

# Voices for Creative Nonviolence

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## December, 2007

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## Dear Friends,

Soon a new year will be upon us. With the dawn of 2008 will come presidential caucuses and primaries; a new Iraq war funding bill; and a continuing humanitarian catastrophe in Iraq, spilling over into Jordan and Syria.

With the new year comes new opportunities for nonviolent resistance to the U.S. war in Iraq and to advocating for payment of reparations to Iraq.

We invite you to join us in Iowa in the five days immediately preceding the Iowa presidential caucus for the SODaPOP campaign. From December 29th through January 3rd, we will engage in nonviolent civil disobedience at the campaign offices of Presidential candidates.

On January 11, Witness Against Torture ([www.witness torture.org](http://www.witness torture.org)) will organize resistance actions in Washington, D.C. to call for the closure of Guantanamo and the end to the use of torture by the U.S. If you cannot travel to D.C., please consider joining or organizing actions in your home community. In his Senate confirmation hearings, the new U.S. Attorney General Michael Mukasey would not even concede that water boarding is a form of torture. We cannot be silent.

In January and February, Congress will consider providing additional funding for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Voices will continue to organize Occupation Project actions around the country during this time period. We especially encourage nonviolent civil disobedience in the local offices of Representatives and Senators from January 15 (Martin Luther King Birthday) through February 22.

On November 8th, activists from Voices for Creative Nonviolence, the University of Iowa, the Iowa Catholic Worker community and the Iowa Occupation Project gathered in Des Moines, Iowa to launch SODaPOP, - "Seasons of Discontent, a Presidential Occupation Project." Aiming to bring the Occupation Project into the

Presidential campaign, we nonviolently occupied the offices of Senator Clinton and Mayor Rudy Giuliani, front runners for the presidential nomination of their respective party and arguably the most hawkish on international affairs within their parties.

Iowa Occupation Project campaign members previously visited the campaign offices of each aspiring presidential candidate (with the notable exceptions of Representatives Dennis Kucinich and Ron Paul, each of whom has consistently opposed funding the U.S. war in Iraq and who are therefore not a focal point of SODaPOP). They delivered a letter seeking a public commitment to complete withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Iraq, cessation of all U.S. military action against Iraq (including an end to air, naval and ground combat), and opposition to any form of military action against Iran.

In Senator Clinton's office, Farah Mokhtareizadeh began reading from the famous speech that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave on April 4, 1967 at Riverside Church in New York, titled "Declaration of Independence from the Vietnam War." One staffer decided to drown out Farah's voice by turning on a booming guitar riff. Undeterred, Farah picked up a bullhorn and continued reading the speech, overpowering the music. Shortly thereafter the music was turned off, allowing all to hear Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's words:

*"We must be prepared to match actions with words by seeking out every creative method of protest possible."*

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Eighteen activists were arrested on charges of criminal trespass, ten in Giuliani's office and eight in Clinton's office. All pled guilty and were fined \$65 plus court costs. We're grateful to a broad range of activists and supporters who've worked to assert the demand to end funding for the war into the process for nominating presidential candidates.

Dr. King's challenge must ring loudly and clearly, stirring us beyond complacency. It's a season of discontent, with no time for despair.

We conclude with changes here at Voices. For the past five years, Laurie Hasbrook has worked diligently and tirelessly here as one of our core office members in Chicago. A strong advocate for social justice, Laurie will be extending her work into other areas of the struggle for justice and will no longer be a core office person. We thank Laurie for her commitment to the work of Voices and all she has given to us in her time with us. Her daily presence in the office will be missed. At the same time, we look forward to continuing to work with Laurie as part of our extended Voices community.

In Solidarity,  
*Kathy Kelly, Scott Blackburn, Dan Pearson, Roshani Saraiya,  
Joel Gulledege, Jeff Leys, Ron Durham, Farah Mokhtareizadeh,  
Bob Abplanalp*



## **The Occupation Project: January to March 2008**

### **A Campaign to End Iraq War Funding and to Prevent U.S. Military Action Against Iran**

Sometime in January or February, Congress will take up President Bush's request for up to another \$192 billion in funding for the Iraq – Afghanistan wars through September 30, 2008. The actual amount will depend upon whether Congress approves more funding for the wars before going on recess in December.

