

Voices for Creative Nonviolence

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Dear Friends,

With the recent election results, it is easy to sit back, relax and count on promises of “phased withdrawal” and “redeployment”. But, as so aptly stated by Dennis Kucinich, the war in and occupation of Iraq will end when Congress eliminates war funding. To this end, Voices is organizing the Occupation Project, a sustained campaign of nonviolent civil disobedience which begins on February 5, 2007. Our country also bears responsibility for the Iraqi refugee crisis and funding Iraq’s reconstruction. Voices continues to collaborate with others seeking justice in the Middle East. Joel reports back on his 6 weeks with Christian Peacemaker Teams in the Palestinian community of Tuwani. As always, thank you for your continued solidarity.

Sincerely,
Kathy Kelly, Laurie Hasbrook, Scott Blackburn, Joel Gullledge, Dan Pearson, Jeff Leys, Leah Patriarco, Neil Brideau and Bob Abplanalp



Sources of Violence

By Kathy Kelly
November 15, 2006

Barely a day goes by when I don’t learn a new report about a beleaguered Iraqi refugee, or of an entire family, in desperate need of help. We think hard, within our Voices for Creative Nonviolence network, about ways to build concern for the estimated three million Iraqis who have been displaced from their homes. Ironically, I think some of the people who can best empathize with Iraqi refugees are the U.S. soldiers stationed in Iraq, far from their homes and families.

Recently, an A.P. reporter in Baghdad described a town hall meeting which U.S. military officials helped organize in a Shi’ite area of northern Baghdad. (“U.S. takes on community building in Iraq” by Lauren Frayer, 11/11/06). Tucked into the article is her observation of two U.S. soldiers who stood guard during the 3 ½ hour meeting. “Outside the auditorium, two U.S. Army snipers clicked their rifles on safety and kicked at tufts of grass to pass the time.”

It’s easy to imagine the idled soldiers composing letters, mentally, to loved ones, or perhaps pulling out pictures of loved ones and longing to be home.

Displaced Iraqi refugees describe to us how they want to take care of their children, how they’re beset by feelings of uncertainty and anxiety, and how, sometimes, they have a lot of “down time” with no meaningful work. I’m guessing that similar conversations happen amongst U.S. military in Iraq. A major difference is that vast sums of money are spent to maintain the U.S. soldiers in Iraq and to equip them with weapons and supplies.

I suppose it’s much more difficult for an analyst employed by a U.S. “think tank” to identify much with the everyday cares and concerns of Iraqi

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The Occupation Project:

**A Campaign of Sustained Nonviolent
Civil Disobedience to End the Iraq War**

Beginning February 5, 2007

Initiated by Voices for Creative Nonviolence

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Endorsed By: Veterans for Peace

Voices for Creative Nonviolence is initiating the Occupation Project: A Campaign of Sustained Nonviolent Civil Disobedience to End the Iraq War. The campaign begins on February 5, 2007 and will run for eight weeks. The campaign challenges Representatives and Senators to publicly declare that they will vote against any further funding for the war in and occupation of Iraq.

We invite you to join with us and others around the U.S. in organizing sustained nonviolent civil disobedience at the offices of Representatives and Senators who do not publicly pledge to vote against war funding.

President Bush is expected to submit to Congress yet another request in early 2007 for supplemental war funding for the Iraq war. Already, the military services are requesting \$160 billion in additional war funding for the current fiscal year, which just began on October 1, though modest reductions will likely be made before being submitted to Congress in early 2007. The funds will be for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and for the so-called Global War on Terror.

In Chicago, a coalition of organizations and individuals will conduct weekly occupations inside the offices of elected Representatives and Senators beginning February 5. Campaigns are also being organized in Wisconsin and Iowa. We ask your participation in the Occupation Project campaign in your own locality—building a campaign of nonviolent civil disobedience focused upon your own Representative and Senators.

The campaign is nonviolent, consists of actions

which risk arrest and is based upon affinity groups. An affinity group is a grouping of individuals who come together for a specific action or for a longer period of time to make decisions together and support each other through a campaign of nonviolent resistance. Each affinity group will determine the type of c.d. action in which its members engage.

