



2018 Position Statements

Veterans For Peace Applauds Korea Talks for Olympic Unity

Date: 1/11/18

As former soldiers, including veterans who remember the horrors of the Korean War, we are delighted to hear that a delegation of athletes, cheerleaders and officials from the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea (DPRK, North Korea) will be participating in the 2018 Winter Olympics in PyeongChang, South Korea, as a result of the high-level inter-Korean talks held at Panmunjom on Jan. 9. We congratulate the Korean people and their representatives.

How wonderful it is that athletes from the entire Korean Peninsula may be marching together under one flag, in the opening and closing ceremonies of the Olympic Games! That will be a beautiful expression of the Korean people's strong desire for peace and reunification!

Beyond the Winter Games, we are also excited to hear that other peace-building measures have been agreed upon, including restoration of the inter-Korean military hotlines as well as resumption of political and military talks between the South and North. These measures will lessen the possibility of misunderstandings and accidental war.

It is also encouraging to hear that, at the request of President Moon of the Republic of Korea (ROK, South Korea), President Trump has agreed to postpone the US-ROK winter war drills until after the end of the Winter Olympics. This is certainly a necessary decision, in line with the UN General Assembly resolution adopted in Nov. 2017, calling for an Olympic Truce beginning seven days before the 2018 Winter Olympics (Feb. 9-25) and ending seven days after the Paralympics (March 8-18).

At this hopeful juncture, we call upon the U.S. government to seize this historic opportunity to build further momentum for peace on the Korean Peninsula by commencing talks with North Korea soon, without any preconditions. We must absolutely stop any tragic resumption of the horrific Korean-U.S. War – possibly a nuclear war this time that would kill millions of people and imperil human civilization.

In order to pave the way for bilateral talks with North Korea, we urge the U.S. government to discontinue its large-scale joint war drills in and around Korea, even after the end of the Olympic Games. These provocative military exercises are not "games." They are preparations for a war that should never happen.

The people of Korea, United States, and the world are eager for peace. Together, we must seize the historic opportunity afforded by the Winter Olympic Games in Korea to change the course of history. Diplomacy Not War! End the Korean War Now with a Peace Treaty!

Veterans For Peace Condemns Racist Remarks

Date: 1/17/18

Veterans For Peace (VFP) strongly condemns the racist comments of President Donald Trump at the White House on January 11, 2018 calling Haiti and African nations "shithole countries." This kind of offensive language has no place in the White House and should be condemned by all people of the world. VFP finds the president's comments more than a little ironic considering that 500 Haitian "Free Men of Color" fought in the American Revolution. In fact, in October 2007, a monument was resurrected in Savannah, Georgia to honor these revolutionaries.

What has been the role of the U.S. in Africa and Haiti? The second country in the Americas to throw off colonial rule was Haiti. Not surprisingly, some of the free men of color who fought in the American Revolution were part of the Haitian Revolution, including Haitian President Henri Christophe. The U.S., under the presidency of the slave-holder Thomas Jefferson, became very concerned that a slave revolt might happen in the U.S. He helped former colonial overlord France enforce a blockade to make Haiti pay reparations that lasted about a hundred years. The U.S. occupied Haiti for 19 years from 1915-34. The U.S. supported the brutal regimes of Papa Doc and Baby Doc Duvalier. In 1994-95, the U.S. sent in Rangers and Green Berets to Haiti during Operation Uphold Democracy. It would be difficult to find a country in the world that has been more oppressed by the U.S. than Haiti.

As for Africa, the 400 year slave trade to the Americas was the beginning of the U.S. interventionism which continues to this day with AFRICOM. U.S. troops are now conducting 3,500 exercises, programs, and engagements per year, an average of nearly 10 missions per day, on the African continent, according to the U.S. military's top commander for Africa, General Thomas Waldhauser.

It is offensive that the U.S. President would make such disparaging statements, given the long and horrific history of colonialism, exploitation and military actions the U.S. has perpetuated around the globe.

Veterans For Peace is an organization of US and international veterans who have been exposing the true cost of war since 1985.

Veterans For Peace Condemns Military Parade

Date: 2/9/18

Veterans For Peace completely condemns the Trump Administration's plans for a military parade later this year. We call on all people who believe in our nation's democratic ideals to stand together and say no to this outrageous, pomp and circumstance parade of military personnel and hardware for no reason other than to feed a pompous ego.

The Administration claims that the purpose of the parade is to give, "[a celebration at which all Americans can show their appreciation.](#)" But there has not been a call by U.S. service members or veterans for a parade. In fact, Military Times conducted an [informal poll](#) with more than 51,000 respondents. As of the afternoon of February 8th, 89 percent responded, "No. It's a waste of time and troops are too busy."

If the president wants to show gratitude to the troops, provide real support:

- Develop better programs and services to reduce suicide rates
- Cultivate a culture where asking for help to manage Post Traumatic Stress is not perceived as weak.
- Stop trying to privatize the Veterans Health Administration and provide it with more funding and staff.
- Continue to reduce the number of homeless veterans.
- Increase the pay of service members who must use SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (also known as food stamps) to feed their families.
- Stop Deporting Veterans, separating them from their friends and families including their children. Thank them for their service by bringing them home.

