



## 2011 Convention Resolutions

[Resolution 2011-1:](#) Veterans National Recovery Center Support

[Resolution 2011-2:](#) US Military Budget Resolution (2011) *(Approved)*

[Resolution 2011-3:](#) Abolition Of Corporate Personhood *(Approved)*

[Resolution 2011-4:](#) Abolishment Of Nuclear Power Plants *(Approved)*

[Resolution 2011-5:](#) Resolution On The Abolition Of Nuclear Weapons By The Year 2020 *(Approved)*

[Resolution 2011-6:](#) Supporting Democracy, Equality & Peace In Palestine

[Resolution 2011-7:](#) Impeachment Of President Barack H. Obama For War Crimes *(Approved)*

[Resolution 2011-8:](#) U.S. Dumping Of Toxic Chemicals In South Korea *(Approved)*

[Resolution 2011-9:](#) Reuniting Ireland

[Resolution 2011-10:](#) Conducting A Study Concerning The Relocation Of The National VFP Office To Washington, D.C.

[Resolution 2011-11:](#) Supporting Red Por La Laz Y La Justicia (Network For Peace And Justice) In Mexico *(Approved)*

[Resolution 2011-12:](#) Depleted Uranium Suppressed Study *(Approved)*

[Resolution 2011-13:](#) Support for Afghan National Solidarity Program Concurrent with U.S Troop Withdrawal

[Resolution 2011-14:](#) Support Of Palestinian Rights Under International Law *(Approved)*

[Resolution 2011-15:](#) Clinical Research On The Consequences Of Inhaling Depleted Uranium Dust *(Approved)*

[Resolution 2011-16:](#) Israeli-Palestinian Peace

[Resolution 2011-17:](#) 2011 Agent Orange Legislation Support *(Approved)*

## **Resolution 2011-1: Veterans National Recovery Center Support**

*Not Approved at the 2011 VFP National Convention*

Whereas, the history of war is such that veterans do not need to bleed to be injured. “Soldier’s heart” in the Civil War, to “shell shock” in World War 2, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) today demonstrate that what veterans see and experience can change them in profound ways. Further, society is only beginning to understand how these potentially life-long conditions affect the ability of the returning veteran to adapt to society, and may result in homelessness, drug addiction or suicide. These veterans with unseen emotional and physiological wounds that cannot be seen are just as much fighters for our society as those that have been physically injured in combat, and

Whereas, there is a need for a Veterans National Recovery Center simply because nothing like it exists today to deal with the recovery problems and strategies for homeless veterans, and

Whereas, a vision exists in which the homeless veterans from around the nation are offered an integrated services center that provides training, counseling, personal connectivity and environment from outside providers to on-site residents in order to lift even the most discouraged homeless veteran off of the floor of life. Research into to the solutions for homelessness among veterans will have far-reaching effects, and

Whereas, the integrated service center will network with national corporations at the highest level to provide job and living opportunities across the country to homeless veteran residents that have adequately progressed to psychological stability and self-sufficiency, and

Whereas, base funding is available for operations through programs promoted by the Department of Veterans Affairs, including a two year program intended to transition the homeless veteran from the street to a working, stable home, a capitals program and a transportation program, and

Whereas, the retired VA Hospital at Knoxville, Iowa is available and has the capacity to support the Veterans National Recovery Center for the Homeless and PTSD Distressed;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Veterans For Peace as a group that strongly supports dealing with the issues of PTSD& TBI and endorses The Veterans National Recovery Center

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## **Resolution 2011-2: US Military Budget Resolution (2011)**

*Approved at the 2011 VFP National Convention*

Whereas, the US military budget FY 2012 (DOD spending) is \$707 billion, and

Whereas the next largest military budget was that of the People's Republic of China at \$114 billion or less than 1/6th of the US total, and

Whereas, the 2012 US military budget allows an additional \$2.7 billion for FBI counter-terrorism and \$46.9 billion for Homeland Security, and

Whereas, additional line items put the grand total of 2012 spending to between \$1.03 and \$1.415 trillion, and

Whereas, the US spent over \$3 trillion to track down and kill Osama bin Laden which was about 1/5 of our National Debt of \$14+ trillion, and

