

POC Quakers - Business & Breakfast Meeting Minutes Held April 19, 2026 at 15th Street Meeting

Present: Helen Garay Toppins (clerk), Linda Shirley (Treasurer, cenhesse), John Choe (Working Group), Ernestine Buscemi (Working Group), and Miguel Herrera

1. Financial Report: As of February 28, 2026 we have \$4,930.28 in our bank account. All expenses this month were paid by donations, so there were no drawdowns from the account.
 - \$29.80 remains from the NYQ Witness Fund allocated to the Translation Project.
 - \$2,402.46 is left in our Quakerism Curriculum Fund
 - \$2,498.02 is unallocated and discretionary

2. NYYM Affinity Group

Helen Garay Toppins has been actively working on development of an affinity group for people of color for NYYM. She has been coordinating community building and our collective response to the NYYM Statement *On Becoming an Anti-racist Faith Community* (<https://nyym.org/anti-racism-statement>). Twenty Friends of color have so far signed up. Future meeting times are being suggested and agenda items are being sought. Please contact Helen at Office@NYYM.org for more information.

3. Witness

- (a) Rapid Response - In order to facilitate a rapid response on matters, such as signing petitions, releasing statements or correspondence on behalf of POC, we agree that the Working Group shall be contacted via email for approval and shall report the action at the next POC Business Meeting. This procedure will only be used on matters clearly uncontroversial that are in accordance with our testimonies. .
- (b) We affirm the attached NYYM statement concerning the War in Iran, which we will publish on our website and distributed as needed.

(c) Linda Shirley is authorized to sign the Anti-Apartheid Communities pledge at AFSC on behalf of POC.

(d) We affirm our support for the attached Report to the NY Quarter regarding their financial divestment in companies that do not align with Quaker testimony.

4. Governance.

Membership: We have membership in the Working Group, but not in the POC as a whole. Membership in the Working Group will be affirmed at a POC Business Meeting by a sense of those at the Meeting and will be done in the manner of Friends.

Topics for discussion at the next POC Business & Breakfast Meeting:

- The proposed retreat for POC Worship & Reflection
- Engagement with Manhattan Monthly Meeting (which POC is under the care of)

5. Innocents Abroad

- John Choe has been appointed NYYM representative for AFSC and attended the AFSC Annual Meeting. He continues to advocate for Friends Fiduciary and other Quaker organizations to divest from companies engaged in questionable military pursuits.
- POC affirms our support for his ministry and affirms the attached Minute Calling for Military Technology Divestment with its accompanying report - Quaker Concerns About Investing in Military Technology. John Choe drafted a petition for those concerned with Quaker investments in Friends Fiduciary and profits generated by military contractors complicit in genocide: <https://www.change.org/friendsfiduciary>.

6. Advancement.

Our Inclusive First Day School Curriculum has progressed through Lesson 6 - Equality, Lesson 7 - AntiRacism and we had a productive session discussing our response to the NYYM Statement *On*

Becoming an Antiracist Faith Community. Field trip to The Studio Museum of Harlem is scheduled for April 26, 2026. Tickets are free.

7. Chinese Translation of Faith & Practice.

Our Anonymous Donor is ready to fund the remaining project and we are just waiting to engage a Chinese-English Reader. As soon as they are engaged we will proceed with translating the remaining pages of Faith, the Glossary and Advices and Queries. Once that is complete the New Inclusive Introduction can be finalized and translated. (We have funding for that as well.)

Announcements:

a. Nova Sturup is in urgent need of a kidney donor and financial support. You can find the GoFundMe appeal at: <https://gofund.me/9a8e2148>. We urge everyone who can to help them in this critical time.

**New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (NYYM)
Minute on the 2026 Iran War**

New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, the association of Friends and Quaker Meetings and Churches in New York and parts of Connecticut and New Jersey, joins with people of many faiths and moral conscience in decrying the ongoing and escalating U.S.-Israeli war on Iran, even as we oppose all wars, and the spiraling violence war sparks. Friends know as a matter of faith, scripture, and experience that war does not resolve differences, but rather ignites escalating rounds of violence. War harms and dehumanizes everyone.