Finally, **stop these endless wars** and turn away from war as the main tool of U.S. foreign policy. Nothing is more sacred to a soldier than peace. Countless deployments and a foreign policy that consistently creates new enemies is abusive and immoral. It guarantees a stream of deaths and broken families, bodies and minds. Killing and hurting people does not come easy.

With all this in mind, Veterans For Peace asks, what is the real reason for this parade? It can't be for the people in uniform. Trump has been ramping up U.S. current wars which have no end and continue to deplete the service members he claims to support. After sixteen years of war, the U.S. has sent more troops to Afghanistan, with no plans to withdraw in sight. The U.S. is keeping a force in Syria and continuing a presence in Iraq nearly fifteen years after the March 2003 invasion. Trump is set on a conflict with Iran though most of the world is trying to work through the tensions. And the U.S. has troops in [twenty countries](#) in Africa that until October of last year, no one seemed to know about.

The parade proposal is only one of the ways Trump has been preparing the country for a new war on the Korean Peninsula for months. He keeps reminding us that all options are on the table. He has escalated rhetoric with the president of North Korea, Kim Jong-Un. He has all but said, war is the only option. And now Vice President Pence is attending the Winter Olympics in South Korea to ratchet up tensions.

This parade is an attempt to increase emotional zeal and pride in the U.S. populace for our Armed Forces. It is an effort to quash dissent by elevating U.S. military prestige and daring anyone to speak against, "the heroes that protect us". He is attempting to pave the way for an attack on North Korea that will not be questioned without looking as if dissenters hate this country and will not support the men and women defending us.

But this is only part of his larger effort to change the meaning of our democracy. If this president is allowed to continue to increase his personal power, by default it will increase the power of the executive branch, with the military as the nation's central institution. This is the natural outcome of years of abdication by Congress, (both Republican and Democrat) to hold the executive branch accountable for the conduct of endless wars with no boundaries, bloated military budgets, extrajudicial killings and torture, while also giving the executive branch limitless tools for surveillance.

This is a parade, not about service members, but about a delusional president who sees himself as the American strongman. The parade is one more step towards making his delusion our reality.

Veterans For Peace Statement on Gun Violence

Date: 3/21/18

END THE GUN VIOLENCE, AT HOME AND ABROAD!

An Urgent Message from Veterans For Peace

As veterans who have been traumatized by the violence of war, we were shocked and saddened by the recent mass murder of 17 high school students in Parkland, Florida. This horrible slaughter, carried out by a troubled young man with a military assault rifle, would be tragic enough if it were a freak occurrence. But sadly, this appalling event is part of a well-established pattern – an unchecked epidemic of mass killings in the U.S.

Typically, these killings have been perpetrated by troubled young men, using military style assault weapons, which are bought and sold in stores across the nation, to anyone 18 or over. Typically, there is a public outcry after these massacres. Typically, the National Rifle Association (NRA), one of the most powerful lobbies in this country, pressures politicians to do little or nothing to restrain unfettered access to these weapons of mass destruction. Somebody is making a lot of money off the sale of these weapons, and they are sharing some of it with the politicians. Plain and simple.

We applaud the students of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School and other students around the country who have decided to directly challenge the corrupted politicians and the NRA's lobby for violent death (and profits).

Veterans For Peace will have a contingent in the March For Our Lives in Washington, DC, on March 24, including several members of our national Board of Directors. We encourage our members to join us in that march, and also to participate in the many local March For Our Lives actions around the country on Saturday, March 24th.

Veterans For Peace is also concerned about the culture of violence and hyper-masculinity that has been cultivated in the United States. While extreme violence is most visible in video games and movies it has become the normal part of all aspects of our culture. Young men are taught that to be a man they must prepare to be violent. Recently Mother Jones compiled a study that shows of all the mass shooting since 1982, they found that 97% were male. We must start talking about and working on ways to dismantle notions of patriarchy that tells men domination and violence are the only way.

Many military veterans see gun violence as a reflection of our culture which teaches that force or the threat of using force is the most effective and honored way to address conflict resolution. That issues are always simple with "bad guys and good guys" and the bad guys must be killed. This reflection of gun violence is most starkly seen in the "permanent wars" that the U.S. is carrying out in multiple countries. At last count, the United States was bombing at least seven nations (Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Pakistan, Yemen, Libya, and Somalia), as well as using drones to carry out targeted assassinations. Here at home, deaths of students and others killed in mass shootings and gun violence, including suicide gun deaths, are said to be the price of freedom to bear arms. Civilian casualties in war are written off as "collateral damage," the price of freedom and U.S. security. But the truth is, at home or abroad, violence begets violence. These U.S. wars have only served to create more

violence, and despite more and more gun access and the spread of open carry and other gun friendly laws, we see more and more mass shootings and gun violence here at home. In both cases, nobody wins except those who are making armloads of money through the sale of guns and bombs.

Here in the U.S., the epidemic of killing is not limited to young disgruntled men with assault weapons. **We must also address an epidemic of police killings, which take place in virtually every U.S. city.** According to a [well-researched article by Michael Harriot in The Root](#), police officers killed 1,129 people in 2017.

