced to respond to the time period set by the State Department. Even if actions are not successful in blocking arms sales, the objective of winning more support for the localized campaigns to isolate W-TNCs will be strived for regardless. This in turn will increase the mobilizing capacity for future Arms Sale Alerts.

### **Propaganda and Political Education**

Localized campaigns are encouraged to initiate their own education and propaganda that fits their local objectives. Resist will offer materials such as primers, slideshows and other items to assist members in constructing their political education programs. Resist will also host regular political education on W-TNCs, wars of aggression and militarism around the world and other burning issues related to the campaign.

The Resist Resource and Campaign committees will collaborate on the creation of these materials while the Membership committee will ensure communication with local members to collect input and self-made materials from members leading localized campaigns.

The Campaign Committee will produce regular prop that relates to the campaign objectives and serves the ongoing political education. It will also ensure that prop from localized campaigns is shared widely.

### ***Weapons Watch***

One project overseen by Resist globally will be the Weapons Watch, a prop project serving the central objective of the Cut Ties with War Profiteers campaign of exposing the business activities, oligarchic behavior and militaristic outlook of W-TNCs and the realities of their products' use in wars of aggression.

This will be in the form of social media posts featuring infographics in an easily digestible way on important facts, figures and current events related to the weapons industry and military spending. The Campaign Committee will lead this project and localized campaigns are encouraged to share them.



## **Localized Campaign Guide**

### **Target**

Identify the specific target using the framework listed above

### **Campaign Name**

This should be a catchy and clear campaign name that clearly communicates the issue and the main call to the public. While the overall campaign through Resist that unites these all will be titled Cut Ties With War Profiteers, named localized campaigns can help easily point local community members towards an action in their city or state.

Examples:

- “PSU, Cut Ties With Boeing!”
- “Who’s Boeing Bombing”
- “Boeing Arms Genocide”

### **Background and Analysis**

This should include relevant information and data that introduces the problem and issue the campaign is trying to address. This will be where the local target is introduced, how the target is connected to specific companies and why people should care.

This should also speak to the roots of the problem and issues, the relationship to the overall political and economic system, how exploitation and injustice are happening, etc.

This can be similar to the overall background presented in this campaign paper but with a focus on the concrete ways the local target contributes to the power of W-TNCs.

### **Goals and Objectives**

Lists down the qualitative goals and quantitative (measurable) objectives.

Examples of qualitative goals:

- Ending a Raytheon training program at a university
- Educate campaign participants on the systematic problem of the military industrial complex in their city

Examples of quantitative objectives:

- Recruit 4 organizations to a local Resist chapter
- Gather 500 petition signatures



- Raise \$1000 for campaign resources

## **Demands**

What are the concrete demands to be made to the target? Can be determined as immediate, intermediate and long-term demands

Examples:

- Immediate: Disinvite General Dynamics CEO from speaking engagement.
- Intermediate: Divest all institutional assets from W-TNCs
- Intermediate: End recruitment programs with Lockheed Martin
- Long-term: Cut all ties with W-TNCs

## **Alliance Work**

List organizations and individuals to bring into the coalition or engage to contribute/provide particular support. These can be organizations, institutions, and/or individuals that can have similar issues, cause or identity.

**Prop/Public information** (how are we raising awareness and spreading the message of the campaign in the widest possible way?)

- Media
  - Press Conference
  - Op-Ed
- Online
  - Memes
  - Facebook, IG
- Off-line
  - Statement flyers (should determine where these materials can be distributed and how many is aimed to be reached)

## **Finance/Fundraising**

How much money and resources need to raised? How do we raise the money in such a way that further engages more people?

## **Design & Phasing**

| Phasing | Date | Activity |
|---------|------|----------|
|---------|------|----------|



|                   |  |  |
|-------------------|--|--|
| <b>Prep</b>       |  | Preparation includes time for research, fact finding, initial meeting and planning, initial alliance work, etc   |
| <b>Kick-Off</b>   |  | This should be a big, visible and wide reaching activity to announce the campaign to the public. This can be in the form of press conferences, rallies or combinations of activities.  |
| <b>Sustaining</b> |  | This is the period to sustain attention of the public, engagement of members and alliances but also a period of gaining strength and support.  |
| <b>Peak</b>       |  | This can be the peak of activity to achieve the demands of the campaign. It should be the combination of the broadest number of active support, highest appropriate form of mobilization, etc.   |
| <b>Resolution</b> |  | Ideally, this is where the demands - full or partial - of the campaign or can just be the end of the first period in preparation for the continuing struggle. This can include celebrations - if victorious - assessment, studies, consolidation, and planning for moving forward. |