The location and frequency of the actions will vary. One possibility is to focus upon a specific Senator or Representative because of their position on the war or in Congress (especially if they are on the Appropriations Committee which will initially vote on the war funding). Another possibility is to rotate the action from one office to another: week one is at Senator A's office; week 2 is at Senator B's office; week 3 is at a Representative's office; week 4 is back to Senator A and the cycle is repeated. Some may act once a week, others every other week. If 16 people are willing to risk arrest, consider having 4 people risk arrest each week throughout the campaign, rather than all at once.

The type of action will also vary as affinity groups decide what to do, so long as the action is based firmly within the nonviolence guidelines and principles of this campaign. Affinity groups within a locality or region may coordinate with each other—perhaps using the model of one affinity group acts at an office one week, followed by a different affinity group the following week, and so on.

One action within an official's office is to read the names of U.S. and Iraq dead, tolling a bell for each name read, until all names have been read or until

the Senator / Representative publicly pledges to vote against any additional war funding or participants are placed under arrest and removed from the office.

Another action within an official's office is to toll a bell once each minute for each Iraqi and U.S. person who has died since the U.S. led invasion. The number of Iraqis who have died as a consequence of the war will quite probably never be known. However, it is established that the number of Iraqis who have died since the invasion number at least in the tens of thousands, if not in the hundreds of thousands. The tolling of the bell would continue until it is tolled once for each person who has died in Iraq or until people are placed under arrest and removed from the office.

Other possibilities include an interfaith prayer service; a silent vigil; posting of the names of Iraqi and U.S. dead; bringing in photos of Iraqis and U.S. soldiers who have died in Iraq; etc.—all occurring within the Representative's or Senator's office and continuing until such time as he / she publicly pledges to vote against additional war funding or the participants are removed from the office by law enforcement.

In laying the groundwork for the Occupation Project, VCNV encourages you to contact your Representative and Senators to seek a public pledge to oppose war funding. Delegations should be formed to meet with Representatives and Senators as soon as possible—but prior to the February 5 start date of the Occupation Project's sustained campaign of civil disobedience. Ask your legislator to publicly pledge to vote against any additional funding for the Iraq war. You should be in contact with the Mandate for Peace campaign's efforts in this regard (www.mandateforpeace.org). If your Rep or Senator makes such a public pledge, please let VCNV know so that this can be noted on the campaign website.

The VCNV website includes the following legislative resources: background information on prior supplemental spending bills; the voting records of Representatives and Senators; list of members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committee; and information on the legislation which Representatives and Senators co-sponsored in the current Congress (though, please be aware that all pending legislation dies with the end of this Congress in December).

In addition, the site will maintain a listing all of the places where activists are participating in the Occupation Project. On this website, activists will also find sample press releases, fliers, informational updates, announcements of actions happening across the United States, and nonviolence guidelines / resources to assist with participation in the campaign. Voices will also provide a basic guide to the arrest and court process for those preparing to risk arrest during this campaign.

During the coming weeks, we plan to be in touch with people and groups who have organized previous nonviolent efforts to end economic and military warfare in Iraq. We plan to continue to work in collaboration with other organizations which promote nonviolent civil disobedience to end the war in and occupation of Iraq, especially the National Campaign of Nonviolent Resistance (www.iraqpledge.org) and the Declaration of Peace (www.declarationofpeace.org), each of which is organizing actions to take place in early 2007.



Voices for Creative Nonviolence was established in 2005 by individuals who previously worked to end the brutal U.S. / U.N. economic sanctions imposed against Iraq by the U.S. and U.N. Many traveled to, and supported those who traveled to, Iraq to bring medicine and other humanitarian supplies to ordinary Iraqi citizens in a campaign of civil disobedience. VCNV calls for the immediate end to the U.S. war in and occupation of Iraq; the unconditional cancellation of all odious debt incurred by Saddam Hussein's regime; the unconditional cancellation of the war reparations charges imposed against Iraq by the U.N. following the Hussein regime's invasion of Kuwait in 1990-91; and the full payment of war reparations by the U.S. to Iraq for the reconstruction of Iraq following 15 years of economic and military warfare against Iraq.