"More people died from police violence in 2017 than the total number of U.S. soldiers killed in action around the globe (21). More people died at the hands of police in 2017 than the number of black people who were lynched in the worst year of Jim Crow (161 in 1892). Cops killed more Americans in 2017 than terrorists did (four). They killed more citizens than airplanes (13 deaths worldwide), mass shooters (428 deaths) and Chicago's "top gang thugs" (675 Chicago homicides)."

A highly disproportionate number of those killed by police are people of color, primarily Black people, Native Americans and Latinos. The percentages are even higher for people of color who were unarmed when gunned down by police. Only 12 officers were charged with a crime related to a shooting death, and certainly fewer were convicted.

We must also oppose the militarization of the police, who are being armed with weapons of war and trained to treat communities of color as occupied enemy territory.

To fully address gun violence, we must also talk about domestic violence, violent crime and gun deaths by suicide. A few statistics from the website [Everytown](#) tell a violent story. Women in the U.S. are 16 times more likely to be killed with a gun than women in other high-income countries.

- Every year U.S. women suffer from 5.3 million incidents of intimate partner violence.
- In an average month, 50 U.S. women are shot to death by intimate partners
- Nearly 1 million women alive today have been shot, or shot at, by an intimate partner.
- About 4.5 million U.S. women alive today have been threatened with a gun by an intimate partner.
- Everytown's analysis of mass shootings from 2009 to 2016 shows that in 54 percent of mass shootings, the shooters killed intimate partners or other family members.

Unfettered gun rights advocates claim that more guns will make us safe. While it is true that legal gun owners commit a small fraction of gun violence offenses, there is a growing body of research that shows the presence of a gun in a home increases the likelihood of someone in the home being killed by a gun. For example, of the 93 people who die from gun violence in the U.S. every day, 58 of those deaths, or nearly two-thirds, are suicides with guns. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data shows suicide with a gun is the most common and by far the most deadly suicide method. This is close to home for us as veterans because 20 to 22 of us die by suicide a day. According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, in 2014, 66% of those deaths were the result of firearms injuries. If we couple these suicide statistics with the above domestic violence numbers, it is easy to see that violent crime, like mass shootings and street violence are only part of our nation's gun death epidemic.

This is the holistic view of gun violence that Veterans For Peace wants to share with all those who share a sense of urgency that something must be done. Yes, military assault weapons should be banned. High capacity ammo magazines too. Thorough background checks should be required of all those wishing to purchase firearms, without exceptions. Those are obvious common-sense steps that are being demanded by the March For Our Lives. We must work to support these young folks and others who have been engaged to continue getting to the root of the epidemic of violence.

We must also take steps to rein in racist police killings and to change the violent, hyper-masculine culture in this country. We must demilitarize U.S. society, and reverse the violent U.S. foreign policy which is causing death and destruction in too many countries. We must address domestic violence and suicide. We must ask who is benefiting from flooding U.S. urban and rural communities with guns? Are they the same manufactures and investors that gain from global arms sales that ensures gun violence around the world?

The toll of this violence on our society, on the working-class men and women who are pressed into fighting the nation's wars, as well as the violence the U.S. government exports and kills innocent people around the world is tragic and intolerable. It must end.

Veterans For Peace Worry that Trump Administration Wants War with Iran

Date: 5/10/18

Veterans For Peace condemns the decision of President Trump to pull the United States out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), an international agreement to deter Iran from developing nuclear weapons. The U.S. has no legitimate reason to withdraw from the JCPOA. By all accounts, Iran has remained in total compliance with the restrictions that were imposed by the agreement. By withdrawing, re-imposing harsh economic sanctions, and escalating its hostile rhetoric against Iran, the Trump administration is setting the stage for expanding its presence and decades long war in the region to include Iran.

President Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA isolates the United States internationally. Along with Iran, this agreement was signed by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council – the U.S., Russia, China, the United Kingdom and France – in addition to Germany and the European Union. The only nations who support the Trump administration's ominous move are Israel and Saudi Arabia, both of which harbor their own plans for domination of the Middle East.

United States' actions are also the height of hypocrisy since the U.S. has refused to sign the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, a treaty that 122 countries endorsed. The withdrawal illustrates that the U.S. government's nuclear policy is rooted in domination and modern colonialism, rather than moving towards a nuclear-free world.

But the duplicity is long standing. The United States has interfered in the internal affairs of Iran for over half a century including a 1953 CIA-engineered coup that overthrew Iran's democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh to install Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, popularly known as the Shah of Iran. The U.S. supported Iraq's Saddam Hussein when he invaded Iran in 1980. The U.S. shot down an Iranian civilian airliner in 1988 killing all 290 people on board, and carried out decades of covert actions and sanctions that have brought suffering to ordinary Iranians.

Veterans For Peace applauds the response so far from Iran and the other signatories to the Iran Nuclear Agreement, who say they will try to maintain this important international agreement, even without the United States. We understand this will not be easy and may not be possible. We call on the Trump Administration to reverse course, to follow the will of the majority of the U.S. people and of the international community. We pledge to resist further aggression against Iran, whether economic, political, diplomatic or military.

Veterans For Peace is committed to a nuclear weapons-free world and continues to call on the Trump Administration to engage in diplomatic steps towards global elimination of nuclear weapons, starting with concrete steps to reduce and eliminate U.S. nuclear weapons.

