



2017 Position Statements

Veterans For Peace Statement on Ban and Border Wall

Date: 2/3/2017

Veterans For Peace strongly condemns President Trump's executive orders banning travelers from seven Muslim majority countries in the Middle East and North Africa, the expansion of a U.S.-Mexico border wall and the acceleration of deporting undocumented immigrants.

As veterans, we took an oath to uphold and defend the U.S. Constitution. The fundamental values we were told we risked our lives to serve, the values for which so many of our brothers and sisters rendered the ultimate sacrifice, are now facing a serious and existential threat. The Trump administration's implementation of hateful White Nationalism through draconian executive orders that target Muslims and ban immigrants and refugees as well as U.S. visa and green card holders, and push for an extension of the wall on the border, are betrayals of the sacrifices made by U.S. veterans.

Veterans For Peace recognizes that these orders did not happen in a vacuum, but represent a long history of racist and violent policy that has perpetuated U.S. wars across the Muslim world and horrific domestic policy that created ICE, massive immigration detention centers and a wall that already separates families. However, the Trump administration has escalated, at an alarming pace, the implementation of new dangerous measures. President Trump is moving to fulfill on the promises of his campaign that caused an upsurge of hateful sentiment in our nation and spurred a rise in fear and anger. These measures increase alienation of targeted groups, give al Qaeda and ISIL recruitment propaganda and put service members lives in increased danger. Additionally, by stopping visa and green-card immigrants from re-entering the U.S., the administration's actions have separated families. These directives are politicized and weaponized hatred and further discrimination against those who are already facing increased repression and violence in this country.

Furthermore, as veterans we condemn the disregard of court decisions and the alarming tactic of reorganizing federal departments to silence anyone who disagrees. This form of censorship and squelching of views that diverge from the leaders of the Trump administration is incredibly disturbing and we fear, shows a trend that dissent or disagreement will face severe repercussions. Silencing dissenting voices ensures groupthink, leading to irrational or dysfunctional decision-making outcomes.

It is more important than ever that veterans stand up, speak out and organize to disrupt the dangerous escalation of racist and unjust policies, both at home and abroad.

Veterans For Peace Rejects President Trump's Military Build Up

Date: 3/6/2017

Veterans For Peace calls for a reduction in the Pentagon budget and an increase in spending to meet human needs at home and abroad. As military veterans from WWII to the current era of conflicts, who have trained for, and in many cases, fought in U.S. wars, we know that current U.S. policies have not only failed to bring peace but are morally bankrupt. Veterans For Peace has called for a different approach than war to demonstrate power and strength and prevent and end violent conflict. For the past thirty-two years, we have called for the abolishment of war as an instrument of national policy. As a nation, we have witnessed the failure and blowback of war many times, including when the U.S. government chose to respond to the tragic and depraved violence of the September 11, 2001 attacks with more violence by invading Afghanistan. The U.S. went on to invade Iraq, overthrow the government in Libya and drop bombs in Syria, Yemen, Somalia and other nations. An October 16, 2016 [New York Times article](#) states, "This year alone, the United States has carried out airstrikes in seven countries and conducted Special Operations missions in many more."

The President plans to increase Pentagon spending by \$54 billion, claiming that the U.S. military is broken and depleted. Mr. Trump recently spoke to service members aboard the new \$13 billion USS Gerald R. Ford aircraft carrier reiterating his call for more spending. Ironically the carrier is a real-life example of why more spending is not needed. U.S. military capabilities far outstrip all other nations. The carrier is an addition to a navy that was already unmatched by all others. With ten carriers, the [U.S. has more than all other nations combined](#) and the carriers are larger, providing more deck space per carrier than other nations. The U.S. Navy has thousands of aircraft, making it the second largest air force in the world behind the U.S. Air Force. The U.S. already [spends almost three times what any other country spends on defense and more than the next nine countries combined](#).

As citizens participating in self-government, it is our responsibility to ask, with this massive military capability and spending and endless global wars costing trillions, why are 15 years of war policy not working? Who is benefiting from more spending on killing and death? The President has called for an escalation of war against ISIL, stating in his address to Congress, "I directed the Department of Defense to develop a plan to demolish and destroy ISIS..." This long-standing policy of militaristic responses to stop terrorism is further evidence that the U.S. is operating according to a worldview of permanent war.

One part of our mission at Veterans For Peace is to end the arms race and to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons. We are deeply concerned about recent statements and developments. The President seeks to increase tensions with Iran by threatening to pull out of the nuclear agreement between Iran and the P 5+1 - U.S., UK, France, China and Russia plus Germany. Mr. Trump has also called for what many have termed a new nuclear arms race. He has made comments calling for increased spending on nuclear weapons and most recently said in a [Reuters interview](#), "...if countries are going to have nukes, we're going to be at the top of the pack..."

Mr. Trump's call for a nuclear arms race is frightening and the Democratic Party's relentless anti-Russian rhetoric is irresponsible. The world does not need a new arms race or rising tensions between the U.S. and Russia. In fact, the world must rid itself of these immoral

weapons before they are used again, and Russia and the U.S. must find peaceful means to address the spread of global violence. There is no real defense against a nuclear strike and a new build up will only bring the world closer to the possibility of nuclear war [resulting in millions if not billions of deaths](#).

Apparently, Mr. Trump has not learned anything from the previous failures of the Bush and Obama administrations. Case in point is the U.S. led raid in Yemen authorized by the President. The raid resulted in the killing of up to [30 civilians, including 10 women and children](#), and the death of U.S. Navy SEAL William Owens. One of the children was an [eight-year-old girl, Nawar al-Awlaki](#), also known as Nora. She was a U.S. citizen and daughter of the former al-Qaida propagandist and American citizen Anwar al-Awlaki, who was killed in a September 2011 U.S. drone strike in Yemen. Nora's 16-year-old brother Abdulrahman - also a U.S. citizen, was killed in a second drone strike soon afterwards. This is exactly the kind of incident that leads to creating more enemies dedicated to fighting the U.S. Is it reasonable to believe all the friends and families of the slain civilians will understand that their deaths are collateral damage or acceptable casualties of war? Or would many of them want the same kind of revenge expressed by President Bush when he said to the world on September 13, 2001, "I can hear you, the rest of the world can hear you and the people who knocked these buildings down will hear all of us soon."