**Become Active with the
Occupation Project
See Page 4 for Mail Form**

YES, I AM INTERESTED IN BECOMING ACTIVE WITH THE OCCUPATION PROJECT

Name

Address

Organizational affiliation (if any)

Phone number

Email

Please contact me about the Occupation Project. I am interested in participating in the following ways:

- Organizing civil disobedience
- Risking arrest in civil disobedience
- Attending a nonviolence training workshop
- Organizational endorsement of the campaign
- Being support for those risking arrest;
- Being a contact in my area

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Source of Violence ...Continued from page 1

refugees when contemplating ways to build better security for the United States presence in the region.

Kenneth Pollack, Director of Research for the Saban Center for Middle East Policy, recently wrote an article entitled "Iraq Refugees: Carriers of Conflict" which was published in the *Atlantic Monthly* (November, 2006). Most of his article depicts the refugees themselves as "the problem." Pollack cites instances in Middle East history in which refugees have fomented civil unrest; he writes of "sanctuaries for militia groups" wherein militia leaders sometimes become leaders of refugee communities. "Tribal elders and other leaders who might oppose violence may find themselves enfeebled by both the trauma of flight and the loss of their traditional basis of power (typically, control of land). As a result, refugee camps can become deeply radicalized communities, dangerous to their host countries in several ways. The mere presence of militias among the refugees tends to embroil the host country in war by making it a target."

Mr. Pollack's analysis regarding refugees could be reconsidered in light of how many Iraqis might view the presence of U.S. troops who are "displaced" on foreign soil in Iraq. The U.S. troops could be viewed as newcomers bringing conflict with them. Suppose we imagined this excerpt from Mr. Pollack's article as a commentary not on Iraqi refugees but on the U.S. troop presence in Iraq: "Most Iraqi refugees (substitute U.S. troops) are not in camps, but dispersed among local populations. But refugees, (substitute U.S. troops) whether in camps or not, can also corrode state power from the inside, fomenting the radicalization of domestic populations and encouraging rebellion against host governments. The burden of caring for hundreds of thousands of refugees (substitute U.S. troops) is heavy, straining government administrative capacity and possibly eroding public support for regimes shown to be weak, unresponsive, or callous."

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Illegal settlement expansion in South Hebron puts Palestinians at constant threat of further land grabs and settler violence.

By Joel Gulledge

10 November 2006 - "Your heads will be on the stones if you don't leave this place", an Israeli settler from illegal outpost Havot Ma'on (Hill 833), threatened members of Christian Peacemaker Teams in the Palestinian village of At-Tuwani. Captured on video, but ignored by district Israeli police, the threat is part and parcel of daily life for Palestinians - and the reason for the continuous presence of international human rights workers here since 2004. A few days later, during a "routine check", I witness my neighbor being physically abused by Israeli soldiers. Such abuse often ceases when soldiers become aware that internationals are present, filming their actions.

Ancient At-Tuwani is located in the South Hebron Hills of the West Bank, home to some one thousand Palestinians who reside in natural caves, living off the land and grazing their flocks of goats and sheep. The topography is harsh; there is no running water or electricity. Under complete Israeli control in "Area C," many South Hebron residents have been expelled and had their homes and property destroyed. Israeli settlers have attacked villagers and human rights workers, and destroyed olive trees. Villagers' livestock and one water cistern have been poisoned, an act UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Director Robert Kennedy calls a form of chemical warfare.

The Israeli separation barrier along route 317 near At-Tuwani restricts villagers' access to their farmland and to vital services such as health clinics, education and markets in nearby cities. Multiple UN reports describe the South Hebron communities as "once self-sustainable, now having one of the highest poverty levels in the West Bank" due to the Israeli

occupation. Prominent Israeli human rights group B'Tselem reports that the regions' "proximity to the Green Line and the sparse Palestinian population living there make the southern Hebron hills a 'natural' candidate for annexation [by Israel], as well as an attractive site for settlement that will create a contiguous Jewish presence on both sides of the Green Line."

In the village of Sussia, the Israeli military has crushed the residents' cave homes. Now the villagers live in tents. I travel there to take the testimony of a village elder assaulted that day by masked settlers. Days before, settlers had strewn metal spikes across



Illegal settlement expansion in South Hebron (Joel Gulledge)

the road attempting to prevent the truck carrying desperately needed water from reaching the community. Three tires were pierced and the water was delayed.