Veterans For Peace also calls for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Syria, Iraq and Yemen, where the U.S. military has joined Saudi Arabia in committing horrendous war crimes. It is time for the U.S. to totally withdraw its military from the Middle East, where it has caused nothing but mass death and mayhem over the last several decades.

Veterans Condemn Israeli Slaughter of Unarmed Palestinian Protesters

Date: 5/16/18

Snipers from the Israeli Defense Forces shot and killed at least 52 unarmed Palestinian protesters this last Monday, May 14. Over 750 men, women and children were injured by live fire, including paramedics who were trying to help the wounded. Israeli drones drenched the protesters with tear gas.

This brings the death toll to over 100 Palestinian protesters, with thousands wounded over the last six weeks, while demanding their right to return to the homes from which they were illegally ejected 70 years ago. The Nakba, or "catastrophe," which is marked on May 15, continues for the Palestinian people.

The very same day is celebrated in Israel as the birth of the Zionist nation. This year Donald Trump sent a gift, one that had been promised by presidents Bush and Obama, but not delivered. The U.S. has moved its Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to the Israeli-occupied city of Jerusalem. Palestinians envision eastern Jerusalem as the capital of a future independent Palestinian state.

As veterans, we condemn the shooting of nonviolent protesters. Was the ammunition purchased with our tax dollars? The U.S. gives enormous amounts of military aid to Israel, along with political cover in the United Nations. By moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, President Trump is making it clear: forget about Palestinian self-determination. By undermining the Iran Nuclear Deal, Trump is also giving Israel a green light to step up its aggression against Iran and its allies in Syria and Lebanon. Israel also has an estimated 200 nuclear missiles pointed at Iran.

Veterans For Peace condemns the ongoing violence against the Palestinian people and their legitimate struggle for human rights and self-determination. We call for an end to U.S. military aid to Israel. We encourage all our members to join in the international campaign to Boycott, Divest and Sanction (BDS) Israel in order to pressure it to end its apartheid policies and practices against the Palestinian people.

[Take Action to Urge Congress to Cut all U.S. Aid to Israel](#)

Veterans Welcome the Joint Statement from the US-DPRK Summit

Date: 6/15/18

Veterans For Peace (VFP) is very moved that the historic US-DPRK summit took place in Singapore on June 12. We welcome the Joint Statement issued from the summit in particular, and congratulate President Trump and Chairman Kim Jong Un for the successful summit.

The joint statement from the two leaders provides an important roadmap for achieving permanent peace and denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula. We hope this statement will serve as a great turning point from the hostile relations between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) for the past 70 years. We urge them to pursue a maximum engagement policy of further talks in good faith, as well as mutual exchanges and cooperation, including a speedy resumption of the joint recovery and repatriation operations of the remains of U.S. soldiers left in North Korea.

It is also encouraging to note that the joint communique states that "President Trump committed to provide security guarantees to the DPRK." Within hours of signing the Joint Statement, the President surprised many by announcing a suspension of the joint U.S.-ROK (South Korea) "war games," which he called "expensive" and "provocative." We applaud the bold step--much needed for reducing military tensions in Korea—as timely and necessary to pivot the U.S. policy from maximum pressure to maximum engagement. In fact, it is also a just response to the North Korean government's unilateral disarmament steps already taken, including the indefinite freeze on its testing of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles as well as the closing of its underground nuclear test site. In addition, North Korea also released three U.S. detainees recently.

However, this historic summit for peace on the Korean Peninsula is being met with widespread skepticism by the mainstream media, who all seem to be reading from the same misguided talking points. Even more alarming is the outright criticism from many in the Congress, both Democrats and Republicans. Are they more comfortable with a dangerous nuclear standoff and continuing the costly Korean War by wasting our tax money on the unnecessary military buildups?

As a peace organization of mostly U.S. veterans that have advocated for an official end to the Korean War for a long time, we are very pleased to see the positive developments for peace and denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula this year. We are proud of the fact that, from last November, we have worked very hard, along with other U.S. peace groups, in drafting and promoting the People's Peace Treaty with North Korea, which is an open declaration of concerned American people for peace with the North Korean people. It is quite encouraging to see more than 30,000 American people have signed this online treaty so far. This clearly shows that not only Korean people but also American people want to end the Korean War now with a peace treaty.

While we pause to celebrate the Joint Statement from the Singapore summit, we know we have much more work to do in the coming months and years. We will keep our eyes on the prize, remain vigilant, and rise above partisan politics. We also urge our members and American people to call upon our government officials to take the next bold step to negotiate

and sign a peace treaty to end the Korean War—the longest U.S. war—officially, as we observe the 65th anniversary of the Armistice Agreement this July.

Veterans Condemn Trump's 'Zero-Tolerance' Immigration Policy

Date: 6/29/18

Veterans For Peace strongly condemns Trump's 'zero tolerance' immigration policy, the imprisonment of children, and criminalization of undocumented immigrants. Our immigration laws and enforcement tactics have long been at a crisis point and we are now witnessing even more draconian enforcement and criminalization of people seeking refuge.

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 world and horrific domestic policy](#) that created ICE, massive immigration detention centers and a wall that already splits towns and separates friends and 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.