In response, Voices will continue to coordinate the Occupation Project campaign of nonviolent civil disobedience and civil resistance, with a particular focus upon January and February.

### **Congress' November War Funding Vote (HR 4156)**

In late November, Congress voted on legislation (HR 4156) to provide \$50 billion in Iraq – Afghanistan war funds. The bill passed the House but was filibustered in the Senate. The bill required that the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq begin within 30 days with the goal of completing withdrawal by December 15, 2008. The bill would leave U.S. troops in Iraq for the purposes of protecting the U.S. embassy and U.S. personnel; training Iraqi security forces; and "engaging in targeted counter terrorist activities against al-Qaeda, al-Qaeda affiliated organizations and other terrorist organizations." In March, when similar language was in a bill in the U.S. House of Representatives, Erik Leaver of the Institute for Policy Studies estimated that such language would leave upwards of 40 to 60 thousand U.S. troops in Iraq.

The November legislation (HR 4156) had two significant short-comings. First, the date for the completion of partial withdrawal was only a "goal" and not a mandatory date. The supplemental war funding bill the House passed in March actually had a mandatory date for the completion of the partial withdrawal.

Second, HR 4156 expanded the mission of U.S. troops left in Iraq when compared to the March legislation. In March, the House provided that the U.S. forces left in Iraq could engage in action against "other terrorist organizations with global reach." The November bill simply read "other terrorist organizations", leaving open the potential that military action would be permitted against purely domestic Iraqi militias—i.e., the current status quo.

### **Anticipated Congressional Action in January – February on Iraq War Funds**

It is difficult to determine the exact time frame in which Congress will take up the issue of Iraq – Afghanistan war funding in 2008. However, it is likely that Congress will take up the remainder of the funding request sometime in January. How quickly legislation will move to the floor of the House and the Senate will likely depend upon whether Congress ends up appropriating additional war funds before adjourning in December.

It is almost certain though that January and February (and quite possibly into March) will be very key months during which Congress will debate and vote on Iraq war funds for this fiscal year (which ends on September 30). Also, on February 5 President Bush will submit to Congress his budget request for 2009, a request that will almost

certainly include additional funding for the wars. Indeed, in early September InsideDefense.com reported that the various branches of the military were preparing their war budget requests and that the requests were likely going to be in the range of \$170 to \$200 billion for 2009.

### **Occupation Project: January – February – March 2008**

The Occupation Project will be reinvigorated for the time period of January – February – March 2008. As a campaign of nonviolent civil disobedience and civil resistance, we encourage the formation of local Occupation Project campaigns which will be sustained over a period of time. Some actions may be entirely legal forms of lobbying while other actions may involve the risking of arrest in acts of nonviolent civil disobedience / civil resistance.

We especially encourage consideration of the following key dates as guideposts to developing actions for local campaigns:

- January 15 – Dr. Martin Luther King’s birthday
- February 5 – President Bush is required to submit his 2009 budget to Congress
- February 22 – The execution date (in 1943) of three members of the White Rose student resistance to Hitler and the Nazi regime.

### **Occupation Project Components**

The Occupation Project has five essential components:

- The demand that Representatives and Senators publicly commit to vote against any additional funds for the Iraq war other than for immediate withdrawal.
- The demand that they publicly commit to oppose any form of military action against Iran.
- Civil disobedience / civil resistance and other forms of sustained nonviolent direct action at the offices of Representatives and Senators that refuse to make such public commitments.
- Commitment to nonviolence in all aspects of the Occupation Project campaign.
- An affinity group structure in which local organizers and social justice advocates determine which Representative or Senator to focus upon; the frequency of the actions; and the nature of the actions, within the broad parameters of commitment to nonviolence and to ending the Iraq war and preventing an attack upon Iran.