Back in At-Tuwani, my neighbor served me tea as we watched his children play near their home. "It's hard watching my children grow up under the same occupation I did," he says. "I don't want them to live in fear."

Until the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands is ended, the basic human and civil rights of such families will never be assured. And the fear which my neighbor knows so well will remain a constant.

Joel Gulledge is a human rights worker with Christian Peacemaker Teams and a co-coordinator of Voices for Creative Nonviolence. He can be reached at joel@vcnv.org. All reports mentioned in this article are located at the author's website: Tuwani.org.

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In his article, Mr. Pollack doesn't prescribe any ways to alleviate the plight of refugees. Shortly before the article was published, conditions worsened for Iraqi refugees when the budget for the United Nations High Commission on Refugees was cut in half.

From an October 22nd, 2007 IRIN report: "More than three million Iraqis who have been forced to flee their homes to other areas of Iraq and to neighbouring countries are facing what UNHCR describes as a 'very bleak future' after the agency's budget for offices across the region was halved for the coming year," said Andrew Harper, coordinator for the Iraq unit at UNHCR in Geneva. He told IRIN that funds for the agency's Iraq programme have been drastically reduced for 2007 because of donors scaling back their contributions. "Iraq has seen the largest and most recent displacement of any UNHCR project in the world, yet even as more Iraqis are displaced and as their needs increase, the funds to help them are decreasing," said Harper. "This growing humanitarian crisis has simply gone under the radar screen of most donors."

According to some estimates, U.S. taxpayers will be asked to spend close to 2 trillion dollars for the war

in Iraq. Feasibly, a generous portion of U.S. wealth and productivity could be directed toward assisting Iraqi refugees and developing a reparations package which could be placed in escrow, under the control of a third party, neutral group for disbursement.

By doing this, we could help uproot the fundamentally cruel unfairness that often causes the conflicts Mr. Pollack wants us to fear.

The narrow focus on Iraqi refugees as potential "carriers" of conflict, coupled with a U.S. foreign policy which has been based on threat and force, suggests that the current administration won't be committed to meeting basic human rights of Iraqi refugees, whether they've been displaced within Iraq or have fled outside of Iraq.

This doesn't lessen our own responsibility to organize nonviolent direct action seeking a U.S. foreign policy based on fairness and justice toward Iraqis. Helping U.S. people develop caring and compassionate views toward all refugees, including Iraqis who were living in their own homes before the U.S. illegally and immorally invaded their country, would be one way to secure a better future for all children.

"Get Lost"

By Kathy Kelly, Leah Patriarco, Neil Brideau
November 7, 2006

In mid-April, 2003, Baghdad skies were still heavy with fumes from the Shock and Awe bombing. The intersection immediately outside our hotel was filled with scores of newly arrived invading U.S. Marines. We began to grow acquainted with many of the Marines who stood guard next to bulldozers, Armored Personnel Carriers, tanks, and humvees. First there were mutually curious exchanges, then longer conversations over water and dates.

Within a few days, we realized that the Marines were protecting the Ministry of Oil building, but that numerous other places were vulnerable to looting and destruction. Alarmed by a rumor that people in Hilla faced an outbreak of cholera because of contaminated drinking water, we wondered if perhaps the Marines weren't getting information about ways to deliver clean water. Were they having trouble locating various hospitals in critical need of protection? Were they

aware that there had been no garbage collection for the past month? Did they need information about where to find humanitarian relief organizations? We sent two of our folks over to visit with the U.S. authorities at the Palestine Hotel. The response to our overture was polite, but unmistakable: "Get Lost." You could read about this on E-Iraq's archives (April 16, 2003, "Heavy-handed and hopeless, the U.S. military doesn't know what it's doing in Iraq,") and see a picture that shows Marines setting up a makeshift sign banning Voices in the Wilderness from re-entry into their headquarters.

Now, we've gotten lost. The losses are staggering, and the U.S. government seems at a loss, — leaders still dare to talk about success while some of their own closest advisers write op-eds indicating that Iraq is a failed state.

Two weeks ago, the New York Times featured a chart it had obtained, dated October 20, in which the U.S. military used a color coded layout to chart variables that contributed, on a continuum, toward a dreaded total chaos in Iraq.