Veterans For Peace understands that this outrageous abuse of refugee children and their parents is an extension of historic and current U.S. intervention in Central America. The U.S. government conducts military interventions, orchestrates coup d'états, and supports oligarchs and dictators. The CIA, NED and USAID pursues regime change for any Latin American government that will not bow to U.S. economic exploitation of their land and their people. This too must end. It is time for the U.S. to have a just foreign policy that treats our neighbors with fairness and compassion.

At a time when refugees who are fleeing [U.S.-sponsored violence](#) are being branded as criminals, rapists and terrorists, and as anti-immigrant rhetoric continues to poison the public discourse, it is important for people of conscience to take a stand and to offer a different narrative.

Instead of welcoming refugees as required under international humanitarian standards, the U.S. government is treating individuals and families fleeing to the U.S. as if they are criminals, imprisoning them for profit. Moreover, the U.S. "solution" to the so-called child migrant crisis has been to further militarize the borders of Mexico and Central America and to jail families indefinitely.

We need to build grassroots power to challenge the racist status quo and we need to take action. We applaud those who have already taken action across the country, from Portland to D.C. We cannot remain silent about the connections between militarized U.S. foreign policy and the reasons why people flee here for their lives.

Veterans For Peace Response to The National Park Service (NPS) Proposed Rule: Special Regulations, Areas of the National Park System, National Capital Region, Special Events and Demonstrations

Date: 7/19/18

Veterans For Peace (VFP) strongly opposes the National Park Service's proposed limitations on the right to demonstrate near the White House and on the National Mall. This is a thinly veiled assault on our democracy by attempting to erect barriers to criticism of an administration that is systematically violating the rights of people to freedom, liberty and justice.

With chapters in every state and veteran members from WWII to the current era, VFP is dedicated to building a culture of peace, exposing the true costs of war, and healing the wounds of war. Our members actively work to prevent the spread of militarism, replace endless war with diplomacy, and promote a long-term vision of peace and justice. Members of VFP are told that we served in the U.S. military to protect the U.S. Constitution, which enshrines freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and the right to petition our government for redress of grievances in the First Amendment. Our members have demonstrated in Washington DC in large and small numbers against multiple administrations' policies including; the continuation of endless war across the globe, bombing of other countries, unfair immigration practices, police shootings and misconduct, refusal to protect future generations from the scourge of climate change, oil pipelines that encroach on native lands, and most recently, the elevation of an alleged sexual assaulter to the Supreme Court.

Closure of 80% of the iconic White House sidewalk to public protest is unacceptable. People should not need a permit to exercise their First Amendment rights. Rather than a reduction in areas of protest, there should be an expansion of places designated for demonstrations. Conflating protected First Amendment activity with "special events" such as concerts denigrates our Constitutional rights. Fining people who seek to exercise their rights to freedom of expression and assembly will have a chilling effect on lawful protest.

The Trump administration should not be permitted to immunize itself and future administrations from criticism by reducing protest areas, limiting spontaneous protest, and charging fees for demonstrations. Some think respecting symbols of our nation, such as the U.S. flag, is more important than the ideals they symbolize. This attempt to limit our rights degrades those ideals, the symbols and our service as veterans.

Finally, "thank you for your service," is a common refrain we hear as veterans. Attempts to curtail our rights and the rights of all is an affront to that service. This cannot stand.

Veterans For Peace says yes to the rights enshrined in the First Amendment and no to all attempts to restrict those rights.

Veterans Support Flotilla and an End to Gaza Siege

Date: 8/2/18

Veterans For Peace calls on the Israeli government to immediately release all occupants of the Al Awda, a vessel of the 2018 "Freedom Flotilla", and for immediate delivery of the medical supplies carried by the Al Awda to their intended recipient; civil society in Gaza.

We condemn the refusal of Israeli authorities to allow ships and ground shipments into Gaza for humanitarian aid. The occupation by Israel of Palestine has imprisoned millions of people for far too long. It has caused untold misery and must end. Stopping the blockade and human suffering in Gaza is an urgent human rights issue that must concern us all.

We call on the U.S. State Department to advocate for the release of occupants of the boats, including the U.S. citizens aboard and to work for an end to the Gaza siege.

Veterans For Peace strongly endorses [this call](#) from Israeli organizations, both Palestinian and Jewish, to support the flotilla and for an end to this humanitarian crisis.

We denounce the slanderous campaign of the government of Israel against the flotilla and its participants, and warn against the government's use of these lies as justification for additional violent actions against the participants of this legitimate political protest.

The flotilla to Gaza is a brave act of political protest, which expresses solidarity with the Palestinian people and the opposition throughout the world to Israeli occupation policies, the ongoing siege on Gaza and the collective punishment of civilians.

Today the Gaza Strip is a massive prison for its 1.5 million residents, for whom basic rights are denied. The right of the Palestinians in Gaza to maintain direct contact with the outside world, their right to open their port, their right to receive and send ships, their right to import and export goods and to develop their economy, precisely as for Israel these rights exist. The state of Israel must end its direct and indirect control over the Gaza Strip, as part of its obligations grounded in international law and to end its occupation regime over the Palestinian Territory and to permit the independence of Palestine.

We emphasize that in contrast to government declarations, the very act of the flotilla is a non-violent one, and in case of an attack by the army the activists are preparing for opposition that is also to be non-violent. In an announcement from one of the members of the international coordinating team of the flotilla, which was issued in response to claims of the security apparatus in Israel, it is explicitly noted that "there are no weapons on any of the ships, and on board all of them are tens of international journalists who can attest to this. The passengers undergo training in non-violence and sign a commitment not to use violence."