Whereas, these expenditures are supposed to secure the safety of this country and its citizens but everywhere raise suspicions of our motives and jealousy of our profligate spending. In addition the killing of bin Laden is supposed to provoke retaliatory attacks by various Al Qaeda aligned groups, and

Whereas, the Marshall Plan initiated by the US to rebuild the European societies and economies after WW II was extremely successful, and

Whereas, it is generally agreed that our current national debt of \$15 trillion is unsustainable by the US in the long term;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Veterans For Peace endorse a proposal to reduce the DOD expenditures in FY2012 and each subsequent year budget by 50% - i.e. for FY 2012 cut it from \$707 billion to \$353 billion. The \$354 billion cut would be invested into two protected funds. The first one containing \$254 billion would be used to fund a 21st Century Marshall Plan. This would be used to alleviate the ravages created in countries by wars around the world and help them rebuild their infrastructures, economies, and centers of commerce. It could also be used to alleviate the problems that countries face when struck by natural disasters like the Tsunami in Indonesia, the earthquake in Haiti, etc.;

Be It Further Resolved that for FY 2012 the remaining \$100 billion (from the cut in DOD expenditures) be allocated to a special fund for the relief of the national debt burden; Be It Further Resolved the amounts deposited in the two funds annually be increased as the DOD expenditures are increased;

Be It Finally Resolved that these two funds be protected and used only for the stated purposes of relieving the effects of war/natural disasters and relieving the US national debt. It is strongly urged that upon approval of this proposal by Veterans For Peace National organization, that all local Veterans For Peace chapters solicit their national and state representatives to identify potential supporters and sponsors. Of necessity this must be a grass roots campaign to succeed.

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## **Resolution 2011-3: Abolition Of Corporate Personhood**

*Approved at the 2011 VFP National Convention*

Whereas, government is created by consent of the governed, and

Whereas, corporations are created under law established by governments that are created to serve the people and corporations do not exist independent of these laws, they must be subject to laws and regulations designed to protect the public interest, and

Whereas, the regulation of these entities is the right of states who incorporate them and not the federal government beyond setting minimum standards of regulation, and

Whereas, the Supreme Court has granted corporations rights and privileges under the unjustified pretext that corporations are persons and citizens of the United States and through an overly broad interpretation of the Commerce Clause, and

Whereas, corporations are not people so cannot be considered persons;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Veterans for Peace calls for the passage of a Constitutional amendment that would substantially state the following: Section 1. The rights and privileges granted to citizens of the United States as enumerated in this Constitution, its amendments, and extended through case law, are exclusively reserved for human beings. Section 2. All non-biological entities in the United States shall be subject to the requirements of any and all laws enacted by the people and their elected governments. Section 3. The minimum regulation of corporations by the states shall be that their charters will include banning direct or indirect funding of candidates for office and the requirement that the corporations operate in the public interest. Corporations will be liable for any and all costs and damages that their operations create to the government and the taxpayers who support it.

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## **Resolution 2011-4: Abolishment Of Nuclear Power Plants**

*Approved at the 2011 VFP National Convention*

Whereas, the nuclear disaster at Fukushima has shown once again that nuclear power plants are, next to nuclear warheads themselves, among the most dangerous devices that our species has ever created, and that, along with nuclear weapons, the construction and proliferation of nuclear power is, as Patrick Moore states in *Assault on Future Generations* (1976), “the most irresponsible, in fact the most criminal act ever to have taken place on this planet,” and

Whereas, as an educational and humanitarian organization dedicated to the abolishment of war and the elimination of nuclear weapons, Veterans for Peace understands the importance of linking nuclear power plants and nuclear weapons with the entire military industrial complex, the same destructive machine that gave us the wars in Vietnam and the Middle East, and

Whereas, in addition to the serious health, safety, environmental, and economic issues involved with nuclear power plants, and the inherent risks of nuclear proliferation and terrorist attacks associated with nuclear power plants, the multiple links between nuclear power and nuclear weapons make it impossible to abolish nuclear weapons as long as nuclear power plants continue to operate, and

Whereas, control over fossil fuels and nuclear energy have been and continue to be a major focus of the wars that have plagued our species in the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries, and

Whereas, there are alternative energy sources, such as wind and solar, that are safe, ecologically sustainable, and economically feasible, that do not cause climate change, and that do not carry with them the risks of nuclear weapon proliferation and terrorism, nor has the control over such resources been a cause of war between nations;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Veterans For Peace opposes any effort to expand nuclear energy and calls for the rapid reduction of existing nuclear power plants, and the complete elimination of nuclear power plants by 2020, and

Be It further Resolved that Veterans For Peace supports the development of a safe, sustainable, and democratic energy system based on solar, wind, and other sustainable sources.