We mourn the tragic loss of life. We mourn the financial cost of this war at about \$1 billion or more per day, while the U.S. government cuts funding for life-sustaining aid around the world and cuts funding for education, healthcare, food, and other essential needs at home. We are commanded not to be arrogant with our wealth, but to be rich in good deeds and take hold of the life that is truly life (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

We call on our elected officials to take action to stop funding the war, end the fighting, and direct the Administration to respect U.S. and international law, to undertake good-faith diplomatic negotiations to establish an immediate ceasefire and end the war.

We aspire to live in that Spirit that reaches across divides and takes away the occasion for all wars. This war inflicts trauma that will have damaging consequences for generations to come. We must acknowledge the harms and listen with compassion to all those harmed. Only then can we step into the healing that brings about a just world where peace is possible.

— New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Minute Calling for Military Technology Divestment

The Religious Society of Friends unite in our testimonies for peace, equality and integrity. As a spiritual community, we see the Light in all and value each life equally. The use of advanced technology to enable war, occupation, and repression is incompatible with our testimonies as a spiritual community. Therefore, we urge all Quaker meetings and organizations to divest from technology companies whose cloud computing and artificial intelligence products enable military, intelligence, and law enforcement agencies to conduct surveillance, detention, and targeted killing.

We are especially troubled by technologies that gather and analyze vast stores of personal data, identify individuals at scale, and support targeting decisions that can lead to detention or death. Such uses of AI and cloud infrastructure are incompatible with a faithful commitment to see that of God in every person and to labor for a world free from war and oppression.

Whether it is the rounding up of our neighbors in concentration camps, the murder of journalists and doctors in Palestine or the bombing of school children in Iran, we must not invest and profit from corporations complicit in enabling these crimes. As Friends, we cannot in good conscience profit from systems that expand the machinery of domination, automate harm, or make violence more efficient and less accountable.

We therefore ask Friends to review all investments, end holdings in companies materially supporting these practices, and redirect resources toward enterprises consistent with peace, justice, and human dignity. We further encourage Quaker meetings and organizations to make this witness public, so that our finances may more fully align with our faith.

We hold in the Light all who suffer under surveillance, detention, and armed violence, and we seek courage to live as a people whose witness does not underwrite the tools of harm.

For more information, read

Quaker Concerns about Investing in Military Technology

Drafted by the People of Color (POC) Worship & Reflection Group of the New York Quarter (April 2026)

Introduction

This document compiles information on Quaker witness and advocacy regarding the integration of technology firms like Amazon, Microsoft and Google into military operations and weapons systems, particularly in the context of cloud-based AI-driven warfare and its impact on civilian populations in Palestine, Lebanon, Iran and the surrounding region. It reflects concerns about how Quaker investments in these technologies may not align with our testimonies of peace, equality, and integrity.

Concerns About Tech Firms and Militarization

Quakers have raised concerns about the ethical implications of tech firms' involvement in military operations. High-profile contracts like the Pentagon's \$9 billion [Joint Warfighting Cloud Capability](#) (JWCC) program and the Israeli military's \$1.2 billion Project Nimbus exemplify the growing centrality of cloud computing infrastructure and artificial intelligence (AI) in operationalizing advanced weapons systems. In total, the Pentagon is spending \$13.4 billion on AI this year, including the [Maven](#) targeting system, which received a contract ceiling increase to \$1.3 billion through 2029.

Amazon and Google jointly won the [Project Nimbus](#) contract to provide advanced cloud computing and AI capabilities for Israeli military and intelligence agencies to **harvest data for facial recognition, tracking, and targeted killing of Palestinians, including journalists, doctors and teachers – in violation of international law.** Engineers at these companies were the first to object to the use of the technologies they built to facilitate unethical surveillance and targeting of civilians by Israeli military and intelligence agencies.

