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December 2005

**WINTER OF OUR DISCONTENT
FEB 15 TO MARCH 19, 2006
ACT TO END ECONOMIC AND MILITARY
WARFARE AGAINST IRAQIS.**

Voices for Creative Nonviolence is organizing the Winter of Our Discontent campaign to help strengthen grassroots opposition and nonviolent resistance to the continued war against the people of Iraq.

A core group will journey to Washington, D.C. to organize a 33 day fast, vigils, lobbying and nonviolent civil disobedience during this period. Others will join the core group in D.C. for shorter periods of time. Still others will organize local actions in their home communities.

Vigils and civil disobedience will occur at places which enact policies that further economic and military warfare against Iraqis. VCNV will be outside the Pentagon, the White House, the Capitol and the International Monetary Fund / World Bank—challenging the four pillars of warfare.

VCNV invites you to join us in D.C. for part or all of the Winter of Our Discontent. If you are not able to travel to D.C., we encourage you to organize actions in your local community.

Please consider:

- 1) Lobbying your Senators and Representative, especially during the February recess when they will be back home (Feb 20 to 25).
- 2) Weekly vigils during the Winter of Our Discontent. Or you may opt to have a daily vigil for the entire period of the Winter of Our Discontent.
- 3) Civil disobedience at the offices of your Senators and Representative if they refuse to publicly call for the withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Iraq.
- 4) Fasts in your local community which would include some form of public presence. For example, you might

organize a 4 to 7 day fast during the Winter of Our Discontent with a public presence of 2 hours each day. Or you may organize a relay fast in which one set of people commits to fasting for 4 to 7 days and is replaced by a second set of people for the next 4 to 7 days and so on and so forth.

5) "Electricity fasts" in which people forgo the use of electricity for a set period of time—3 days, a week, a month. Participants would gather each day for a set period of time to maintain a public presence.

6) Encampments, perhaps more possible for those in the warmer climes (or the hardest of souls in the cooler places), for a week or two or the duration of the Winter of Our Discontent.

7) Civil disobedience at places which manufacture weapons. VCNV can help you to identify purveyors of death in your local area.

8) Creative actions to press not only for an end to the U.S. occupation of Iraq and withdrawal of U.S. troops, but also for just treatment of veterans—i.e., an end to stop loss orders; an end to forced rotations; fully funded quality health care, both physical and psychological.

The key demands of Winter of Our Discontent include:

- 1) An end to the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq, with immediate withdrawal of all U.S.-U.K. military forces.
- 2) Payment of war reparations by the U.S. to Iraq for the damage inflicted by the past 15 years of economic and military warfare against Iraq.
- 3) The unconditional cancellation of the remaining \$33 billion in war reparations charges which the United Nations imposed on Iraq following the Saddam Hussein regime's 1990-91 invasion and occupation of Kuwait. Note that nearly all individual claims have been paid and the remaining claims would be mostly paid to other governments and state-owned enterprises.
- 4) The unconditional cancellation of the odious debt incurred by the regime of Saddam Hussein.

5) No internationally forced privatization of Iraq's state-owned enterprises, especially its oil resources and oil wealth.

6) Respect for basic human rights and workers' rights as per international law.

Please advise us if you plan to join the presence in D.C. or will be able to organize local actions in your home community. VCNV will help coordinate local actions to maximize the national impact of the Winter of Our Discontent. The strength of the movement is in the heart of our country—in local communities, amongst local activists. Winter of our Discontent seeks to strengthen the movement at the grassroots while also fostering national coordination of local actions.

February 15 marks the 3rd anniversary of the global march against the war and the birth of a new superpower—a global movement committed to peace and justice.

March 19th marks the 3rd anniversary of the official start of the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

Let these two anniversaries mark the Winter of Our Discontent as we act to demand an end to the occupation and an end to all forms of economic and military warfare against Iraq.

In Solidarity,
Kathy Kelly, Joel Gullede, Farah Mokhtareizadeh, Dan Pearson, Laurie Hasbrook, Scott Blackburn, Jeff Leys

100,000 RINGS: Remembering the Iraqi Dead

For 5 days in late October, over 100 grassroots groups and individuals tolled bells in remembrance of Iraqis who have died because of the current war and occupation. Participants collectively tolled bells in 100,000 solemn rings, once per minute, while reading the known names of Iraqis who have died. We likely will never know the countless tens of thousands more who have died. From Geneva, Switzerland to Lexington, Kentucky; Shepherdstown, West Virginia to Oxford, UK, people mourned publicly for this tremendous loss of life and colossal violence done to the people of Iraq.