We denounce attempts of the government of Israel to create an atmosphere of fear of the flotilla and to discourage participation in it. The government of Israel wishes to create an unfounded atmosphere of fear through knowingly spreading lies about the so-called preparations for violent resistance to kill soldiers, and the intention of peace activists participating in the flotilla to bring weapons with them to Gaza; in parallel, it is exerting unprecedented pressure on international journalists, lest they join the flotilla in order to cover

it. This media campaign, intended to sow fear and hatred in the Israeli public, further arouses suspicion that an additional goal is to justify the harsh and dangerous results which are liable to occur in case of a violent takeover of the ships and harm to their passengers.

Veterans For Peace Keeps Eye on Military Psychologists and American Psychological Association

Date: 8/2/18

As former members of the armed forces, we at Veterans For Peace have a lived understanding of the longstanding use of psychology in warfare by the United States. **We are products of it.** As such, we are well acquainted with the American Psychological Association's historically profitable relationship with what is now known as the Department of Defense. We are also acutely aware of the military psychological industry's deleterious impacts on our lives and the lives of Peoples around the world.

The APA's enmeshment with the national security apparatus of the United States became public knowledge when the world learned that psychologists were contributing to torture. In addition, an independent review, commissioned by the APA Board of Directors, revealed direct coordination between APA staff and Department of Defense personnel in interpreting the APA's Ethics Code to allow members to continue to participate in interrogations of detainees captured in the "war on terror."

Not only is torture morally wrong, it is illegal under treaties that the United States has signed, ratified, and then reinterpreted in domestic law to allow the implementation of the torture program. These include the Geneva Conventions (which prescribe how people affected by war, whether as soldiers or civilians, may be treated) and the United Nations Convention against Torture.

Holding prisoners indefinitely at detention centers without genuine legal recourse is also illegal under international law. Yet that is precisely what is happening today at sites like the U.S. base occupying Guantánamo Bay.

Three years ago, the APA's Council of Representatives voted 157-1 in Resolution 23B to forbid its members to participate in national security interrogations or to provide treatment to detainees at detention or interrogation centers such as the base in Guantánamo Bay unless they are working directly for detainees themselves, or by an independent third party like the International Committee of the Red Cross. At that time APA president-elect Susan H. McDaniel, PhD, said in an APA press release, "We have much work ahead as we change the culture of APA to be more transparent and much more focused on human rights."

Now **factions within the APA are getting ready to undo all that good work.** The Council of Representatives will vote on two resolutions at the upcoming APA convention in August:

- One, Resolution 35B, would amend 23B to once again allow APA military psychologists to return to detention or interrogation centers to treat detainees, even if they would be employed directly by the military.
- The other, Resolution 13D, would undo the APA's efforts "to be more transparent" by removing the findings of the independent review (the Hoffman Report) from the APA website. This action constitutes an act of censorship and would bury important truths about a painful episode in APA's history.

These resolutions hardly help the APA to be "much more focused on human rights." Rather, it will allow the organization to focus on the ambitions of some psychologists at the expense of human rights.

Veterans For Peace strongly encourages the American Psychological Association's Council of Representatives to stay true to its commitment to culture change, transparency, and a much-needed focus on human rights. We hope that our opposition to these proposed resolutions gives military psychologists pause. Many of us have been in the position of losing our humanity in "service" to the interests of the U.S. government. We understand how military culture, coupled with the horrors of making war, can overpower benign intentions and diminish empathy for others, bringing people to follow unlawful orders and ultimately to commit various atrocities -- all in the belief that they are doing the right thing. We wonder what will happen when the ethical and/or moral integrity of a military psychologist is challenged by the various **toxicities in military culture**? Such a policy not only puts the people in care at risk of psychological injury, it puts **military psychologists at risk of committing morally injurious acts.**

We call on military psychologists to **disobey unlawful orders** at all times and to focus their efforts on healing the wounds of war rather than causing them. They cannot do this if they are working for the U.S. military or intelligence services in settings such as the base occupying Guantánamo Bay, or other extra-territorial sites that are illegal under international law. We join with others who call on the APA's Council of Representatives to maintain the courageous stance it took in 2015 and reject resolutions 35B and 13D.

[Center for Victims of Torture Letter to APA](#)

[APA: Do Not Take a "See No Evil" Approach to Torture](#)

[Veterans: Do Not Send Military Psychologists Back to Gitmo](#)

[APA to Vote on Overturning Ban on Psychologists at Guantanamo](#)

[Psychologists Are In A Nasty Fight About A Report on Torture](#)

[Another Crossroads for the APA](#)

[A Human Rights and Ethics Crisis Facing the World's Largest Organization of Psychologists](#)

Veterans Applaud Postponement of Costly Military Parade

Date: 8/18/18



Veterans For Peace is encouraged at the announcement that the costly military parade has been postponed. Since the first day this parade was announced, Veterans For Peace members have been organizing to stop this parade. Yesterday, one day after the No Trump Military Parade coalition, of which Veterans For Peace is a founding member, [announced that 187 organizations](#) would be joining together to protest the parade, including hundreds of veterans.