The military response to that tragic day has only brought more war and death. It is time for a new way. We call on the President to learn from the past 15 years and step out on a new direction of peace.

If the President can't learn from past failures, perhaps he can learn from success. The Iran agreement is a milestone in diplomacy that averted a war and met all parties' concerns about Iran's nuclear power program. Working with Russia in Syria, President Obama secured an agreement where the Syrian government willingly gave up its stockpile of mustard gas and nerve agents, a task that was completed in the summer of 2014. Syria also signed the international Chemical Weapons Convention. Diplomacy can work. Peace is possible, but we must work for it.

U.S. global policy of endless war and filling the coffers of an already bloated military budget has merged into a global response of violence. We need a global response that meets human needs and aspirations. Militarization is not the foundation on which to build peace. U.S. efforts have proven that war is the breeding ground for more violence and hatred. We need increased spending in social programs here at home, including significant resources dedicated to our veterans who are suffering devastating effects as a result of their service. We need an increase in diplomacy to end the wars. We need to dedicate resources to helping bring relief to the refugee crisis resulting from endless war.

We, as veterans, know that peace is possible, but only if resources are directed towards caring for one another, not perpetuating militarization across the globe.

Petition: Fund People's Needs, Not Trump's Military Greed

Trump's misdirected White House is putting military profiteering before public needs and putting future generations at risk. Trump's proposed budget would slash social services that we depend on to raise the military budget by 10%. The United States already spends more on its military than the next 7 countries combined." Sign the United for Peace and Justice

petition to call for funds to be spent on human needs here at home, not military and war-making abroad.

[Sign the petition!](#) Tell Democrats and Republicans in Congress that we value and support a system that prioritizes public needs over wars and corporate profiteers.

Veterans For Peace Condemns U.S. Actions in Syria

Date: 4/7/2017

Veterans For Peace condemns the illegal U.S. attack in Syria. We call on the Trump Administration to immediately end all military actions in Syria and to begin intense U.S. diplomatic efforts to end the conflict in the region. We call on our members and all those who want an end to U.S. wars to contact the President and Congress, to meet and talk to people about peaceful means to end the war in Syria and hit the streets to make our resistance to war visible.

Call the White House 202-456-1111 and your Senators and Congressional Representatives 202-224-3121 and tell them that military action only increases the dangers and intensifies the humanitarian catastrophe in the region.

Veterans For Peace mourns the deaths of those recently killed in the chemical attack and the hundreds of thousands of lives that have passed over the last six years of this conflict. The physical effects of a chemical attack and the way it kills is horrendous. The president stated, "No child should ever suffer such horror." But the ongoing war itself is horrific with many more children dying due to countless attacks by all forces involved, disease, and other war related crises. The madness of this multi-sided war must end. We demand the Trump administration remove all military operations within Syria and to stop flooding the region with arms sales.

The United States is not innocent in the death of over 400,000 people in Syria and across the region since 2011. For more than two decades, the U.S. has been the most powerful destabilizing factor in the region. For the last few years, the U.S. has and continues to support and conduct military operations within the borders of Syria with devastating effects, including the bombing and killing of civilians. Further, the 1991 U.S. led invasion of Iraq, the no-fly zones led by U.S. forces, the war in Afghanistan and the second invasion of Iraq are twenty-six years of continuous U.S. military operations. The cumulative effects of U.S. war-making, decisions made as part of the occupation of Iraq and the subsequent rise of ISIL are the most impactful factors in creating the refugee crisis and the regional destabilization the president referred to in his statement.

It should be clear after more than a generation of war that more war and violence as witnessed in last night's attacks will not bring an end to the killing and suffering. There are no positive effects coming out of U.S. involvement in Syria and it only further contributes to the death and destruction of the Syrian people. We call on the President to stop ratcheting up tension at home and around the world. The "peace and harmony" he calls for cannot prevail through cycles of violence.

Veterans For Peace: No More Troops in Afghanistan

Date: 6/16/2017

The Trump Administration announced it has given Defense Secretary Jim Mattis the authority to determine troops levels in Afghanistan. It is widely believed that Mattis favors sending several thousand more U.S. troops to Afghanistan. Why? Perhaps to break the “stalemate” as described by the Commander of U.S. Forces in Afghanistan, Army General John Nicholson when describing the war to the Senate Armed Services Committee. In his June 13th testimony, Secretary Mattis told the same committee, “We are not winning in Afghanistan right now.”

Veterans For Peace calls for a different direction than more war. We call on Congress to stop funding war and demand a plan for a peaceful solution. We call on the President to immediately begin withdrawal of U.S. troops and take a new direction towards diplomacy and peace. And we call on the people of the U.S. to resist war and demand policies that foster peace and prosperity at home and in Afghanistan.

It should be clear after 16 years and the death of tens of thousands of people that no one is a winner in Afghanistan. There is no clear concept of what it means to win there. In fact, it is no longer clear why the U.S. continues to keep troops in Afghanistan and now is on the brink of increasing the number of men and women in harm's way.

The U.S. has claimed to be at war in Afghanistan to deny “terrorists” training and staging areas to attack the United States and to protect the people of Afghanistan. After this long period of war, what does the U.S. have to show for its military efforts?

Since the horror of September 11, 2001, the U.S. has been on a path of war, wreaking havoc on millions of people around the globe. Because of displacement, death and maiming of loved ones by U.S. wars, animosity towards the U.S. has increased and the world has become less safe. The animosity caused by the wars has created a larger pool of people willing to fight the U.S. In 2001 al Qaeda had limited influence and ISIL did not exist. Now Al Qaeda and ISIL have affiliated groups and sympathetic supporters around the globe.

