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Resolution 2012-01

VA Benefits And Legal Status In Cases Of Other Than Honorable Discharges

Whereas, Veterans for Peace holds that any citizen who volunteers or is drafted to serve his or her country is entitled to treatment for injuries sustained from combat, military sexual trauma or other serious trauma as the result of their service, and

Whereas, it is estimated that tens of thousands of veterans of the US military are being denied VA services due to Other Than Honorable discharges, and

Whereas, the former Chief of Mental Health Services and other VA mental health providers have observed that a common cause of behavior that leads to OTH discharges is PTSD incurred as a result of trauma incurred in the military, and

Whereas, the process of determining condition of discharge is ultimately controlled by the individual's command and is subject to capricious treatment in some cases, and

Whereas, PTSD is often undiagnosed or not manifested until after discharge, and

Whereas, Public Law 95-126 does not provide for a VA evaluation of veterans with OTH discharges, and

Whereas, veterans who cannot comport (i.e. behave) themselves in a manner consistent with the UCMJ or civil law due to PTSD are arguably those in most need of treatment, and

Whereas, Veterans for Peace holds that foreign nationals who serve in the US military are entitled to the same VA benefits and treatment under the law as US nationals, and

Whereas, under Public Law 104-208 foreign nationals who have served in the US military are subjected to deportation based on a different standard of aggravated felony than that applied to US citizens;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Veterans for Peace requests that a bill be introduced in Congress to remedy these injustices that will substantially include the following:

1. All veterans at their request shall be evaluated by employees of the Veterans Health Administration to determine the extent of any existing disability, and
2. All veterans who served in combat or who were otherwise traumatized during their service, regardless of national origin or condition of discharge shall be deemed eligible for all benefits provided for other veterans, and
3. Such veterans as are determined by the VA to have a service-connected disability

shall automatically be eligible to be considered for back pay of payments owed for a period not to exceed ten (10) years prior to the date of application for said benefits, and

4. Any veteran of the United States military deported from the United States for a legal offense shall be notified of their right to return to the United States and of their eligibility for VA benefits upon completion of any prison sentence that may be imposed as a result of their conviction, and

5. These foreign nationals will be granted citizenship after fulfilling all other terms of naturalization and afforded all the benefits of citizenship accorded naturalized citizens under the terms of the Fourteenth amendment to the United States constitution. The same conditions will be offered to their immediate family members.

Approved during the 2012 VFP election

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Resolution 2012-03 Naturalization Oath Of Allegiance

Whereas, the Naturalization Oath of Allegiance requires naturalized citizens to promise to, “bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by the law; to perform noncombatant service in the armed forces of the United States when required by the law”, and

Whereas, the Selective Service Act that requires male U.S. citizens between 18 and 25 years to register with the U.S. government for potential military service, the statement in the naturalization oath regarding military service is redundant;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Veterans For Peace calls on the government of the United States to immediately delete the portion of the naturalization oath of allegiance referencing military service.

Approved during the 2012 VFP election

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Resolution 2012-04 Illegal Drugs – A New Approach

Whereas, the U.S. funded war on drugs results in approximately 10,000 deaths per year in Mexico, costs U.S. taxpayers \$15 billion per year in interdiction and \$18 billion per year on incarceration of drug offenders;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Veterans For Peace calls on the government of the United States to legalize use of marijuana, end the war on drugs, and divert interdiction and incarceration funds to drug education and treatment.

Approved during the 2012 VFP election

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Resolution 2012-05 Selective Service Registration, Ending

Whereas, the Selective Service Act requires male U.S. citizens between 18 and 25 years to register with the U.S. government for potential military service, aids the government in its instrumentation of war;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Veterans For Peace calls on the government of the United States to immediately revoke the Selective Service Act.

Approved during the 2012 VFP election

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Resolution 2012-06 Amazon.Com VFP Affiliation

Whereas, the Seattle Times (March 31, 2012) reports, as of December 30, 2011, Seattle-based Amazon.com, Inc. had annual sales of \$48.1 billion, an annual profit of \$631 million, and a market value of \$78.7 billion, and

Whereas, the Seattle Times (March 31, 2012) reports: "Last year, amid a troubled economy, United Way of King County said it received record donations from some of the area's largest companies" but it received nothing from Amazon and "In a city noted for its big-time philanthropy, Amazon has been a small-time donor.", and

Whereas, the Seattle Times (April 2, 2012) reports that: "The world's largest Internet retailer [Amazon] currently collects sales taxes from customers in just five states giving it a price advantage [as against local retailers] of up to 10 percent in most of the

country" and "States have lost more than \$52 billion during the past six years due to untaxed Internet purchases", and