However, our commitment will not waver until this gross display of militarism is canceled. 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 a parade demonstrating our military might will do nothing to end wars, bring about peace or help our fellow veterans and active duty service members.

At a moment when the U.S. is aggressively posturing around the globe, taking us further away from moments of diplomacy and peace, attacks on veterans healthcare, deportations and a mental health epidemic where veterans and service members commit suicide at a rate of [21 times a day](#), a military parade is not where our priorities should be focused.

Veterans For Peace will continue to organize until this parade is canceled and will continue with our efforts to "[Reclaim Armistice Day](#)" with a solemn procession in Washington D.C. on November 11 to mark the 100th anniversary of the Armistice that ended the horrible carnage of World War I.

Veterans For Peace Statement on International Peace Day

Date: 9/18/18

In 1981, the General Assembly of the United Nations declared the 21st of September as an International Day of Peace. This day is devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and peoples. The theme of this year's commemoration is "The Right to Peace- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights at 70" which aims to highlight the importance of all segments of society to work together to strive for peace. The theme celebrates the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a milestone document in the history of human rights. Drafted by representatives with different legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world, the Declaration was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948. Yet, the Universal Declaration does not include a separate article on "Right to Peace". This is why the UN is asking this year: What does "The Right to Peace" mean to you?

We know that the UN has presented challenges towards achieving a JUST peace. However, as veterans we know that peace is not achieved in the moments before a conflict, and the price of "peace" after war are countless lives lost, survivors scarred, civil society in tatters and resources wasted. A JUST peace is found by building communities that meet human needs. We are all too familiar that injustices felt through poverty, racial inequality, religious bigotry, collapsing inner cities and infrastructures, lack of universal health care, climate change and quality education contribute to war and insecurity.

As veterans we see the connections between greed, the endless wars abroad, the U.S. bloated military industrial complex, and the inequities it brings to the poor and marginalized all over the world. It is not enough that we veterans see and understand the interconnectedness.

If we want to abolish war we must help our fellow citizens here at home see the same connections. We need to understand that dropping more bombs, killing innocent civilians and resorting to military solutions is robbing the world's children of health care, education and meaningful jobs to build a safer and more secure future. We believe that as people see and understand this connection, they will stand up with us against war. We can then work together to put in place the building blocks necessary to build a sustainable and peaceful future.

To that end, we call upon our members, fellow veterans, supporters and greater communities to move beyond talk of ending conflict, and instead adopt and implement practices that build peace at home and abroad.

Veterans For Peace: NO Troops to the Border!

Date: 11/20/18

Veterans For Peace strongly condemns the recent announcement that up to [15,000 active duty military personnel may be sent to the U.S. southern border](#). These troops will join the additional National Guard units that were sent last year, increasing the militarization of our borders at an alarming rate. Our immigration laws and enforcement tactics have long been at a crisis point and we are now witnessing an even more draconian surge in the use of force to prop up failed policies.

Veterans For Peace calls on all our members and all veterans who see the inhumanity and injustice of the current policies to call their Congressional Representative and Senators to demand the military be pulled back from the border and that the members of the approaching caravan be treated with dignity and processed according to international humanitarian standards as refugees. We call on all service members participating in the border deployment to follow the long American tradition of listening to their conscience and remember that they have no obligation to follow illegal orders. (For questions on military rights, contact the [GI Rights Hotline](#) or [Courage to Resist](#))

The U.S. government, instead of welcoming the approaching refugees, the majority of whom will [seek asylum under completely legal processes](#), is treating individuals and families fleeing to the U.S. as if they are "terrorists" (even when "counterterrorism" officials within the administration are [stating that no such people exist within the caravan](#)). The majority of these refugees are fleeing from [violence in Honduras](#) and a political situation [United States' actions](#) have made worse.

The U.S. government's claim that active duty troops are providing only innocuous support services are misleading. This is the introduction of U.S. military force as a deterrent to those who are pursuing their rights as asylum seekers fleeing from extreme poverty and violence in their homelands, much of it due to U.S policies. The U.S. is required under international humanitarian standards to welcome those seeking refuge.

Veterans For Peace recognizes that these orders did not happen in a vacuum, but represent a [long history over several administrations of racist and violent policies](#) that has perpetuated U.S. wars across the world and horrific domestic policies that created ICE, massive immigration detention centers and a wall that already splits towns and separates friends and 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.

Additionally, Veterans For Peace is not only concerned about the safety of individuals and families fleeing violence and the increased militarization of the border but we are extremely concerned about the continued disregard of federal law. Federal law, namely the [Posse Comitatus Act](#), prohibits the deployment of active duty troops on domestic soil and the U.S. Government continues to ignore laws in favor of increasing militarization of U.S. domestic policy.

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 and we do not believe that more military at the border is rooted in justice or compassion.

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. 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.

News Articles:

[Trump's Military Deployment to the US-Mexico Border Is Illegal](#) by Marjorie Cohn
[Sending the US Army to the Border Creates 'a War Atmosphere'](#) by Ryan Harvey

Veterans For Peace Statement on Withdrawal of U.S. Troops from Syria

Date: 12/12/18

Veterans For Peace is pleased to hear that President Trump has ordered a total withdrawal of U.S. troops from Syria, where they had no legal right to be in the first place. Whatever the reasoning, withdrawing U.S. troops is the right thing to do.