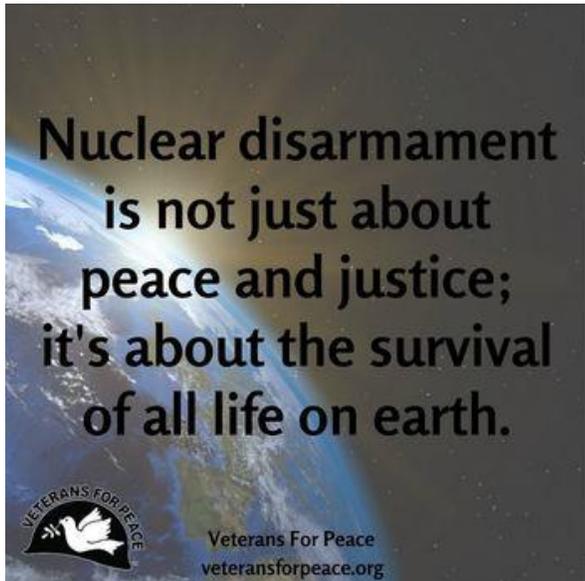
The protection of the Afghan people has been a total failure. It has been widely reported that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan found that there were 11,418 civilian casualties (3,498 deaths and 7,920 injured) between January and December 2016, an overall increase of 3 percent. An appalling number of those casualties were children – 923 deaths, and 2,589 injured – a 24 percent increase over record-high numbers from 2015. In addition, 3,535 coalition forces have died; three of which were recently killed as a result of an insider attack fire from an Afghan soldier. We must add to these losses all the people who are physically and psychologically broken and families torn apart. The human cost is immeasurable. But there is also a dollar cost to war. The U.S. has spent over \$1 trillion in this failed and depraved effort in Afghanistan. These dollars represent lost opportunities to repair U.S. infrastructure, pay for healthcare, create jobs and address a host of human needs.

It is not too late for a different direction. War was always the wrong option. Perhaps it was not clear 16 years ago. It should be clear now more than ever!

Veterans For Peace Applauds the Adoption of a Nuclear Ban Treaty And Calls on U.S. To Sign Immediately

Date: 7/14/2017

On July 7th, 2017, the United Nations approved a legally binding [Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#). At last, the world now has the first-ever treaty to ban all nuclear weapons.



The day the treaty was signed, the U.S. issued a statement that said “We do not intend to sign, ratify or ever become party to it.” The U.S., the sole remaining superpower, is developing new, more accurate and more lethal nuclear weapons, while deploying "missile defenses" that make a nuclear first strike more possible and more likely.

Veterans For Peace is dismayed that the U.S. refuses to sign the monumental treaty that will make the world a safer place. The Treaty is a victory for humanity and the shared natural world. It brings Veterans For Peace closer than ever to achieving our mission to abolish war by forwarding our goal of ending the arms race and to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons.

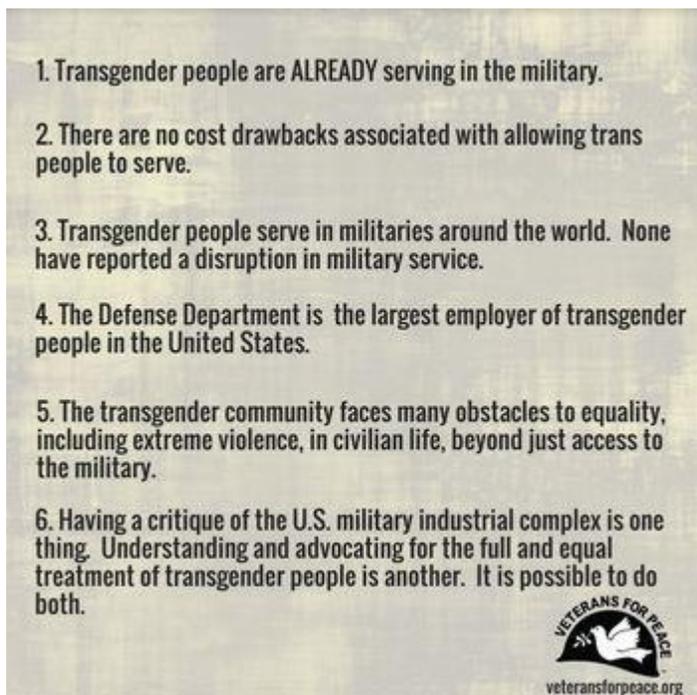
Veterans For Peace remains committed to fulfilling our mission, redoubling our efforts to ensure that the United States ratifies the treaty and eliminate nuclear weapons entirely. Let this be the generation that will finally ban nuclear weapons.

It's not just about peace and justice; it's about the survival of all life on earth.

Veterans For Peace Condemns Any Transgender Ban

Date: 7/26/2017

Veterans For Peace condemns President Trump's effort to ban transgender people from serving in the U.S. military. Veterans For Peace affirms the rights, humanity and identity of trans people and calls on President Trump to reverse his bigoted decision to bar trans people from exercising their right as full citizens to serve in the United States military.



As a peace and justice organization, we abhor war and look forward to a day when all combatants refuse to fight. We work hard and diligently to realize our mission to abolish war. However, as we work to fulfill the mission of ending war, we also stand for justice. The Trump Administration's pronouncement flies in the face of our stated values as a nation that all are created equal with unalienable Rights. Veterans For Peace stands in solidarity with the transgender community as its members struggle for recognition as equal citizens and free people.

Further, the president's tweets are a disgrace and a dishonor to transgender people who have participated in the U.S. military. There are varying estimates that

there are 6,000-15,000 transgender service members in the U.S. military today. As a volunteer force, these individuals have the right to choose to join the military. That should be respected and they should not be targeted for who they are. They should be judged by the content of their character and the quality of their work.

Sources for the graphic:

2. http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1530.html

3. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/07/26/trump-said-transgender-troops-cause-disruption-these-18-militaries-show-otherwise/?utm_term=.20a863a592ab

4. <http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-pentagon-transgender-ban-20160630-snap-story.html>

5. <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/25015-transgender-activists-speak-out-against-campaign-to-end-trans-military-ban>

If you've been mistreated or harassed based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or HIV status, the ACLU wants to hear about it --The ACLU might be able to help. [Please fill out this form](#). For a FAQ on Transgender Military Service, SPARTA has provided [this helpful document](#).

Executive Director Responds to Transgender Ban

Here we go again. Donald Trump's latest efforts to ban as many transgender people as possible from serving in the U.S. military is another example of his efforts to appease the xenophobes, homophobes and bigots in his base rather striving to be everyone's president. It is exceedingly clear that Trump does not care about what is just. He only cares about his ego and feeding it no matter the cost. Today this cost are the rights of the transgender community.