Is it utterly naïve to think of again approaching the U.S. authorities, carrying an alternative chart? Volunteers here studied various recent reports about unmet human needs in Iraq posted on a digest we maintain called Iraq Health Care and Infrastructure. They created a chart offering key indicators for concern in Iraq based on the affliction caused by extreme poverty, hunger, lack of health care and displacement.

Now, even as some “neo-culpas” condemn the war in Iraq, they still issue a cautionary warning: don’t throw out the baby with the bath water, —the “baby” being the war on terror. It’s ok to declare the war in Iraq a failure, but don’t let go of the baby, the war on terror, — how, I wonder, will that “baby” grow?

U.S. and UK economic warfare against Iraq slaughtered hundreds of thousands of babies, causing rage, grief and agony, along with deep mistrust, across the Arab and Muslim world.

We and our children would not be so threatened by potential terrorist attacks if we had learned to study charts indicating why people would be so angry and enraged that they might consider waging insurgent warfare in the first place.

If we earnestly ask why people who undertake terrorist acts against the U.S. and its allies would be so angry, we find claims not so different from the ones that fueled the U.S. Revolutionary War: people don’t like to live under occupation; they don’t want to turn over their resources to a far away country; they don’t want foreign bases on their soil, — and they don’t want to carry their children, starved and diseased, to burial grounds.

The skies over Baghdad are still heavy with the fumes of war. Numerous Iraqis who’ve raised complaints about how they’ve been treated under U.S. occupation have been told to more or less “get lost.” Our best hope

“The rising up of a desire to obtain wealth is the beginning; this desire being cherished, moves to action; and riches thus gotten please self; and while self has a life in them it desires to have them defended. Wealth is attended with Power, by which bargains and proceedings contrary to Universal Righteousness are supported.... O that we who declare against wars, and acknowledge our trust to be in God only, may walk in the light, and therein examine our foundation and motives in holding great estates! May we look upon our treasures, the furniture of our houses, and our garments, and try whether the seeds of war have nourishment in these our possessions.”

to help clear these skies and find an “exit strategy” is to bring the U.S. troops home and to pay generous reparation for the suffering caused, entrusting such

Iraq: Indicators of Human Needs	
Key Indicators:	
Child malnutrition	
High Unemployment	The countrywide unemployment rate is over 60%*
Lack of access to basic necessities	Prices of basic necessities rose 70% between July 2005 and July 2006.* Only 32% of Iraqis have access to clean drinking water.
Extreme poverty and hunger	As of October almost 5.6 million Iraqis are living in poverty, 2.3 million in absolute poverty.*
Lack of health care and high health care costs	The US planned to complete 180 health clinics by the end of 2005. By March 2006 only 4 had been completed.*
Internal Displacement	Each week 9,000 Iraqis are driven from their homes. Many then live without sufficient shelter, food, water, or employment opportunities.*
a. IRIN; October 17, 2006 b. Medact; March 2006 c. Agence France Presse, Geneva; October 3, 2006	

funds to a neutral, third party group while recognizing that the U.S. is uniquely unqualified to undertake reconstruction in Iraq.

Yes, bring the troops home, but also spend time, in each of our homes, studying a question posed by Jonathan Woolman in 1764. This saintly founder of the Quaker faith urged people to uproot violence by paying attention to human needs. Toward that end he posed this question:

Voices for Creative Nonviolence

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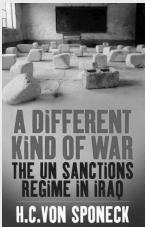
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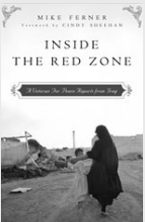
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A Different Kind Of War: The UN Sanctions Regime In Iraq, by H.C. Von Sponeck



Inside the Red Zone: A Veteran For Peace reports from Iraq, by Mike Ferner.
www.MikeFerner.org



Available January 2007
Battlefield Without Borders, Iraq Poems, by David Smith-Ferri with a Foreword written by Kathy Kelly.
www.BattlefieldWithoutBorders.org

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 and quantity.

“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 Pekin Prison by Kathy Kelly. **\$15**

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

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