With the simple sounding of a bell, each participant sent their sincere condolences to the families and friends of those lost in this war.

The action marked the first anniversary of the epidemiological study published in the British medical journal, *The Lancet*, which estimated that upwards of 100,000 Iraqis died as of the fall 2004 because of the war and occupation—because of violence, inadequate health care, unsafe drinking water, acute child malnutrition, etc.

ECONOMIC WARFARE: STEALING IRAQ'S OIL WEALTH

[The following draws upon the recent report "Crude Designs: The Rip-Off of Iraq's Oil Wealth", published November 2005 by PLATFORM, Institute for Policy Studies, War on Want, Global Policy Forum, Oil Change International, and New Economics Foundation. You can read the report online at www.crudedesigns.org)

Who will control Iraq's oil wealth? The Iraqi nation? Or foreign oil companies? Who will receive the benefits of the oil wealth?

The answer is not simply a question about whether or not Iraq's oil industry is privatized. The state oil industry need not be sold off wholesale—or even partially—for Iraqis to lose control of their nation's wealth. A more nefarious scheme—because it is utterly non-transparent—is the potential for creation of "production sharing agreements" (PSA for short).

In Iraq and in all countries except the U.S., the state owns the oil reserves. It is only after the oil is extracted that the oil becomes the property of a corporation. That corporation purchases the oil from the state, typically through the payment of royalties.

Because of the payment of royalties to the state, the state has far greater control over the price of oil. It can negotiate the royalty rates with the purchaser of the oil. It can establish laws, rules and regulations concerning the extraction of the oil. The state becomes the recipient of the benefit of the oil.

This means that the state retains the oil revenue for use in constructing schools, housing, health care, water systems, roads, and other parts of the common good.

PSAs stand the equation on its head—and side step the issue of who owns the oil reserves. Under a PSA, Iraq would most probably continue to legally own the oil reserves in the country. However, the oil companies accrue profits when they are compensated for the development of the oil production infrastructure. PSAs also provide compensation to companies to cover "risk" taken by a company in developing the infrastructure.

Under a PSA, the state theoretically has final control over the oil reserves. However, the PSA will specify that the first portion of extracted oil—known as "cost oil"—goes directly to the company. The next portion is then split based upon some specified formula between the company and the state.

Essentially, a PSA nearly guarantees no-risk investment for oil companies at the expense of revenue for the state. Oil companies want PSAs because they

guarantee a stream of revenue for the company—and also allow the company to claim the oil reserves on their books, enhancing the value of the company.

PSAs also protect the oil company from any potential changes in state rules, regulations and laws. A PSA will typically last for a period of 25 to 40 years, during which time the state will normally be required to cover any adverse impact upon a company's bottom line.

In essence, then, a PSA would infringe upon the ability of Iraqi people to act democratically. New labor laws protecting the rights of workers could not be passed—after all, laws recognizing unions and collective bargaining would most probably result in greater wages and benefits for the workers, thus hurting the company's profits. Environmental regulation would be at risk if it adversely affected a company's economic position. Workplace safety laws would be out the window.

With a PSA, Iraq would lose control over the development of its oil industry. Control over the rate of development of its oil reserves is key to the economic development of Iraq. This is especially true since Iraq depends upon oil for virtually all of its revenue. But under a PSA, the development of oil reserves would be done at the beck and call of the oil companies—as the companies determine their own production rates absent state regulation. Iraq would have no control over the depletion of these oil reserves—and so no control over its economic future.

Oil companies would reap windfall profits under PSAs—and the wealth of Iraq would be stolen. Current policies in Iraq would put at least 64% of Iraq's oil reserves at the development whims of private companies. Under current Iraq governmental policy, 63 of Iraq's 80 oil fields would be subjected to private development. Any newly discovered oil fields would be developed by private companies.

So what does this mean for Iraq? One recent estimate is that the new oil contracts entered into under a PSA would cost Iraqis anywhere from \$74 billion to \$194 billion in lost revenue over the life of the PSA. Oil companies on the other hand would have rates of return on investment in the range of 42% to 162%.