I have great concerns with U.S. endless wars and our nation's foreign policy being one of global domination and disregard for the rule of law and human life. I do not advise anyone to join the U.S. military today. But I know that the right to serve one's country in the military has been part of our nation's historical process of acceptance and inclusion. No matter my position on U.S. wars, I understand that no U.S. citizen should be denied the right choose to join or not to join our nation's military. My ancestors struggled for the right to serve as equals in the U.S. Armed Forces. I was able to exercise my right to serve because of the struggle for dignity and equality of those who came before me. The rights of transgender people are also part of that struggle. Many of the same arguments about unit cohesion and readiness used today to justify banning transgender people were used to continue the practice of segregated units, to keep gay people out of the military and to stop women from serving in combat roles. My ancestors did not only struggle for their and my rights, but for all people's rights.

With this second attempt to ban transgender people from serving in the U.S. military, again the Trump Administration shows that it has no respect for people's rights or the Constitution of the United States. Choosing to join or not to join the U.S. military is a personal decision that should not be determined by government. The only obstacle should be standards that are the same for everyone, not qualifications that clearly target a specific group to ensure to keep them out.

Trump is the "What can I do today to hurt someone today?" president. He does not seek to lift up the best of our nation. He cultivates our country's worst fears and tendencies of xenophobia, prejudice, exclusion and bigotry. It is my hope that our nation has come to a place where most of us understand that a central aspect of freedom is the right to make choices. People must be able to decide for themselves to join the military or not.

No one should be treated as a second-class person. We must stand with our transgender brothers and sisters just as we must stand with all those under attack by this Administration. Trump is not making America great. He is trying to tear us apart. We must remember what really makes America great; the ideals we profess and the progress we make as we the people strive to live up to those ideals.



Michael T. McPhearson, Executive Director, Veterans For Peace

Remembering Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Date: August 2017

The people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki experienced the horror of nuclear bombs dropped on their churches, on their schools, on their cafes, on their streets, on their homes and their families. Today the last survivors of those bombs, known as the Hibakusha, continue to appeal to the world to rid itself of these terrible weapons of mass destruction and mass suffering.

We continue to be dismayed at the lack of accountability that the U.S. has taken towards unleashing the most devastating attack the world has ever seen. The U.S. remains the only country in the world that has used nuclear weapons, of which the side effects are still being felt today.

Veterans For Peace now takes up the call of the Hibakusha. We who have trained for war and experienced war know its meaningless violence, its futility, its lies and false promises. We want to abolish all war, to end the violence of military intervention, and the threats of nuclear destruction.

Together with the courageous Hibakusha survivors, we call on the world to rid itself of nuclear weapons and to renounce war once and for all.

Veterans For Peace Apologizes to Japanese People and the World

May 30, 2016

Veterans For Peace expresses our deepest condolences to all those who were killed and maimed, and to their families. We apologize to the [Hibakusha, the survivors](#) of the nuclear bombings, and we thank them for their courageous, continuing witness.

We apologize to all the Japanese people and to all the people of the world. This hugely atrocious crime against humanity should never have happened. As military veterans who have come to see the tragic futility of war, we promise that we will continue working for peace and disarmament. We want to see nuclear disarmament in our lifetime.

Diplomacy, Not War in Korea

Date: 8/13/2017

1. North Korea offered to suspend nuclear tests in exchange for U.S. cancellation of large-scale joint war drills with S. Korea.

2. The Korean War has never ended. The armistice signed in 1953 was to "insure a complete cessation of hostilities and of all acts of armed force in Korea until a final peaceful settlement is achieved." No final settlement has been agreed upon.

3. The U.S. has placed multiple embargos on N. Korea, the latest was passed last Saturday and would affect a third of N. Korea's overall trade.

4. The U.S. currently has 30,000 troops in South Korea.

5. The U.S. has 375,000 military and civilian personnel in the Asia Pacific.

Who Is Escalating War?

www.veteransforpeace.org



Veterans For Peace continues to urge for diplomacy with North Korea. The belligerent language from President Trump is only exacerbating an already aggressive U.S. policy towards North Korea.

It is more important than ever that the U.S. begins seeking diplomatic solutions that involve all regional powers towards peace. Increasingly the world is moving towards a nuclear stand-off. The United States has continued to expand their military position in Asia and advocating for deadly sanctions on Korea.

We call upon the United States to immediately:

- Engage in negotiations with North Korea, without pre-conditions, towards ending the Korean War
- Sign the UN Peace Treaty on Nuclear Weapons
- Cease the Military Build-Up in Asia Pacific

Sources;

1. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-usa-drills-idUSKBN0KJ09F20150110>
 2. <https://www.archives.gov/files/historical-docs/doc-content/images/korean-war-armistice.pdf>
 3. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/08/security-council-vote-north-korea-sanctions-170805153043100.html>
 4. & 5. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/aug/09/what-is-the-us-militarys-presence-in-south-east-asia>
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Diplomacy, Not Bombs - An Emergency Appeal from Veterans For Peace

Date: 8/17/2017

The governments of the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) have recently escalated the threat of nuclear attacks. Especially this week, the danger has become still greater, to the point of threatening to trigger World War III.

Veterans For Peace pledges to do everything we can to prevent the beginning of this new conflict and strongly urges the U.S. government to open a dialogue with the DPRK without any preconditions, and call on all countries to promote the same.

In the 1950s during the Korean War, both President Harry Truman and General Douglas MacArthur, who was commander of U.S. forces in Korea, openly discussed the possibility of using nuclear weapons against the DPRK. That threat was especially terrifying coming from the only country ever to use nuclear weapons in war, and at that time still under the very president who had ordered the Hiroshima and Nagasaki attacks.

The DPRK has remained under the U.S. nuclear threat from that day to the present. In recent years, the DPRK has developed its nuclear weapons and missile capability in hopes of deterring such an attack by the U.S.

Frequent overtures for dialogue by the DPRK to the U.S. have been turned down. Instead, the U.S. has carried out large-scale, joint military exercises with the Republic of Korea (ROK) in and around the Korean Peninsula, flown B-1B strategic bombers into ROK airspace along the DMZ, and sailed the nuclear aircraft carrier Carl Vinson into Northeast Asia, in addition to the carrier Ronald Reagan, which is stationed in Japan.

