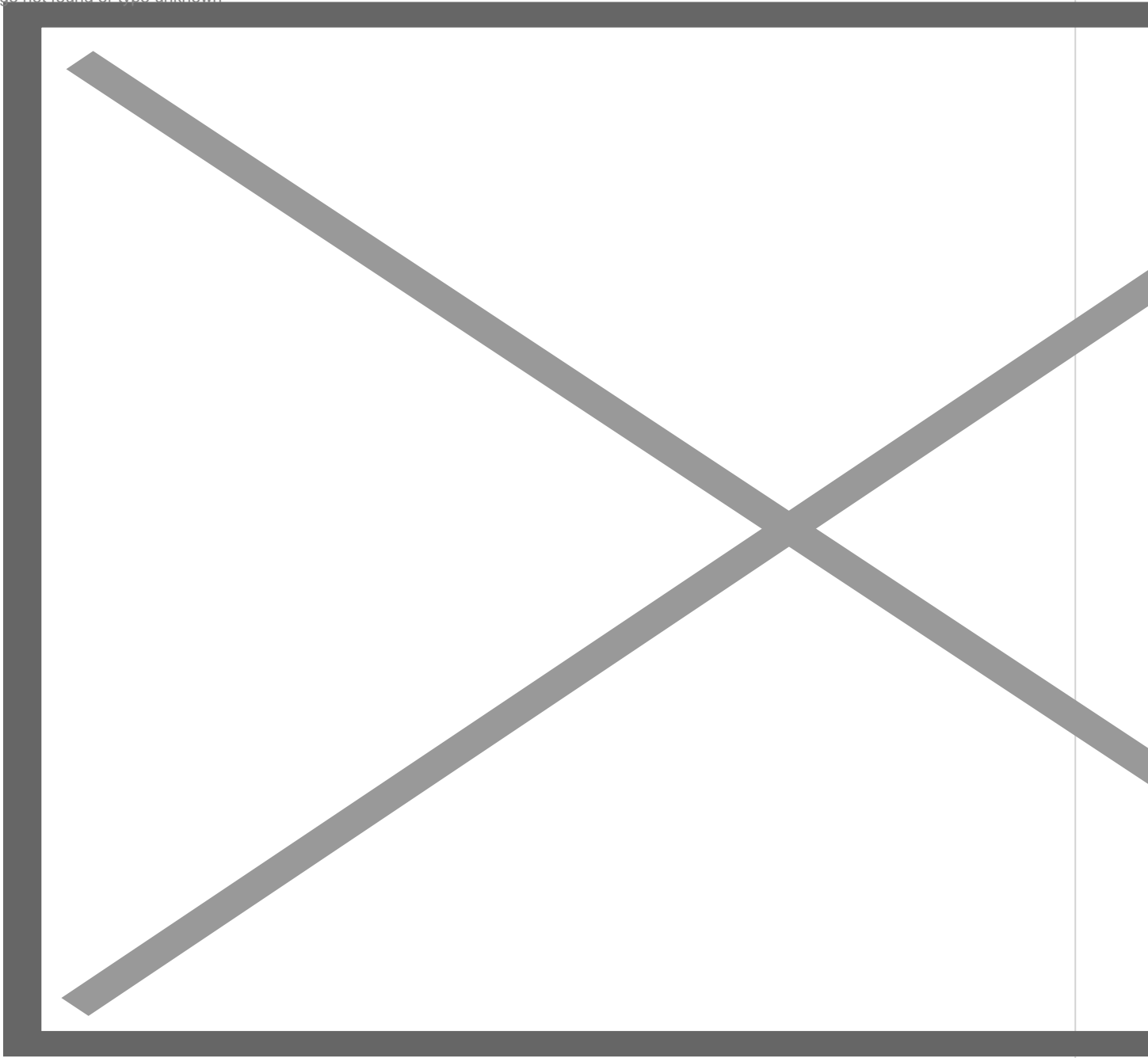


*San Francisco State University
divests from arms companies
aiding Israel's war on Gaza*

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Demonstrations at San Francisco State University last semester

San Francisco, September 1 (RHC)-- In a move celebrated by pro-Palestinian activists as a win for the divestment movement and a "major victory" for Palestinian rights advocacy in the United States, San Francisco State University (SFSU) has pulled investments from four weapons companies involved in Israel's war on Gaza.

Students for Gaza SFSU said the university will sell its corporate bond position in American aerospace and arms manufacturer Lockheed Martin Corporation, Italian defense company Leonardo, U.S.-based data analysis enterprise Palantir Technologies, as well as construction equipment manufacturer Caterpillar.

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) had earlier described the corporations as “profiting from the Gaza genocide.”

Students at the SFSU held a press conference and rally in the Malcolm X Plaza on campus where they announced the news to fellow students.

Activists say the move came following months of demonstrations from pro-Palestinian groups calling on the SFSU to withdraw investments in portfolios that profit from harming Palestinians.

Noam Perry, the strategic research coordinator with the AFSC, said the measure was significant for a variety of reasons, none more so than “the transformative process the university went through, and the moral stance it committed to” in reaching its decision to change track on the investments.

“It’s not that the university decided to divest from these four companies. It’s that the university decided on a new ethical investment policy, and when it screened its direct investments through this new lens, these are the companies that were flagged. So the policy would make sure the university cannot directly invest in these and other similar companies in the future.

“As far as I know, this has been the most earnest process that a US university has had so far to respond to the divestment demands of its student’s encampment,” Perry said. He added that the university had demonstrated that it respected students’ voices regarding how it invested its money.

Perry said that whereas Lockheed Martin, one of the world’s largest weapons manufacturers, has been supplying F16s and F35 jets to the Israeli Air Force, the Italian weapons manufacturer, Leonardo, has been providing the Israeli navy with the 76 mm guns that have been targeting Gaza from the sea.

The Denver-based Palantir Technologies has been helping Israel develop “kill lists” for Israel, while Caterpillar, infamous for its D9 armored bulldozers, has been a long-time target for Palestinian activists due to its role in demolishing Palestinian homes and civilian infrastructure.

“These bulldozers have also been crucial for Israel’s ground invasion of the Gaza Strip, accompanying combat troops and paving their way by clearing roads and flattening entire residential neighborhoods,” Perry added.

Perry said, success notwithstanding, more work still needs to be done at the university. “It’s important to note that divestment from both Palantir and Caterpillar was not due to SFSU’s commitment to divest from weapons manufacturers, but thanks to the other parts of the university’s investment policy, which now considers internationally-recognized human rights, in addition to the university’s prior commitments to racial justice and environmental issues,” he said.

Back in April and May this year, students set up an encampment at SFSU, as part of the nationwide call for students to demand universities to divest from corporations seen as complicit in the bloody Israeli onslaught against Gaza. The encampment organized by Students for Gaza SFSU lasted three weeks.



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