### **Become Involved**

The Occupation Project initially launched on February 5, 2007. Since then, over 400 arrests have occurred in the offices of 42 Representative and Senators. This past May, 15 of those who were the focal point of the campaign voted against the final version of the Iraq-Afghanistan war supplemental. Of those 15, 14 switched their votes from a year ago, when they had voted in favor of war funding.

To become involved, please contact us: 773-878-3815 or via e-mail at [info@vcnv.org](mailto:info@vcnv.org) or at the website, [www.vcnv.org](http://www.vcnv.org)



## **Seasons of Discontent: A Presidential Occupation Project**

This campaign launched on November 8 in Des Moines, Iowa. Eighteen social justice advocates were arrested in the presidential campaign offices of Hillary Clinton and Rudy Giuliani.

The campaign seeks public commitments from each presidential candidate to: 1) a complete withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Iraq within 100 days of assuming office; 2) complete halt of all U.S. military action against Iraq and Iran (including ground, air and naval action); and 3) full funding for the reconstruction of Iraq. The complete set of commitments being sought can be found on the Voices website.

### **December 29 to January 3 – Des Moines, Iowa**

Please join us in Des Moines for five days of extensive and intensive nonviolent direct action and civil disobedience immediately prior to the Iowa caucus. Call us at 773-878-3815 or e-mail us at [info@vcnv.org](mailto:info@vcnv.org) if you are able to come. The Iowa Catholic Worker community is assisting with housing during this time period.

### **After Des Moines and Nationwide**

If you are not able to join us in Des Moines, we encourage you to form affinity groups to participate in the campaign in your home state. Please consider organizing nonviolent civil disobedience at presidential campaign offices in your home state. Please contact us if you have questions about how to do this.



# If Irony Were Justice

By David Smith-Ferri  
May, 2007

Somewhere, Mustafa knows, he has a twin brother,  
an American soldier with wheels for legs  
a man who stands for nothing,  
a man who is no longer a man  
who urinates through a tube into a bag,  
an American digging into the bureaucratic rubble of his government  
trying to unearth something human,  
trying to locate a surgeon's fingers to reset the clock of his life  
and point him forward.

If irony were iron,  
Mustafa's back would have held  
when four years ago today  
the force of a US missile swept him like a branch from his roof  
and dropped him two stories below in his garden.

If irony were bread,  
a small round of dough, pounded, stretched, flattened  
and thrown on a fire,  
a bowl of hummus dribbled with olive oil,  
a cool yogurt and cucumber salad,  
Mustafa would never be hungry here in Amman.

For three years he rolled his chair through Baghdad –  
one more broken body bent to its wheel –  
and along concrete and barbed wire barriers that line the Green Zone  
seeking reparation for his injuries.

I left no door unknocked, he says.

If irony were justice,  
the U.S. military would have given him more than a letter:

Mustafa Samir Hassan was injured  
when a missile exploded near his home  
in the Karrada neighborhood of Baghdad on April 3rd, 2003 . . .

It would instead have given him:  
anesthesia, scalpels, transfusions, trained fingers, aftercare.

Somewhere, Mustafa knows, there is a clinic  
with doctors who can repair his back,  
who can reorient his life toward the future.  
But for now, he is still trying to learn about this war from his television,  
still climbing a ladder to fix an antenna on his house in Baghdad,  
still falling  
like a long-stemmed glass  
to hard ground.



## SODaPOP in Iowa

Photos by Mike Ferner

Pictured above are participants in the November 8 SODaPOP action. In keeping with the bipartisan nature of the campaign—that both Republicans and Democrats bear responsibility for the war and for ending the war—arrests occurred at Rudy Giuliani's (10) and Hillary Clinton's (8) campaign offices.

At Giuliani's office, participants distributed photos of Iraqi citizens seeking dialogue with campaign staff and read the names of U.S. soldiers and Iraqi citizens killed in the war. A reluctant and respectful Clive police department arrested 10 people at Giuliani's office. Non-Iowa residents were held overnight and pled guilty to trespass. Iowa residents were released that night. Elton Davis, of the Des Moines Catholic Worker, declined to give his name in solidarity with out-of-staters and was held overnight separate from the others. He was released the following morning. You can read Joy First's account of the Giuliani action, including her reflections on spending the night in jail, on the Voices website.