On August 9, in reaction to President Trump's threat to rain "fire and fury" on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the DPRK military announced that it was going to draft a plan to launch four intermediate missiles into the waters around Guam, subject to Chairman Kim's approval. Japan's Defense Minister Onodera then announced that if an attack against the U.S. bases on Guam were carried out, this would constitute an immediate threat, which would enable the Japanese Self-Defense Forces, for the first time in the postwar period, to engage in collective military operations with the U.S. military. This would in effect spell the end to Article 9 of Japan's constitution, which renounces Japan's right to participate in war.

Members of Veterans For Peace know that opening negotiations with the DPRK to prevent the beginning of this war will require political courage. According to the U.S. government and the mass media, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a country, with whom negotiation is impossible. However, the DPRK has diplomatic relations with 166 countries around the world, and had frozen its nuclear weapon program, under the 1994 Agreed Framework, until the Bush administration discarded the agreement in 2002.

The [DPRK's Foreign Minister has stated](#) that if the U.S. stops its joint military exercises with the Republic of Korea, the DPRK would be willing to stop its nuclear weapons tests and missile launches. The Foreign Minister also stated that the DPRK would be willing to engage in negotiations as long as the U.S. and South Korea do not demand that the DPRK dismantle its nuclear program as a precondition for the talks.

On the U.S. side, President Trump, speaking of the DPRK leader Kim Jong Un, said, "If it would be appropriate for me to meet him, I would absolutely. I would be honored to do it." To create a positive environment for the negotiations, Veterans For Peace calls upon the U.S. government to suspend the upcoming U.S.-ROK joint war drill, 8/21-31, and begin the negotiations with DPRK now.

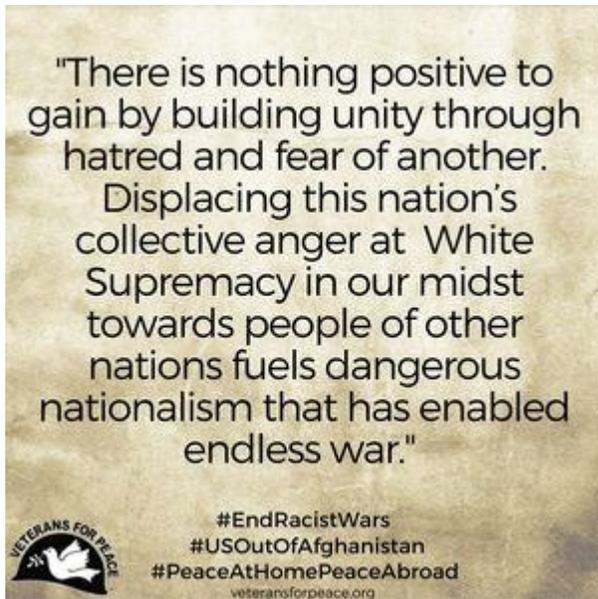
End the Korean War Now!
Sign a Peace Treaty!

[Sign the Petition to Stop THAAD!](#)

Afghanistan: More of the Same But Wrapped in Secrecy

Date: 8/23/2017

This past Monday, Trump addressed the nation about Afghanistan. The president's speech at its core is more of the same disastrous policies that we have seen for sixteen years, except this administration wants to completely abandon pursuit of a political solution and shroud the war in a cloak of secrecy. Veterans For Peace, once again, calls for a different direction other than war. We call for U.S. troops to leave Afghanistan and a robust pursuit of a political solution to end the war.



It is not surprising that Trump began this speech by attempting to rectify his inability to speak out directly against White supremacy. Instead of speaking unequivocally as president against ideologies of hate and White supremacy, he attempted to wrap himself in patriotism and the blood and sacrifice of fallen soldiers. In doing so, Trump attempted to sidestep his own culpability in the rise of hate and intolerance in the United States. In fact, we see that Trump only knows how to divide and fear-monger. His urging everyone in this country to come together against a common foe is no different than his campaign rhetoric using fear to call for unity against Muslims, immigrants and people of color. Now he is using fear of people in another country to wage endless war. We, at Veterans For Peace, have seen this

tactic repeatedly. There is nothing positive to gain by building unity through hatred and fear of another. Displacing this nation's collective anger at White supremacy in our midst towards people of other nations fuels dangerous nationalism that has enabled endless war. Further, we see by Trump's speech the next day in Phoenix that his words of unity here at home are hollow.

Endless war is the plan that Trump laid out Monday. In this regard, there are few differences in the approach of the prior two administrations. The policy differences that do exist will not change the reality of what is happening in Afghanistan and will continue to ensure more death for U.S. troops and the people of Afghanistan.

Veterans For Peace is alarmed by the policy changes outlined. Trump indicated that a political settlement with the Taliban will not be sought and that the focus will be on military options. He also blatantly stated that the U.S. public will not be given a basic outline of plans in Afghanistan. Both policies are dangerous. Cloaking the war in Afghanistan in more secrecy, in a time when increased privatization of our armed forces is being considered, diminishes accountability and gives the U.S. public no idea of what we are being asked to commit to war. Moving away from a pursuit of a political solution and giving commanders on the ground more leeway to use force will more than likely lead to more civilian deaths with little chance of significantly increasing the possibility of the U.S. militarily defeating the

Taliban. The two previous administrations put little real effort in a political solution, but complete abandonment can only mean prolonging war and more bloodshed.

Veterans For Peace also condemns the aggressive and needlessly antagonizing language towards Pakistan, especially given our long history of drone warfare in the country that has killed innocent civilians and violated their borders. Previous administrations have sought a balanced approach to Pakistan and India, two nuclear powers with a fragile relationship. Trump's highlighting of India's benefit to the U.S. economically and invitation to be more involved in Afghanistan appears to be favoring India and to punish Pakistan. It is hard to see a positive outcome of framing the U.S. relationship with Pakistan or India in the context of moving closer to one and distancing the U.S. from the other.