Whereas, the Seattle Times (April 3, 2012 and May 10, 2012) reports credible allegations of illegal, sweatshop-like conditions and practices in several Amazon warehouses resulting in significant worker injuries and mistreatment, and

Whereas, independent bookstores: 1) Are essential for the "discovery and nurturing" of talented new writers (Boston Review, Nov./Dec. 2010); 2) Help foster a sense of literary community among costumers (PolicyMic, Dec. 2011); and, 3) Contribute significantly more money to the local economy than do large national/multinational retailers (American Booksellers Association, undated), and

Whereas, the Seattle Times (April 3, 2012) reports: "Early on, Amazon took a hard line against unions. A high-profile organizing effort by the Communications Workers of America at an Amazon call center in Seattle ended in 2001, when the center was shut down and some 400 workers were laid off...", and

Whereas, a 2008 report by John Logan of the London School of Economics found that Amazon deployed anti-union consultants in Britain and "The union involved in the organizing drive at Amazon, the Graphical Print and Media Union, stated that the company mounted the most aggressive campaign it had ever encountered and accused management of sacking a union activist and committing other unfair practices", and

Whereas, the Christian Science Monitor (December 3, 2010) reports: "WikiLeaks ... was ejected from Amazon cloud-based servers, apparently under pressure from US politicians" and, quoting CNN.com journalist Rebecca MacKinnon, "[Amazon] sent a clear signal to its users: If you engage in controversial speech that some individual members of the U.S. government don't like—even if there is a strong case to be made that your speech is constitutionally protected—Amazon is going to dump you at the first sign of trouble"; and,

Whereas, in a December 15, 2010, email bulletin Veterans For Peace (VFP) President Mike Ferner stated "Amazon wasn't a major revenue source" and announced that the VFP Executive Committee had "voted to break all commercial ties with" Amazon and urged "our members, supporters and the public to boycott Amazon", and,

Whereas, according to VFP Treasurer Nate Goldshlag, the VFP boycott of Amazon was rescinded "some time last year", i.e. in 2011, and VFP has reestablished its commercial ties to Amazon;

Therefore Be It Resolved by Veterans For Peace at its national convention assembled in Miami, Florida, August 8-12, 2012, that Amazon.com, Inc.'s corporate values and practices are inconsistent with the values and practices of VFP, and

Be It Finally Resolved that VFP should end its affiliation with Amazon.com, Inc.

Approved during the 2012 VFP election

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Resolution 2012-08

Low-Risk Aid For The Healing Of Veterans

Whereas, data from the mental health systems of the military and the Department of Veterans Affairs show that the rates of suicide, homelessness, family breakdown, and substance abuse among veterans have steadily continued to rise since the start of the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars, and

Whereas, during those same years, the military and the VA have steadily increased the use of the traditional approaches of psychotherapy and psychotropic drugs, the latter often in combinations of two or even many more drugs, and

Whereas, it is well-documented that psychotropic drugs often increase emotional problems and even the risk of suicide and other violent behavior, and

Whereas, it is also well-documented that many veterans for various reasons are reluctant to visit psychotherapists, and

Whereas, the ongoing isolation of many veterans from their communities is well-documented and is known to be harmful, and

Whereas, many approaches not requiring the labeling of war-traumatized veterans as mentally ill have shown to be helpful, and these include but are not limited to physical exercise, the use of the arts and community connections, meditation, and simple listening sessions;

Therefore Be It Resolved that chapters of Veterans For Peace (VFP) are encouraged to make efforts to depathologize war trauma (that is, stop saying that those troubled by war are therefore mentally ill) and urge the increased use of nonpathologizing, low-risk ways to help veterans heal emotionally, morally, and spiritually by sending requests to that effect to the heads of the mental health systems in the military and the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and

Be It Finally Resolved that VFP chapters are encouraged to contact their United States Senators and members of the House of Representatives to request that they order a Government Accountability Office (GAO) compilation of the research about the effectiveness of alternative, low-risk approaches to healing trauma.

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Resolution 2012-13

VFP PWG Palestine Resolution for 2012

Whereas, the resolution presented last year by the VFP Palestine Working Group at the 2011 VFP National Convention (Resolution 2011-14 entitled Support Of Palestinian Rights Under International Law) and which was passed by an overwhelming majority at that convention, was subsequently misrepresented and mischaracterized by some members of veterans for Peace, and

Whereas, the intention of that motion was to change the policy of VFP relating to the Israeli occupation of Palestine from a position supporting the 'Two State Solution' (the creation of a Palestinian State within the areas captured by Israel during the 1967 war known as Gaza and the West Bank) to a policy of respecting and supporting the self-determination of the Palestinian People and their enjoyment of all human rights pertaining to them as well as implementation of and adherence to all international laws and UN Security Council Resolutions applying generally and specifically to the Palestinian People, and