# Giuliani And Clinton Taste Occupation In Iowa

By Mike Ferner

November 9, 2007

DES MOINES — A new campaign to place the Iraq war in the center of Iowa's presidential caucus races kicked off in Des Moines yesterday. But as often happens, it wasn't so much the protest that made the story as the reaction to it.

"Seasons Of Discontent—A Presidential Occupation Campaign," or SODaPOP as its organizers dubbed it, targeted the campaigns of Rudolph Giuliani and Hillary Clinton, taking over their offices in the Iowa state capital and disrupting both campaigns for several hours before a total of 18 people were arrested.

The "law and order" Giuliani campaign waited only about two hours to call on the suburban Clive, Iowa police to arrest 10 activists. The Clinton campaign appeared more reluctant to remove the protesters, waiting almost eight hours before requesting the Des Moines Police Department remove nine activists. The last two hours of the Clinton occupation generated reactions from young staffers that typically send a candidate's damage control unit into overtime, especially when that candidate is trying to appeal to rock-solid Democratic voters.

The nine, along with a handful of supporters, called on Clinton's Ingersoll Ave. office at 1:30pm, telling staffer David Barnhart that they had come for the Senator's response to a letter they had sent her a month earlier, asking her to publicly pledge "to take the necessary concrete steps to end the Iraq war, to rebuild Iraq, to forswear military attacks on other countries, and to fully fund the Common Good in the U.S."

Barnhart ended a brief exchange with Catholic Peace Ministry director, Brian Terrell by saying, "Look, nobody wants to end the war in Iraq more than Hillary Clinton. We love to hear a diversity of opinion, but we are asking you to leave now."

Ignoring Barnhart's request, the occupiers spent until 8:00pm reading the names of Iraqis and U.S. soldiers killed in the war, taping "End the Iraq War" flyers onto

Clinton campaign signs, taking a brief turn calling registered voters to inform them of Clinton's war votes before the phone was disconnected, having limited success engaging staffers and volunteers in discussion, and making enough racket doing so to make it difficult to continue business as usual. In twos and threes throughout the afternoon, all the campaign volunteers and most of the staff departed.

At 6:30, Terrell and Farah Mokhtareizadeh, a 24 year-old peace activist from Philadelphia, followed by two reporters, drove across town to Clinton's Second Street office. Through the building's glass doors they saw a group of about 25 people but found the door locked. First Terrell, and then the reporters, asked to come in. One reporter, told earlier in the day that all statements for the Clinton campaign had to come from press secretary Mark Daly, asked unsuccessfully to speak with him. Staff members ushered the knot of volunteers into an interior room, leaving a half-dozen of their colleagues in the outer area who proceeded to ignore not only Terrell and the reporters, but over the next half hour, more than a dozen volunteers and paid staff, all surprised to see the doors locked and unable to get anyone's attention from inside.

Shortly after they returned, Mokhtareizadeh began reading the famous speech that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave on April 4, 1967 at Riverside Church in New York, titled "Declaration of Independence from the Vietnam War." The most frequently quoted lines in it are, "A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death," but it also contains a prophetic warning from the Buddhist leaders of Vietnam.

"Each day the war goes on the hatred increases in the hearts of the Vietnamese and in the hearts of those of humanitarian instinct. The Americans are forcing even their friends into becoming their enemies. It is curious that the Americans, who calculate so carefully on the possibilities of military victory, do not realize that in the process they are incurring deep psychological and political defeat."

Moments after those lines were read, a booming guitar riff thundered from the open door of a work room adjoining the space held by the occupiers, drowning out  
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King's words. Mokhtareizadeh picked up a bullhorn and continued King's speech, overpowering the music.

Shortly thereafter, the decibel battle ended in success for the occupiers and King's speech continued at a humane level.