The JWCC currently involves four tech companies delivering cloud solutions for the U.S. Department of War to plan and fight future armed conflicts with advanced communications, data processing, information sharing, and synchronization capabilities across multiple domains (i.e., land, sea, air, cyber, space). **By enabling the use of advanced weapon systems and coordinated military operations, these emerging technologies conflict with our testimonies.**

AI targeting systems like [Maven](#) have already been implicated in automatically identifying and directing air strikes against thousands of targets in Iran – including a school where 168 children were killed on the first day. Hospitals, bridges and oil refineries have all been targeted. Under international law, destroying civilian infrastructure is a war crime. **The speed of AI targeting has reduced human mediation and judgement – often compounding faulty intelligence – exponentially automating the machinery of death.**

AI's Impact on Gaza

The Israeli military's AI-powered targeting systems like '[Lavender](#)' and '[Where's Daddy?](#)' have had a profound impact on Gaza's population, which is undergoing what many human rights groups like [Amnesty International](#) and experts at the [United Nations](#) consider a "genocide." Israel's "Where's Daddy?" program calculates when fathers are home with their families in order to maximize casualties during targeted missile strikes, often ending entire bloodlines.

Key impacts include:

- **Target Identification and Surveillance:** reliance on AI systems to rapidly analyze data and identify targets increases the risk of civilian casualties, including the destruction of entire families, in military strikes.
- **Automated Decision-Making in Warfare:** these systems accelerate weapons use and reduce human oversight in targeting decisions, increasing the risk of mistakes and "collateral damage" as well as [grossly disproportionate \(and avoidable\) civilian casualties](#).
- **Destruction of Civilian Life:** AI-powered airstrikes often prioritize the targeting of residential areas and civilian infrastructure – including hospitals, schools, and houses of worship – resulting in widespread destruction and loss of life.
- **Ethical and Humanitarian Concerns:** military systems powered by algorithms and artificial intelligence challenge the principles of proportionality and distinction, fundamental to international humanitarian law.

The use of cloud computing and AI technology has become so critical to the widespread destruction and ethnic cleansing of Palestine that the United Nations Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese included an entire section in her recent report documenting how American tech companies enable and profit from the "[Economy of Genocide](#)."

The Israeli government also uses big tech's cloud computing and AI technology to maintain its illegal occupation and [apartheid system](#) of ethnic segregation and racially motivated violence elsewhere in Palestine such as in the West Bank and Jerusalem. These are [not a utilization of "off-the-shelf" products](#), but special accommodations made for military operations: 'Google and Amazon submitted to highly unorthodox "controls" that Israel inserted into the deal' according to news reports.

Quaker Advocacy

Quakers, who have advocated for peace, and equality throughout our history, are now being asked to extend these principles to the struggle for climate justice and limiting the use of advanced technology in surveillance, war and immigrant detention. Actions based on these principles include:

- **Support for Worker Protests:** Quaker organizations like the [American Friends Service Committee](#) (AFSC) have supported employee-led protests in tech companies against military contracts like Project Nimbus.

- **Calls for Divestment:** Similar to earlier campaigns to end apartheid in South Africa, Quaker groups now urge institutional investors to divest from companies profiting from war, genocide, and apartheid.
- **Advocacy for Corporate Accountability:** Quakers have called for greater transparency and ethical guidelines for global corporations, most recently around climate justice and sustainability.

Advocacy works. Pressure by advocates and journalists recently forced Microsoft to end its partnership with Unit 8200 (a notorious arm of the Israeli military implicated in war crimes) in the use of its Azure cloud computing and AI service. While laudable, more remains to be done, as Microsoft continues to contract with the Israeli military at large.