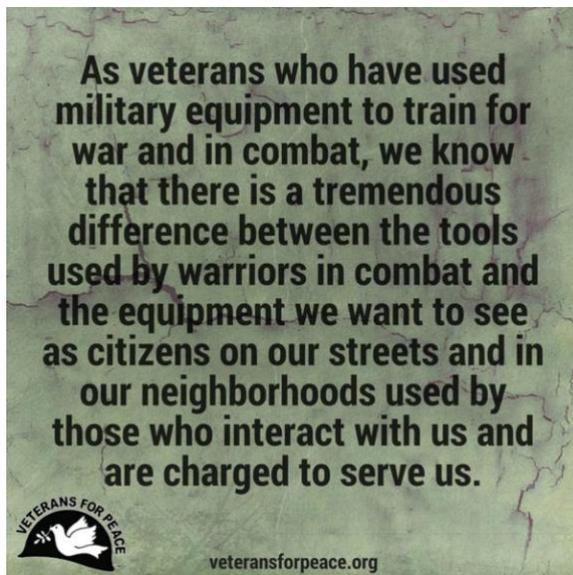
Trump's speech admitted no culpability in the role of the U.S. in destabilizing the entire region, alternating between blaming Afghanistan and Pakistan. The U.S. military has destroyed countless villages and continues to create an atmosphere of fear and hatred with covert drone operations that kill thousands of innocent people. It should be clear after sixteen years and the death of tens of thousands of people that no one is a winner in Afghanistan. There is no clear concept of what it means to win there. In fact, it is no longer clear why the U.S. continues to keep troops in Afghanistan after sixteen years of failure.

Veterans For Peace calls for a different direction than more war. We call on Congress to stop funding war and demand a plan for a peaceful solution. We call on the president to immediately begin withdrawal of U.S. troops and take a new direction towards diplomacy and peace. And we call on the people of the U.S. to resist war and demand policies that foster peace and prosperity at home and in Afghanistan.

Veterans For Peace Condemns Trump Administration Announcement to Further Militarize the Police

Date: 8/30/2017

Monday, Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced that the Trump administration will lift limits on the 1033 program to once again allow local police departments access to surplus military equipment such as grenade launchers, high caliber weapons, tracked vehicles that look like tanks and bayonets.

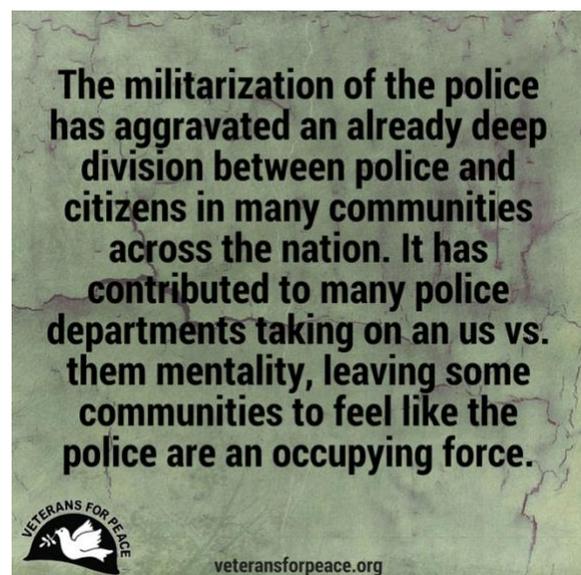


Veterans For Peace condemns the Trump administration's choice to allow more combat equipment to be transferred from the Pentagon to domestic police forces. As veterans who have used military equipment to train for war and in combat, we know that there is a tremendous difference between the tools used by warriors in combat and the equipment we want to see as citizens on our streets and in our neighborhoods used by those who interact with us and are charged to serve us. We call for the immediate suspension of the 1033 program and for all equipment meant specifically for war like MRAPs, tracked vehicles, grenade launchers and high caliber weapons – 50 caliber and above, to be immediately returned to the Pentagon. The

militarization of the police has aggravated an already deep division between police and citizens in many communities across the nation. It has contributed to many police departments taking on an us vs. them mentality, leaving some communities to feel like the police are an occupying force. Police forces have used this kind of equipment to intimidate citizens exercising their constitutional rights to freedom of speech, to assemble and to petition the government for redress.

Trump's July 28th "Please don't be too nice," statement when addressing law enforcement on Long Island NY was a comparatively innocuous prelude to this new policy of releasing more equipment meant for war into our communities. His words appear to condone police brutality and now his directive to place combat weapons in the hands of police while reducing and in many places ending Justice Department efforts at accountability send a clear signal that police can act violently with impunity.

The Trump Doctrine is one of divide and conquer through hate. Trump's words and policies are an extension of a deeply racist, xenophobic and fear-based worldview.



To act this way in the wake of the tragedy in Charlottesville and the rise of hate in our nation makes it clear that the president has no intention of working to improve police and community relations nor in taking concrete steps to bring people together. In fact, he has thrown gas on a smoldering fire by embracing revisionist history, claiming that someone wants to take, "our history." Who is "our"? He speaks as if the history of the U.S. belongs to one group and is not a collective story, as if all the people in the United States are not part of the triumphs, challenges and failures of this nation.

Trump's words and actions call on us to act. We must all act to weave the social fabric of this nation into a tapestry where everyone is valued and can equally participate. The healing we need does not begin with combat weapons. It begins with peace building at home and abroad, acceptance of each other, economic investment in people and environmental protection.

Veterans Call for De-escalation, Negotiations and Peace on the Korean Peninsula

Date: 9/7/2017

Veterans For Peace, a U.S. based organization with international chapters in Japan and Okinawa, calls on the governmental leaders of the U.S., the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, aka North Korea), the Republic of Korea (ROK, aka South Korea) and Japan to stop their escalation of threatening words and actions, and begin negotiations toward the signing of the long-awaited Peace Treaty putting a final end to the Korean War.

Any attempt to solve the issues dividing the Korean Peninsula by warfare would bring disaster not only to the people living there, but also to all the people living in Northeast Asia.

Retired General Gary Luck, Former Commander of U.S. Forces in Korea, has estimated that such a war would leave one million dead. And what would be the aim of this war? Each side is threatening to make war on the other to punish it for threatening to make war. This is the behavior of schoolyard bullies, armed not with knives and clubs but nuclear weapons. This catastrophic war is avoidable and must be avoided.