At the conclusion of the King speech, Robert Braam, a 51 year-old cabinetmaker from Manhattan, Illinois took up reading the names of Iraqis killed in the war until through the main door strode an assertive, middle-aged woman who went about the office introducing herself with a firm handshake to every protester, as Teresa Vilman of the Hillary Clinton campaign. "I'll give you three minutes to leave and then I'll call the police," she said, smiling, "which I guess is what you want anyway."

Within minutes, five police cars and over a dozen officers began rolling into the campaign office's parking lot. At Captain Bob Clock's request, Vilman went up to every activist and the reporters, asking each to leave. Supporters of the occupiers who did not intend to be arrested, and the reporters exited the office. Not long afterward, Des Moines police officers led nine handcuffed occupiers out of the Hillary Clinton campaign office and into a waiting paddy wagon. The ninth was Mokhtareizadeh, who, throughout the day was not planning on being among the arrestees. As she returned inside the office to submit to the police, she said, "After reading that whole speech from Dr. King, I just had to get arrested with the others."

The other SODAPOPers arrested at the Clinton campaign office were Renee Espeland, 46, a Des Moines chimney sweep; Chris Gaunt, 51, a third-generation Iowa farmer from Grinnell; and Chrissy Kirchoefer, 30, from Marseilles Illinois.

They were joined in the Polk County Jail by the ten arrested at Giuliani's Iowa headquarters, Kathy Kelly, Co-director of Voices for Creative Nonviolence, Chicago; Suzanne Sheridan 31, photo assistant and artist model, Francis of Assisi Catholic Worker House in Chicago; Ron Durham, 26, bike repair and handyman, Francis of Assisi House, Chicago; Elton Davis, 45, proprietor of Sweet Bee Infoshop, Des Moines; Ed Bloomer, 60, Dingman Catholic Worker House, Des Moines; Joy First, 53, of Madison, Wisconsin; Nick Kinkel, 19, Des Moines; Mickey Davis, 16, Waukee, Iowa; Jeff Leys, 43, and Dan Pearson, 26, both Co-directors of Voices for Creative Nonviolence, Chicago.

Organizers say the protests in Iowa will continue, with more occupations slated for December 29 to January 3, 2008 as the caucuses take place. They hope peace activists will generate similar actions in other states as the presidential primary season develops, and challenge candidates "as they make public appearances around the state without regard for arbitrary 'free speech zone' restrictions that may be established by candidates, parties, police or the Secret Service."

*Ferner is a freelance writer from Ohio and author of "Inside the Red Zone: A Veteran For Peace Reports from Iraq."*



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## Refugee Resettlement Program

**By Cathy Breen**

November, 2007

Amman, Jordan

Yesterday I visited a family whose 10 year old son is working for 8JD a week, that is about \$10. A sweet faced slip of a child, he smiled as I took a picture of him at his work place. His father meanwhile suffers the humiliation of idleness and the inability to support his wife and other children. Beset by death threats, they fled to Amman about ten months ago; their home in Baghdad is now occupied by militia. I felt embarrassed as I offered them a small gift of money from a family in the states who

wants to help Iraqis stuck here. The family is in need of basic foodstuffs, furniture, blankets and a heater as winter approaches. They once had work, a car and their own home. I met the wife and mother with her smallest child in tow on a bus last week. We were both making our way to the UNHCR. She to beg assistance.

Over the last weeks and months many Iraqis here in Amman have asked me if, as a U.S. citizen, I could help them get information as to where their "cases" stand, or if I know how the process works once they have registered at the UNHC and are referred to IOM for resettlement. Their daily bread seems to be waiting. They are discouraged and disheartened. Are their "cases" in a stack

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of files forgotten in a back room somewhere? Some have worked as translators for U.S. forces, others have been waiting months, even years, to immigrate to relatives in the states. Others are hoping to qualify for resettlement. Their money has run out, they can't work, they are here illegally.