The common argument set forth in favor of PSAs is that foreign investment in Iraq's oil industry is necessary for the rehabilitation of the industry. Leaving aside for the moment the argument that the U.S. owes Iraq war reparations for the damage inflicted upon Iraq for the past 15 years of economic and military warfare, consider the following alternate scenarios to financing

which leaves control of Iraq's oil reserves in the hands of the state:

Iraq's government could directly invest \$2.5 to \$3 billion of its budget each year for the next 3 years to rebuild capacity oil production. That's about 10 percent of its budget.

Or Iraq could borrow money in the form of loans or issuance of bonds. \$3 billion borrowed over 20 years at 10% annual interest would equate to \$352 million per year in debt service.

Or Iraq could use other forms of contracts with oil companies which allow for foreign investment but which ensure that the state retains its economic sovereignty and control over its oil reserves.

Of course, there is the issue that the U.S. is largely responsible for the economic devastation of Iraq over these past 15 years. Perhaps the U.S. should simply buckle down, do the right thing and pay war reparations to Iraq—which means Iraq retains economic sovereignty and can develop the oil fields for the future benefit of Iraqi citizens.

14 ARRESTED WHILE NONVIOLENTLY RESISTING C.I.A. WAR OF TERROR FLIGHTS

On November 18, social justice activists from St. Louis and North Carolina, plus one from Chicago (Kathy Kelly), were arrested protesting the secret C.I.A. flights in the war of terror being waged by the U.S. The 14 arrested were charged with trespassing and assigned a January 5, 2006 court date.

AERO Contractors of Smithfield, N.C. operates "rendition" flights for the C.I.A.—"...the agencies practice of seizing terrorism suspects in one foreign country and delivering them to be detained in another, including countries that routinely engage in torture." (NY Times, May 25, 2005)

The "rendition" flights operated by Aero Contractors for the C.I.A. violate international laws, specifically the U.N. Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. They also violate the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights. Each convention prohibits a) torture; b) cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; and c) returning individuals to a country in which they will face the danger of torture, or cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment or treatment.

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Aero Contractors is a small business, operating out of a small airport, in a small community in North Carolina. "Out of sight. Out of mind." Aero Contractors, the C.I.A. and the U.S. government do not want us to think about or talk about the rendition flights. We must all work to educate ourselves about what is actually being done in our name in this so-called global war on terror. For indeed it is a global war OF terror being waged by our country. But after we educate ourselves, we must act and we must resist with the discipline of nonviolence this assault on the soul of our nation.

RESOURCES ON THE U.S. WAR OF TERROR

Stop Torture Now, based in St. Louis, MO, organized the action at Aero Contractors. It is a project of the **Center for Theology and Social Analysis**. You can reach **Stop Torture Now** at 314-482-3872. Their email is comments@stoptorturenow.org. Website is www.stoptorturenow.org. The website for the **Center for Theology and Social Analysis** is www.ctsastl.org.

Human Rights Watch issued a report in September on the torture of Iraqi detainees by the U.S. military. The report is titled "Leadership Failure: Firsthand Accounts of Torture of Iraqi Detainees by the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division". You can read this report online at www.hrw.org/reports/2005/us0905.

In the Name of Democracy: American War Crimes in Iraq and Beyond, by Jeremy Brecher, Jill Cutler and Brendan Smith. This new book examines the legality of the Iraq war and the

occupation. It draws upon original source documents, including ... "eyewitness accounts, victim testimonials, statements by soldiers turned resisters and whistle-blowers, interviews with intelligence insiders and contributions by Mark Danner and Seymour Hersh." See the publishers website at www.americanempireproject.com

RESOURCES AVAILABLE FROM VOICES FOR CREATIVE NONVIOLENCE

The following are available from Voices for Creative Nonviolence. All prices include postage. You may make checks out to VCNV and mail to VCNV; 1249 W Argyle St #2; Chicago, IL 60640. Please note in the memo of the check which item you are purchasing.

* *"In a Time of Siege: Defying War and Sanctions in Iraq"*, a Peace Productions documentary on the Voices in the Wilderness campaign to end U.S. economic sanctions. It includes footage of Voices members meeting U.S. Marines as they entered Baghdad following the Shock and Awe bombing. \$20.

* *Other Lands Have Dreams: From Baghdad to Peking Prison* by Kathy Kelly. \$15.

* *Taking A Stand: A Guide To Peace Teams And Accompaniment Projects*, by Elizabeth Boardman. \$10

* *September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows*, edited by David Potorti, \$15