In understanding the background to this situation, it should be remembered that the DPRK has been under nuclear threat from the U.S. ever since the Korean War in the 1950s. That their government has in recent years taken to threatening nuclear retaliation to any attacker is a wildly dangerous and morally condemnable policy, but it is not unique to the DPRK. It is a policy, invented by the U.S. and adopted by every country that possesses nuclear weapons, called "nuclear deterrence". Every criticism heaped upon the DPRK for following this policy applies equally to every country possessing nuclear weapons.

Each year the U.S. and the ROK carry out joint military exercises right up against the DPRK border and based on the scenario of an invasion of that country.

Every year the DPRK, which unsurprisingly considers this a threat, protests with verbal counter-threats and, recently, missile launchings.

This year, the U.S. and Japan carried out joint military exercises at the same time as the U.S.-ROK exercises. Rhetoric has escalated. U.S. President Donald Trump threatened "fire and fury like the world has never seen" and stated that "all options are on the table", which means a pre-emptive strike is being considered. DPRK leader Kim Jong Un threatened to launch missiles aimed at the vicinity of Guam. Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe threatened to send Japan's Self Defense Forces along with any U.S. invasion of the North, which would spell the final end of Japan's Peace Constitution. Kim Jong Un responded by sending a missile over northern Japan – though not, as was claimed, violating Japan's airspace, as when it passed over Japan it was in outer space, at an elevation even higher than that of the many satellites that legally pass over Japan every day.

Prime Minister Abe, however, took advantage of the situation by calling a state of emergency in northern Japan, commandeering the national broadcasting system NHK, and also the cell-phone system, to urge people take shelter from the alleged impending attack by moving to the basements of concrete buildings (few buildings have these). Presumably Abe is hoping

that the resulting panic will help him to promote his militarization plans, and in particular to gain support for his purchases of expensive counter-missile commodities. (It is noteworthy that during this “state of emergency” the trains, including the bullet trains, were kept running.)

This gambling with the lives of millions has got to stop. And there is a way to stop it. DPRK, while carrying out its threatening nuclear tests and missile launchings, has repeatedly said it wants to negotiate a peace treaty ending the Korean War, which the U.S. has been refusing. But a peace treaty is a very good idea, the signing of which would allow the many hundreds of millions of people living in Northeast Asia to breathe a sigh of relief. Veterans For Peace calls on the U.S. Government to accept this offer, and to begin negotiations with the DPRK aiming at signing such a treaty and normalizing relations between the DPRK and the ROK.

And as the governments of the relevant countries seem locked into their present self-destructive policies, we call upon the citizens of those countries, who surely do not want a meaningless nuclear war where they live, to demand that their governments back off and begin negotiations, which are the only way to bring peace to the region.

Written by Veterans For Peace, VFP Japan and Okinawa VFP

Veterans For Peace on Afghanistan

Date: 10/6/2017

At the beginning of the 17th year of the U.S. war in Iraq, Veterans For Peace continues to call on the government of the United States to immediately withdraw all military and intelligence forces from Afghanistan and Pakistan. We call on the government of the United States to provide humanitarian aid directly to the people of Afghanistan, in non-coercive forms, to help the Afghan people rebuild their own nation and their lives in cooperation with other nations in the region; to allow the people of Afghanistan to freely determine their own government without interference by the US; and to issue an official apology to the people of Afghanistan.

President Trump is the third president to continue the depraved and failed U.S. war policy in Afghanistan. He and Presidents Bush and Obama have claimed that the U.S. has a winning strategy in Afghanistan and that the U.S. public must continue to support the war efforts to maintain U.S. security and to help the people of Afghanistan. However, the truth is the war is killing the people of Afghanistan. After 16 years, civilian deaths are rising. A [New York Times](#) July 27th article reported that the United Nations [Afghanistan Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict report](#) states 1,662 civilians were killed in the first six months of 2017, a 2 percent increase from last year and 3,581 additional civilians were wounded. The report also states there is a 23 percent rise in the number of women killed and child deaths are up 9 percent.

The presence of U.S. forces is the primary driver of violence in Afghanistan and that 17 years ago there was no negotiations or dialogue with the former Afghan Taliban government to extradite Osama bin Laden. Instead the U.S. invaded Afghanistan and ousted a government the U.S. had formerly worked with. War was the first and only tool employed by the U.S. Since 2001, [violence has increased significantly within Afghanistan, as well as the rise of militant groups](#). It is beyond clear that our presence is only aiding the further destabilizing of that entire region.

War is a death factory. Thousands of U.S. and coalition troops have died. Tens of thousands of service members have been wounded. [Veteran suicide rates have increased dramatically](#) since 2001. While the U.S. government claims to protect the people of Afghanistan, the Afghan people have lost the most to U.S. foreign policy. According to the [Costs of War project at Brown University's Watson Institute](#), that as of mid 2016 the combined total of deaths in Afghanistan and Pakistan stood at 173,000 with over 183,000 people seriously injured. Constant warfare and deaths can do nothing but inflame rage against the U.S. **The U.S. must stop endless war. It is time to bring all our troops home now!**

Veterans For Peace Statement on Support for Zahid Chaudhry

Date: 11/6/017

Text: Veterans For Peace understands the very human need to feel safe and secure, in our homes and in our everyday lives.

We live in a world with perpetual fears, of unpredictable violence from twisted ideological extremists, whether it be the violence of a man from Uzbekistan behind the wheel of a truck in Manhattan, a mentally disturbed man in Las Vegas shooting into a concert crowd with automatic weapons, a homegrown neo-Nazi in Charlottesville driving his car into anti-racist protesters, or a white supremacist ex-convict with a knife riding mass transit train in Portland, Oregon. Knowing that this violence exists means we need reasonable heads to put those fears into perspective and collective work to replace our culture of violence with a culture of peace.

As veterans we know the dangers that lurk in the dark corners of the world; our nightmares are full of them. However, we also know there is a greater danger right here in the United States.

That danger is injustice.

One such injustice is the persecution of disabled U.S. Army veteran Muhammad Zahid Chaudhry.

