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From: Peace and Justice Works <pjw@pjw.info>

To: Portland City Council -- Commissioner Amanda Fritz <amanda@portlandoregon.gov>,
Commissioner Chloe Eudaly <chloe@portlandoregon.gov>,
Commissioner Dan Saltzman <dan@portlandoregon.gov>,
Commissioner Nick Fish <Nick@portlandoregon.gov>,
Mayor Ted Wheeler <MayorWheeler@portlandoregon.gov>

Cc: News Media <newsmedia@pjw.info>

Subject: **COMMENTS: Opposing the proclamation of April 21 as "USS Portland Day"**

Mayor Ted Wheeler and members of City Council:

We urge you to reconsider and withhold your proclamation that April 21 will be "USS Portland Day," because this proclamation directly conflicts with earlier Council statements and resolutions about spending priorities and Portland's concerns about military conflicts. In 2012, Council voted to support a resolution calling attention to the domestic costs of war and calling for the funds being spent on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to be redirected to human needs. (Resolution No. 36896 which we have posted at http://pjw.info/wardollars_city_final.html) Moreover, several of our Mayors (including, we believe, Mayor Wheeler last year) have supported similar resolutions at the National Conference of Mayors. For example, resolution #59 in 2011 called for the war dollars to come home:

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/itsallpolitics/2011/06/20/137305749/mayors-ask-congress-to-end-iraq-afghan-wars-reroute-money-to-u-s-cities>

A resolution passed in 2017 stated that cities (including Portland) would direct department heads to consider what they could accomplish with money now being spent on the military instead being distributed for local use. It called attention to the fact that even "fractions of the ... military budget could provide free, top-quality education from pre-school through college, end hunger and starvation on earth, convert the U.S. to clean energy, provide clean drinking water everywhere it's needed on the planet, build fast trains between all major U.S. cities."

http://legacy.usmayors.org/resolutions/85th_Conference/proposedcommittee.asp?committee=Metro%20Economies

The website promoting the commissioning of the "amphibious landing dock" tells us the ship has two anti-air missile systems, two 30MM anti-surface guns and nine 50 caliber anti-surface machine guns. Thus, it is disingenuous for the proclamation to state that this warship will "protect our nations [sic] interests but also provide aid during emergencies such as earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes or other disasters." When Iraq was under United States and United Nations sanctions, our country refused to let in hundreds of items that the Iraqi people desperately needed, including tires for their ambulances, because the federal government claimed those items were "dual use" for both civilian and military. Just as it was a morally imprecise stretch to prevent tires from reaching the Iraqi public because they might be used for military purpose, it is a stretch in the other direction to praise a warship because it may someday be used for humanitarian relief efforts.

It is bad enough that when warships visit our waterfront during the Rose Festival, we are now met with signs that say "No Trespassing-- US Navy Restricted Area-- USE OF FORCE AUTHORIZED." As we wrote to the Mayor last June, that's a very jarring message at a "family-friendly" event.

Setting aside the undemocratic nature of a non-profit holding an event with limited public seating (<http://ussportlandlpd27.org/>), and holding City Council hearings where no public testimony is taken, we instead choose to focus on the dangers of praising military spending when our housing, roads, parks, schools and other critical infrastructure are under-funded and crumbling. As Martin Luther King, Jr. said: "A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."

Please drop the proclamation and continue the City's policy to promote nourishing life rather than ending it.

--dan handelman
for Peace and Justice Works
PO Box 42456
Portland, OR 97242
(503) 236-3065
pjw@pjw.info
<http://www.pjw.info>