AFSC and Friends Fiduciary

Many Quaker meetings have unknowingly become complicit in genocide by investing our corporate endowments through Friends Fiduciary, a Quaker investment fund that buys shares in corporations like Amazon, Google and Microsoft. Despite years-long efforts urging them to change their investment policies, Friends Fiduciary has refused to shift funding away from these military contractors and war profiteers. Friends Fiduciary argues that military technology is too complicated to develop a clear divestment policy and that we shouldn't penalize corporations selling "dual-use technology" (ie, tech that can be used for both civilian and military purposes). They employed similar arguments and delaying tactics when questioned about our investments in fossil fuel companies, but were eventually forced to divest when enough Quaker meetings began to object.

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) has played a leading role in organizing Friends to end the genocide and apartheid. AFSC maintains an extensive library of investment research that details big tech's complicity in the Israeli government atrocities in Palestine (as well as human rights violations around the world). AFSC also maintains a shortlist of companies to divest from, which Friends Fiduciary appears to base its decisions on divestment. Unfortunately, AFSC's shortlist leaves out some of the biggest tech companies complicit in genocide. The non-violent Palestinian-led Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement has called for us to divest from Google, Amazon, and Microsoft (BDS also calls for consumer boycotts of big tech but acknowledges that reasonable alternatives might not exist). This disparity between BDS and AFSC divestment priorities should be remedied with AFSC updating its shortlist and encouraging Friends Fiduciary to divest our money from these highly complicit military tech contractors. Pressure campaigns without the teeth of potential impacts on corporate bottom-lines have not been sufficiently effective thus far.

As a spiritual community that upholds the testimonies of peace, equality and integrity, please consider taking action to raise awareness and oppose war, genocide, and the violation of our rights. Some steps could include:

1. Contacting Friends Fiduciary, urging AFSC to update its divestment shortlist, or signing an online petition urging them to reconsider their investments in Amazon and other tech companies complicit in genocide;
2. Drafting and submitting a minute requesting your Quaker worship group, meeting or organization divest corporate endowments from companies complicit in war and genocide; or,
3. Withholding financial support from Quaker worship groups, meetings or organizations that refuse to divest from companies complicit in war and genocide.

Questions? Contact the Friends of Color Working Group at poc@nycquakers.org!

Sources and URLs

1. **Democracy Now:** "*Lavender & Where's Daddy: How Israel Used AI to Form Kill Lists & Bomb Palestinians in Their Homes*" - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4RmNjH4UN3s>
2. **Wired Magazine:** "*The Hidden Ties Between Google and Amazon's Project Nimbus and Israel's Military*" - <https://www.wired.com/story/amazon-google-project-nimbus-israel-idf/>
3. **Quakers in the World:** "*Quaker Peace & Social Witness and Disarmament*" - <https://www.quakersintheworld.org/quakers-in-action/102/Disarmament>
4. **American Friends Service Committee:** "*AFSC Supports Student Protests Demanding Divestment for Palestinian Rights*" - <https://afsc.org/newsroom/quaker-org-supports-student-protests-demanding-divestment-palestinian-rights>
5. **Common Dreams:** "*No Tech for Apartheid Campaign*" - <https://www.commondreams.org/news/no-tech-for-apartheid>
6. **International Commission of Jurists:** "*Symposium on Military AI and the Law of Armed Conflict*" - <https://opiniojuris.org/2024/04/04/symposium-on-military-ai-and-the-law-of-armed-conflict-the-need-for-speed-the-cost-of-unregulated-ai-decision-support-systems-to-civilians/>
7. **The Guardian:** "*Microsoft blocks Israel's use of its technology in mass surveillance of Palestinians*" - <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/sep/25/microsoft-blocks-israels-use-of-its-technology-in-mass-surveillance-of-palestinians>
8. **United Nations:** "*From Economy of Occupation to Economy of Genocide - Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories Occupied since 1967*" - <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/ahrc5923-economy-occupation-economy-genocide-report-special-rapporteur>
9. **Euractive:** "*AI at war: Five things to know about Project Maven*," <https://www.euractiv.com/news/ai-at-war-five-things-to-know-about-project-maven/>
10. **New York Times:** "*Silicon Valley Bet on War. The Bets Are Paying Off.*" <https://archive.ph/9Ux1U#selection-503.0-503.51>