Whereas, there is currently pending in the United Nations an application for full recognition of a Palestinian state within the land captured by Israel in the 1967 War known as Gaza and the West Bank that enjoys broad support in Palestinian communities inside and outside of Historic Palestine, and

Whereas, the United Nations agency UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) has already expressed its recognition of such statehood, and

Whereas, Veterans for Peace recognizes that because of the continued Israeli confiscation of Palestinian land and water, the demolition of Palestinian homes, the construction and expansion of illegal Jewish settlements, the construction of Jewish only roads that connect Jewish settlements while isolating Palestinian communities, the ethnic cleansing of Palestinian Arabs from important Palestinian urban centers such as East Jerusalem and Nablus, all of which have continued almost completely unabated for more than twenty years since the ostensible beginning of the Palestinian – Israeli Peace Process at the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference, many Palestinians now believe that Israel has knowingly and methodically made the existence of a viable Palestinian state in the Occupied Palestinian Territories a practical impossibility, and

Whereas, VFP recognizes that because of those realities, which Israeli governments cynically refer to as “facts on the ground”, an increasing number of Palestinians have understandably abandoned hope in a Two-State Solution and are now exploring other models of resolution including a “One State Solution” which refers to a single democratic

and secular state within the combined territories now known as Israel and the Occupied Territories of the West Bank and Gaza, in which Palestinians and Israelis, Jews, Christians and Muslims as well as those practicing other religions or no religion will all have equal rights under the law;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Veterans for Peace, as a matter of policy, recognizes and respects the diversity of views in the greater Palestinian Community regarding which paths or which models hold the greatest promise for a just resolution of the Israeli occupation of their land referred to as the Palestinian – Israeli “conflict”, and

Be It Finally Resolved that VFP as a matter of policy does not believe it is appropriate or desirable for either VFP or the US government to attempt to limit in any way the options which Palestinians may consider in their pursuit of justice and a Palestinian homeland.

Approved during the 2012 VFP election

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Resolution 2012-14 Dismissal Of Charges Against PFC Bradley Manning

Whereas, the U.S. wars upon and occupations of the peoples of Iraq and Afghanistan are based on the lies of the 1% who profit from war, and have nothing to do with the legitimate defense of the United States or the interests of 99% of the People, and

Whereas, the so-called “Global War on Terror” is little more than a cover for U.S. military aggression in pursuit of the imperial ambitions of the 1%, and

Whereas, the initiation of these “wars of choice” by the U.S. government, as well as the conduct of the U.S. military in Iraq and Afghanistan, have violated international law, including the UN charter and the Geneva Conventions, and

Whereas, international law, domestic U.S. law and the Uniform Code of Military Justice require soldiers to refuse to participate in war crimes, and further require military personnel to report any evidence of war crimes, and

Whereas, PFC Bradley Manning, after allegedly releasing the “Collateral Murder” video and other evidence of U.S. war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan, has been held in U.S. military prisons for over two years, including eight months of solitary confinement and “cruel and inhuman” treatment, according to the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, and

Whereas, Bradley Manning has been charged with “Aiding the Enemy,” and faces possible life imprisonment, and

Whereas, the documents made public by WikiLeaks should never have been kept from

public scrutiny, and these revelations have helped fuel worldwide discussion about U.S. overseas engagements, civilian casualties of war, imperialistic manipulations and military rules of engagement, and

Whereas, according to journalists, Bradley Manning's alleged actions helped motivate the democratic Arab Spring movements, shed light on secret corporate influence on our foreign policies and, most recently, contributed to the Obama Administration agreeing to withdraw all U.S. troops from the occupation in Iraq, and

Whereas, President Barack Obama, when campaigning for the presidency, promised to protect whistle-blowers, not to persecute them, and

Whereas, Veterans For Peace considers Bradley Manning to be a hero, and awarded him the Courage of Conscience award at our 2010 Convention, and

Whereas, Bradley Manning was recently chosen as Global Exchange's Human Rights Award People's Choice Winner, and,

Whereas, the entire parliamentary delegation of The Movement in the Icelandic Parliament has nominated Bradley Manning for the Nobel Peace Prize, and

Whereas, Veterans For Peace supports GIs who follow their consciences and obey international law;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Veterans For Peace calls on the U.S. government and military to dismiss all charges against PFC Bradley Manning, and

Be It Further Resolved that Veterans For Peace call on the President to pardon PFC Manning in the event that he is convicted of any charges, and

Be It Finally Resolved that Veterans For Peace will communicate these demands to all appropriate authorities and that we will work to build public support to free Bradley Manning.