We understand that following his honorable discharge from the military, Zahid attempted to become a U.S. citizen, unsuccessfully. Now he faces deportation on frivolous grounds.

When our government in earnest and out of real concern for the safety of its citizenry becomes overzealous and grasps at straws to deport a military veteran, one who has been a pillar of his community, the question of state racism is unavoidable. Is the persecution of Zahid Chaudhry simply because of his name, and thus a manifestation of Islamophobia? His record of service to his country and community should speak for itself.

Since his separation from the military, Zahid has worked tirelessly to make the U.S. a better place to pursue the American Dream. He has been married to a U.S. citizen for 16 years and has an outstanding record of community service, having assisted the homeless and volunteered with a fire department, the Red Cross and Habitat for Humanity. He and his wife have been involved in senior care, community garden projects and charity work. In addition, Zahid's leadership as president of Veterans For Peace Rachel Corrie Chapter 109 in Olympia, Washington has demonstrated his commitment to educating on and carrying out nonviolent approaches to resolve conflict, build peace, and end injustice.

Zahid is facing deportation to Pakistan, a country that is no longer his home. The United States is his home – the place where his family is and where he and his wife have worked to nurture positive community connections. A reasonable mind would know that to deport Zahid to Pakistan is to place both he and his wife in danger, as they would be a target of those very

extremist groups whose violence we dread so much. Zahid would be considered a traitor by extremists in Pakistan for serving in our military and would be living in fear of reprisal. Let not fear rule the decisions of our courts. All testimonies from friends, community leaders and veterans praise Zahid as a man of peace, a loving and a compassionate man, an extraordinary person, a man that is a positive contributor to his family, friends and community.

Veterans For Peace asks that anyone in a position to judge Zahid's character and his commitment to his country reflect deeply on his remarkable and multifaceted service to our nation over many years before deciding his fate.

It is inconceivable that a man who would make such a sacrifice for his country would be treated in this way. Our veterans, regardless of their birthplace, do not deserve to be ripped from their homes and deported, particularly when they have dedicated themselves to building community and a just and peaceful future. Our veterans and community leaders deserve our gratitude, not irrational judgments based in fear.

Given our current political environment, it may be more important than ever that we lift up our image to the world, demonstrate justice still prevails in the U.S., and dismiss this deportation hearing in favor of Zahid and allow him his right to become a citizen of the country he has dedicated his life to serving.

For more information, visit the following websites:

www.KeepZahidHome.org

www.Justice4Chaudhry.info

Veterans For Peace On Giving Thanks

Date: 11/22/2017

Text: This Thanksgiving we know that there are many struggles around the globe, at home and abroad. As veterans, we are aware of our legacy as participants in perpetuating injustice across the globe and against indigenous people. We believe that violence and injustice must be challenged and ended in all its forms.

Human dignity must be protected and defended.

As advocates for justice and peace, we all know that this holiday is not the story of unity taught to us. However, we also know that many people have come to see this holiday as a way to value gratitude, reflection and peace. It marks a unique opportunity for us to discuss peace and justice in various settings with individuals outside our typical audience. Veterans For Peace continues to be grateful for all those who work for peace and express great admiration for the resistance of all peoples against injustice.

A VFP message to use at your Thanksgiving Table:

"Let us remember those within our own communities who live in poverty, violence, and oppression. How can we work to end indifference to suffering and mend the community bonds that tie us together?"

"Let us remember the historical legacy of this day and vow to never repeat. Let us hold up and support all indigenous struggles here and around the globe."

"Let us be mindful of the many ways we can build a peace-filled community. A peaceful world comes from the people, so this work is dependent on each of us. Every small, sincere movement toward peace will bring us closer."

"Let us also remember as Veterans For Peace veterans, families and friends, to be thankful for each other as we work together to create the peace we seek in the world."

Veterans For Peace Statement on Puerto Rico

Date: 12/14/2017

Text: Our mission states that, “we are dedicated to building a culture of peace, exposing the true costs of war, and healing the wounds of war” ([view here](#)).

With this in mind, Veterans For Peace stands in active solidarity with the Peoples of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

We are with you.

We recognize and regret the military’s role in the United States government’s historic and ongoing colonial oppression in these unincorporated territories, resulting the abhorrent destruction of the land and its Peoples.

We see and feel the deadly impact of federal, state, and local corruption, punitive response, and outright neglect in the struggle to survive back-to-back natural disasters (as reported in articles below).

We demand that government officials, aid workers at all levels, as well as citizens who are acting against efforts to sustain life, cease and desist. You do not have to do this. You can make a different choice.

We call on all military and law enforcement personnel to disobey unlawful, unethical, inhumane orders. You do not have to follow. You can lead in the right direction. We echo the United Nations in its call on the United States government to “remove regulatory and financial barriers to reconstruction and recovery.... guided by international human rights standards...” (see article below).

We commend the many aid organizations and self-organized groups of people - from small town community groups to Water Protectors from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe - who are working hard on the ground to alleviate the suffering in the aftermath of the hurricanes. Continued support for these efforts is much needed (see list below).

We extend our gratitude to the news media outlets that continue ethical reporting on the struggle for relief and invite more to do the same. More attention is needed in Vieques, Culebra, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

We invite our members, along with all Peoples the global community, to be the kind of bystanders who intervene - to be the kind of allies who listen, learn, and respond in culturally respectful ways. We ask you to join us as we actionably engage the truth of modern colonial oppression in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Please consider purchasing something from the [Amazon Wish List!](#)

Related Articles:

[BBC - Puerto Rico's Hard Road to Recovery after Hurricane Maria - 11.10.2017](#)

[Mint Press News - Puerto Rico's Recovery Efforts Stymied by Colonial Status - 11.10.17](#)

[UN News Centre – UN Experts Sound Alarm on Mounting Rights Concerns in Puerto Rico in Wake of Hurricane Maria – 10/30/17](#)

[WWLP – Warren, Markey Urging Aid for Islands of Vieques and Culebra – 10/3/17](#)

[NY Times – After Irma and Maria: How 3 Spots on the U.S. Virgin Islands Are Faring – 11/10/17](#)

A Few Organizations to Support:

[One Love Collective Organizers](#)

[Maria Fund](#)

[Para la Naturaleza](#)