A few days ago I had a long-sought-after meeting with someone from the US Embassy-Amman and a representative from the State Department who deals with our Refugee Resettlement program in the region. Preparing for the meeting was a daunting task. There are so many questions we find no answers to on the official US websites we are referred to. Though the meeting was brief, just over 1/2 hour, I found the two women across and alongside of me attentive and respectful. I hoped to learn what Iraqis can realistically expect from the U.S.? What hope can we give them? While I was grateful to be fit into their busy schedules, the time did not allow me to cover many of the issues I had hoped to address.

In recent weeks I have heard numerous accounts from Iraqis who have been rejected resettlement after being interviewed by an officer from the Homeland Security team. After going through laborious and time consuming sessions (interviews which can span over months) with UNHCR and their partner organization, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), their cases had finally been referred to the Department of Homeland Security (DOH).

I was able to learn at the meeting that the US target goal for the fiscal year 2008 (beginning Oct. 2007) for Iraqi refugees is 12,000. If we consider the two million Iraqis in Jordan and Syria alone, 12,000 would constitute .006%. In any case, it seems obvious that the bulk of "cases" being considered for US resettlement will have to be rejected. Although I asked what the rejection rate was, this information could not be shared. I wasn't surprised by this.

On more than one occasion I have spoken with Iraqis who have been rejected by DOH, to find that someone in their family had been kidnapped and that a ransom had been paid to secure the release of their loved one. Although the box "credibility" had been checked on their rejection forms, the type of questions put to them by the interviewer led us to believe that paying a ransom might

well have been the reason for their rejection. I welcomed the opportunity to put this question to the US Embassy and Dept. of State representatives. Is paying a ransom an automatic cause for rejection? I was told that there are times when exemptions are made in cases where a ransom is paid, but that one has to look at this from a security perspective. It is the determination of the DHS. It is the law, and it is applied universally.

Iraqis are safer than other refugee populations I was told. They are in fact being given preference over other refugee populations, taking slots from others who are vulnerable. There was something of a self-congratulatory tone when speaking about the praiseworthy resettlement program that has been created in such a short period of time, or of the millions of dollars the U.S. has given in aid for Iraqis. I replied that Iraqis are in fact deserving of special attention from our country because WE created the refugee crisis they are facing. I was politely advised that this was a political topic. It did not seem open for discussion.

I sometimes ask myself why I should be surprised by the fixed hard stares directed at me as I walk the streets of Amman, or that one after another taxi passes me by. I am so obviously an "American."

"Threat against Iran Real" was the title of an article in yesterday's newspaper. Columnist Musa Keilani, a frequent contributor to The Jordan Times, wrote "The drums of war are being beaten with growing pitch in Washington. It is almost certain that the Bush administration will order military action against Iran soon." Mr. Musa believes "military action against Iran cannot and will not be confined to a barrage of missiles against key Iranian targets" but that the U.S. "will resort to the use of nuclear power aimed at depriving the Iranians of the means to retaliate." He believes that Iran will be "stunned as heavily as Hiroshima and Nagasaki in World War II." George Bush's warning of World War III "does not come out of a vacuum," and the only unanswered question, Mr. Musa predicts, is "when it will happen."

The drum beats of war might well be sounding in the U.S., but the reverberations are being felt throughout the Middle East.



## Voices for Creative Nonviolence

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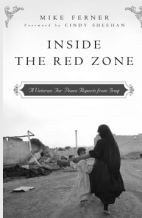
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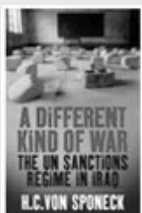
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### A People's Campaign to Defund the War

Over the past year, peace activists have voted, lobbied, marched, and taken direct action to end the war in Iraq. Courageous soldiers have refused to fight the war. But Congress has appropriated billions of dollars to continue the war and appears ready to authorize a future military attack on Iran. It's time for taxpayers who oppose this war to join together in nonviolent civil disobedience and show Congress how to cut off the funds for this war and redirect resources to the pressing needs of people.

For more information Visit:  
<http://nwtrcc.org/wartaxboycott>