Approved during the 2012 VFP election

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Resolution 2012-15

Resolution Calling for Unconditional Amnesty for All GI Resisters

Whereas, the U.S. wars upon and occupations of the peoples of Iraq and Afghanistan are based on the lies of the 1% who profit from war, and have nothing to do with the legitimate defense of the United States or the interests of 99% of the People, and

Whereas, the so-called “Global War on Terror” is little more than a cover for U.S. military aggression in pursuit of the imperial ambitions of the 1%, and

Whereas, the initiation of these “wars of choice” by the U.S. government, as well as the conduct of the U.S. military in Iraq and Afghanistan, have violated international law, including the UN charter and the Geneva Conventions, and

Whereas, international law, domestic U.S. law and the Uniform Code of Military Justice require soldiers to refuse to participate in war crimes, and further require military personnel to report any evidence of war crimes, and

Whereas, tens of thousands of U.S. troops have absented themselves from the military or otherwise refused to deploy or re-deploy to illegal wars and occupations, and

Whereas, hundreds of GI resisters who are seeking sanctuary in Canada, Germany and other nations are at risk of being deported to the U.S., where they would be imprisoned, and

Whereas, thousands of GI resisters are living underground in the United States, where they face the daily possibility of arrest and imprisonment, and

Whereas, thousands of GI resisters have been discharged from the military with less-than-honorable discharges that deny them much needed benefits, including treatment and compensation for the wounds of war, and that relegate them to lifetime discrimination in the job market and elsewhere, and

Whereas, in 1973, when U.S. troops began to withdraw from Vietnam, GI resisters in Canada and Europe, along with Vietnam Veterans Against the War, church and civil liberties groups initiated and led a broad-based movement for unconditional amnesty for all war resisters, and

Whereas, President Jimmy Carter, in his first act upon assuming the presidency in January 1977, granted an unconditional pardon to Vietnam era draft resisters and created a program of leniency for military deserters, who were quickly discharged upon turning themselves into the military, and

Whereas, Veterans For Peace supports GIs who follow their consciences and obey international law by refusing to participate in illegal wars or war crimes;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Veterans For Peace calls on the U.S. government and military to grant an unconditional amnesty to all GI resisters who are facing punishment for refusing to fight in illegal wars and occupations, for refusing to participate in war crimes, for leaving military control without official permission, for seeking treatment for the wounds of war, and for resisting sexual violence, sexism and racism within the military, and

Be It Further Resolved that Veterans For Peace calls for the upgrading of all less than honorable discharges and for the creation of a single type, nondiscriminatory discharge, and

Be It Finally Resolved that Veterans For Peace will communicate these demands to all appropriate authorities and that we will work to build public support for amnesty for all GI resisters.

Approved during the 2012 VFP election

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Resolution 2012-16

U.S. Sale of Cluster Munitions to South Korea

Whereas, in June 2012, the Pentagon's arms sales agency (Defense Security Cooperation Agency) notified the U.S. Congress of its intension to sell 367 advanced cluster bombs (CBU-105D/B WCMD Sensor Fuzed Weapons) to the South Korean Air Force, and

Whereas, the proposed arms sales is valued at \$325 million, and the prime beneficiary of this sales is Textron Systems Corporation, a major weapons manufacturer in Wilmington, MA, and

Whereas, the CBU-105 cluster bomb is a weapon of mass destruction, each weighing 420 kg, that can disperse a total of 40 heat-seeking bomblets, covering an area of 40 acres, and

Whereas, the Pentagon already sold to South Korea other numerous cluster bombs, including CBU-87, CBU-97, CBU-103, M-26 rockets, ATACMS missiles, etc., and

Whereas, like landmines, cluster bomb is an indiscriminate weapon which can inflict gross sufferings upon civilians, during armed conflict and many years thereafter, due to the frequent failure of its smaller bomblets to explode upon impact, and

Whereas, according to the Cluster Munition Coalition, cluster bombs caused more civilian casualties in Iraq in 2003 and Kosovo in 1999 than any other weapon system, and

Whereas, the proposed sale will violate the Convention on Cluster Munitions, an international treaty that bans the production, transfer, stockpile, and use of cluster munitions, and

Whereas, the proposed sales will violate Paragraph 13(d) of the Korean War Armistice Agreement, which prohibits “introduction into Korea of reinforcing....weapons and ammunition,” and provoke further military tensions and arms race on the Korean Peninsula;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Veteran For Peace (VFP), meeting at its national convention in Miami, Florida, on August 11, 2012,

- 1) Condemns the proposed Pentagon sales of cluster bombs to South Korea;
- 2) Calls upon the Congress to oppose the proposed sales;
- 3) Calls upon the Obama administration to stop selling the cluster bombs to South Korea and other nations immediately, and join the Convention on Cluster Munitions; and
- 4) Urges all VFP members and local chapters, as an expression of our concern on this issue, to send a copy of this resolution to our Representatives and Senators in Congress.

Approved during the 2012 VFP election

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