It is incorrect to characterize the U.S. military intervention in Syria as “fighting terrorism,” as much of the media is doing. Although the U.S. fought against the ISIL Caliphate (aka “ISIS”), it also armed and trained Islamist groups, including al-Qaeda aligned forces, who are seeking to destroy the secular, multi-religious Syrian state and establish a harsh fundamentalist order of their own.

Furthermore, the U.S. aerial bombardment of the city of Raqqa, Syria, similar to its bombardment of Mosul, Iraq, was itself terror in the extreme, causing the deaths of tens of thousands of civilians. These are huge war crimes.

A continued U.S. presence in Syria would only prolong a policy that has been disastrous for all the peoples of the region, who have already suffered way too much as a result of years of U.S. intervention and occupation on their soil. It would also be a disaster for the troops who are being asked to carry out this impossible burden.

In these moments when those in power advocate for remaining at war, Veterans For Peace will continue holding true to our mission and understanding that war is not the answer. We sincerely hope that the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Syria will be total, and will be soon. We hope this will also lead to the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan, where the U.S. government is currently in talks with the Taliban and an end to U.S. involvement in the Saudi-led war in Yemen, which is causing the death by starvation of tens of thousands of innocent children.

Veterans For Peace knows that the U.S. is a nation addicted to war. At this time of uncertainty, it is critically important that we, as veterans, continue to be clear and concise that our nation must turn from war to diplomacy and peace. It is high time to unwind all these tragic, failed and unnecessary wars of aggression, domination and plunder. It is time to turn a page in history and to build a new world based on human rights, equality and mutual respect for all. We must build momentum toward real and lasting peace. Nothing less than the survival of human civilization is at stake.

Veterans For Peace Statement on Trump Plan to Deport Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian War Refugees

Date: 12/18/18

President Donald Trump's administration has announced a plan to deport Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian war refugees who came to the United States after our disastrous war in their nations over four decades ago. Veterans For Peace denounces this plan as a dishonorable betrayal of former allies in war and a racially-motivated attack on minority communities.

In the 1950's, '60's, and '70's, the United States violated internationally-agreed upon peace treaties, international law, and moral conduct by intervening to prevent an internationally-supervised free election to form a government in Viet Nam after the French colonialists left. The United States illegally divided Viet Nam in half, declared the southern half a new country called "South Vietnam," and formed, financed, and armed a government there. Some Vietnamese in the south, believing in the US, supported that government. They joined the fight against Vietnamese who resisted the American intervention, thus creating what we refer to as the "Vietnam War" (Viet Nam today calls it the "American War"). Due to massive popular resistance both in Viet Nam and in America, the U.S. and U.S.-formed government in the south lost the war, and thousands of Vietnamese who had supported the American side in the war fled to the U.S. The American war in Viet Nam spilled over to neighboring countries, including Laos and Cambodia, resulting in similar waves of refugees fleeing after the American war. America welcomed them, and they settled here. These communities have worked hard, established themselves, proven their loyalty to America, and demonstrated a high level of achievement and a low crime rate. They are some of our most productive residents and deserve our nation's support and loyalty in return.

The Trump administration claims they are deporting criminals, but administration behavior with Latino and other groups show they are deporting everyone. And all people, even criminals, have rights that law, social order, and morals require to be respected.

Veterans For Peace stands firmly in support of the Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian communities, and are directly opposed to the Trump administration's plan to deport them. We will work with these communities and other allies to support them against this deportation plan, and offer aid as we can.

Statement of Pro-Diplomacy Groups Regarding U.S. Policy Towards Iran

Date: 12/18/18

Pro-diplomacy groups representing millions of American voters urge lawmakers to publicly articulate and support the following principles with respect to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) that verifiably blocks each of Iran's pathways to a nuclear weapon and created a much-needed diplomatic relationship between Iran, the United States, and U.S. allies:

- Support for the JCPOA and returning the United States to compliance with the agreement;
 - Opposition to sanctions that:
 - disrupt any party's implementation of the JCPOA;
 - prevent the United States from coming back into compliance with the JCPOA in the future;
 - disproportionately impact Iranian civilians rather than regime officials engaged in illicit or destabilizing activities;
 - block necessary humanitarian and medical supplies from reaching the country;
 - Support for good faith diplomacy toward additional agreements as the preferred basis for addressing further concerns about Iranian activity; and
 - Opposition to starting a war of choice with Iran
-

About Face: Veterans Against the War

American Family Voices

Americans for Peace Now

Arms Control Association

Beyond the Bomb

Brave New Films

Center for International Policy

Common Defense

Council for a Livable World

CREDO Action

Daily Kos

Demand Progress

Federation of American Scientists

Foreign Policy for America

Franciscan Action Network

Friends Committee on National Legislation

Global Zero

Indivisible

J Street

Jewish Voice for Peace

Just Foreign Policy

MoveOn

National Iranian American Council

Open Society Policy Center

Pax Christi International

Peace Action

Peace Corps Iran Association
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Ploughshares Fund
RootsAction.org
Sojourners
T'ruah
Truman National Security Project
U.S. Labor Against the War
Union of Concerned Scientists
Veterans For Peace
VoteVets
Win Without War
Women's Action for New Directions
World BEYOND War
