**2023 Year-end message from President of INAT**

Yesterday was Christmas, a time most spend with family, sharing gifts, good food and happy stories. Some see it simply as a holiday, most recognize its origins as a holy day. However, in this year exactly 2023 years after the birth of Jesus Christ, the world is faced with very disturbing times in his birthplace, Palestine. A CNN news title (12/24/2023) read “With war raging in Gaza, Christmas is effectively canceled in Bethlehem”. The text of the article read.

“Local leaders made the decision last month to scale back festivities in solidarity with the Palestinian population﻿, as heavy fighting raged between Israel and Hamas in the devastated Gaza Strip. More than 20,000 Palestinians have been killed during Israel’s air and ground offensive, according to the Hamas-controlled Ministry of Health in Gaza and nearly 85% of the strip’s total population has been displaced. … Many here [West Bank]have ties to Gaza through loved ones and friends, and a sense of misery has fallen upon the city revered by Christians as the birthplace of Jesus”

This apartheid-level destruction and atrocities is only possible because of the military technology at the disposal of Israel. Their military assault is guided by the conquest mentality that dominates Israeli leadership. The year is ending on an unparalleled violent note last seen in Palestine in 1948 when the European settler invasion created the state of Israel.

As INAT, we are concerned with technology policy and the impact that current technology development and deployment is having worldwide. All citizens should be concerned about how their governments are spending tax dollars on military technology. USA citizens should be particularly concerned since their government gives over 3 billion dollars in military technology to Israel each year, while over 580 thousand are homeless in the USA. Last year the USA government spent $136 billion on the procurement of weapons, $107 billion on research and development of weapons and equipment and over $10 billion on the construction and management of military facilities. This is a governmental policy choice grounded in the conquest mentality. Earlier this month INAT gave a seminar on ‘Military technology and the conquest mentality’. A recording of the seminar is available on our website.

According to the Global Health Policy Website (dated 20 December 2023) “About half of the world’s population is at risk of being infected with malaria. In 2022, there were an estimated 249 million cases of malaria and 608,000 deaths from malaria worldwide.” The same publication points out “U.S. funding for malaria control efforts and research activities was approximately $1 billion in FY 2023”. While the U.S. is the largest donor to global malaria control, this $1 billion contribution pales when compared to the military spending sited above and the **$766 billion** allocated to the defense department last year.

The destruction of Gaza over the last three months is the result of bombs and missiles largely made in the USA and funded by citizens’ taxes. In 2024 there will be a need to rebuild hospitals, housing, water and sanitation systems, the electricity grid, and roads. Who will provide the funding for this technology? There must be an immediate call for an end to the destruction of Gaza. There is a need to plan now for the application of appropriate technology and techniques to 1) assure the health and safety of the close to 2 million displaced people and 2) swiftly rebuild the necessary infrastructure in Gaza.

As INAT’s president, I call on all that read this message to pressure governments and industries to call for an end to the killing of innocent women and children in Palestine. We must organize to end this attempted conquest of Palestine and combat this conquest mentality in all its forms. **INAT believes embracing technology that empowers people, and their communities is a step in this process. An end to funding of weapons technology would provide money needed to meet the basic needs of billions of the poorest of our world’s population.**