

The Peaceable Assembly Campaign

Voices for Creative Nonviolence is initiating a nationwide Peaceable Assembly Campaign which seeks an end to the U.S. wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan and an end to U.S. support of the continued occupation of the Palestinian territories. Beginning in September, 2009, and continuing for the next ten months, we will engage in both legal and extralegal (nonviolent civil disobedience/civil resistance) lobbying efforts, urging Representatives and Senators to stop authorizing and funding wars and occupations.

The Folly of the Present Policy

At the zenith of its growth in the last half century, the United States of America has the most powerful military forces in all of human history. But this has come at a terrific cost: extravagant demands for resources, trillions of dollars of national debt and the incalculable destruction, displacement, and death that is caused by war.

Projecting military power around the world is extremely costly for all of us.

1. We believe that U.S. policies in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan aim, in part, to secure and control priority access to natural resources and to establish ongoing U.S. military presence in these regions.

2. We think it is folly to believe that the United States can successfully control the politics of Iraq, Afghanistan or Pakistan. Ultimately, this project cannot succeed, and is not worth the cost in human lives and national wealth, even if it could succeed.

3. The U.S. and its allies have used armed occupation and military offensives to secure perceived U.S. national interests in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. We believe military solutions are facilitating recruitment for Al Qaeda, Taliban groups, and other organizations that engage in armed resistance to the U.S. and its allies. Lacking the resources to resist overwhelming U.S. superiority in weapons technology, by so-called "conventional warfare," they resort to a variety of improvised tactics, including terror attacks on civilians. Western attempts to dominate this region are increasing armed resisters, not defeating them.

4. In 2007, the U.S. and Israel signed a Memorandum of Understanding that the U.S. would provide Israel with \$30 billion in military aid over the next 10 years. The U.S. also signed military pacts worth 13 billion dollars for Egypt and arranged billions of dollars in arms sales to Saudi Arabia and Gulf states. U.S. military aid and U.S. weapon sales to the region escalate the arms race and lessen the likelihood that conflicts will be resolved through negotiation and diplomacy.

The current "War on Terror/ Overseas Contingency Operations" paradigm of occupation and militarization is counterproductive. We should not pursue this failed strategy. History clearly points out that attempts at subjugating countries in the Middle East and Central Asia have all failed miserably. We need a new path and vision for creating peace and justice.

Our Proposal

We call on Congress and the Obama Administration to:

1. Demand and organize prompt regional negotiations with all interested parties and seek settlements to these conflicts that could minimize the potential for civil wars during inevitable struggles over political power.

2. Announce and carry out a prompt end to U.S. combat engagement in these wars, and an orderly, prompt withdrawal of all U.S. forces and bases from these countries.

3. Close Guantanamo, Bagram and other detention facilities established as part of the so-called "war on terror" under President Bush and press for full U.S. compliance with all international treaties regarding the treatment of prisoners.

4. Stop all forms of collective punishment imposed on civilians.

5. End U.S. interference in the affairs of other countries.

6. Massively reduce U.S. military spending consistent with these goals.

7. Convert excessive military spending to:

a) Provide assistance to refugees of these conflicts through local aid agencies and the United Nations implementing partners;

b) Support the development of public infrastructure, education, local economies, and healthcare networks in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Palestine;

c) Retrofit U.S. housing, transportation, industry and other property assets for maximum energy efficiency;

d) Invent and develop renewable and sustainable methods of alternative energy production;

e) Build energy efficient systems for mass transit throughout the United States;

f) Repair and restore our public infrastructure, including subsidies to create full employment and affordable housing in impoverished and neglected areas;

g) Provide universal health care and quality education for all people living in the United States.

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