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ANTIWAR ACTIVISTS ARRESTED AT HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS HEARING

Washington, D.C. - March 9 – Two activists were arrested last evening at the House Appropriations Committee hearing. Mike Ferner and Ed Kinane of Voices for Creative Nonviolence, interrupted the hearing to call for an end to funding of the war against Iraq. The Committee was considering, and subsequently approved, an additional \$67 billion in supplemental funding for wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Ferner and Kinane were released early this morning on charges of disrupting a Congressional committee hearing.

One of several amendments to the funding bill was offered by Rep. James Walsh's (R-NY), to shift funds earmarked for Veterans Administration hospitals. As soon as votes were cast on Walsh's amendment, Ferner rose and told the committee members that as a former Navy Hospital Corpsman during the Viet Nam war, "the best way to stop creating more wounded and disabled veterans is to stop this war."

As committee chair, Jerry Lewis (R-CA), pounded the gavel Ferner continued, "In the name of the majority of Americans who now oppose this war we say, 'Stop the killing.' Listen to the names of a few victims of this our government's war," he added, and began reading a list beginning with two young Marines and two Iraqis. Seized by Capitol Police, Ferner was hustled from the chamber as he called out, "These are the names of dead veterans...this government is violating international law...committing war crimes."

Kinane, who held a banner that said, "Stop the Killing," as Ferner spoke, was also ejected from the hearing. The two were placed under arrest, charged with disturbing a Congressional committee hearing, and given dates to appear in D.C. Superior Court.

Since February 15, VCNV members have participated in a liquids-only fast and vigil at the U.S. Capitol. Four have gone without food as an act of solidarity with Iraqi citizens and as a call to the U.S. government and citizens to end the war against Iraq. This action is the second action of civil resistance carried out during the Winter of Our Discontent campaign. The first occurred on February 27 in which 7 people were arrested at the White House.

Key demands of the campaign include: 1) an immediate end to the U.S. occupation of Iraq; 2) full funding of the reconstruction of Iraq by the U.S.; 3) cancellation of the odious debt incurred by Saddam Hussein's regime, without any International Monetary Fund conditions; and 4) cancellation of the war reparations charges imposed against Iraq by the U.N. for Hussein's invasion and occupation of Kuwait in 1990-91.

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