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## **Resolution 2011-5: Resolution On The Abolition Of Nuclear Weapons By The Year 2020**

*Approved at the 2011 VFP National Convention*

Whereas, President Barack Obama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in large part for his “vision of a world free from nuclear arms,” but until the underlying roots of the nuclear weapons complex are addressed such words remain empty rhetoric, and

Whereas, in 1967, a few months before his assassination, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., another American Nobel laureate, in speaking about the war in Vietnam, noted that the United States government was “the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today,” a sentiment which continues to resonate in light of the continuing wars in the Middle East, and

Whereas, neither Barack Obama nor any other United States President has ever issued a “no first use” policy on nuclear weapons, but instead the United States government has, on at least 25 occasions, threatened to initiate nuclear attacks on other nations, and

Whereas, the Obama Administration’s Nuclear Posture Review, released in April 2010, contains plans for a vital and continuing role of nuclear weapons in US foreign policy with no plans to eliminate nuclear weapons in the foreseeable future, and

Whereas, there are powerful economic interests, often called the “Merchants of Death,” which profit from United States nuclear weapons and the rest of the U.S. war machine and which exert an undue and undemocratic influence on U.S. policy, and

Whereas, Mayors for Peace, an international organization led by the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and representing nearly 5000 cities in 150 nations, has developed Vision 2020, a practical plan for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2020, and

Whereas, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in his “Beyond Vietnam” speech quoted above, stated that the “war in Vietnam is but a symptom of a far deeper malady within the American spirit” and that “we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values,” sentiments which command consideration in light of our continuing wars and continuing reliance on nuclear weapons as an crucial part of our foreign policy;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Veterans For Peace endorses the Mayors for Peace Vision 2020 campaign for the complete abolition of nuclear weapons by the year 2020;

Be It further Resolved that Veterans For Peace urge President Barack Obama and other U.S. policymakers, as well as our members and supporters, to read Dr. King’s “Beyond Vietnam” speech and reflect on its meaning for the Twenty First Century.

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## **Resolution 2011-6: Supporting Democracy, Equality & Peace In Palestine**

*Not Approved at the 2011 VFP National Convention*

Whereas, in 1947, Palestinian Muslims and Palestinian Christians comprised about two-thirds of the population of Palestine—the territory today comprising Israel, Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem—while Jews comprised only about one-third of the population and owned less than seven percent of the land of Palestine, and

Whereas, the 1947 partition of Palestine and "the establishment of a Jewish State" there in 1948 violated the Atlantic Charter of 1941 and violated the "peaceful means," "justice," "equal rights," and "self-determination" principles of Article 1 of the United Nations Charter of 1945, and

Whereas, the Jewish majority in Israel exists as a result of the violent expulsion and ongoing exile of Palestinian refugees, now numbering 4.8 million from 1948 alone, and

Whereas, in 2005 the US State Department indicated that the Palestinian population living in Palestine now exceeds that of the Jewish population while the "Jewish state" exercises de facto sovereignty or control over all of Palestine, and

Whereas, a fall 2010 poll conducted by the US-based Israel Project revealed that 60% of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza agreed that the "real goal" of the peace process "should be ... one Palestinian state" and "Only a fifth [of Palestinians] accept the current Israeli government's strictest formulation of its goal, 'a permanent right to exist as a homeland for the Jewish people' in Palestine", and

Whereas, a fall 2010 poll conducted by the Palestine-based Arab World for Research and Development revealed that 54% of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza expressed support for "one bi-national state 'with Israelis and Palestinians as equal citizens', and

Whereas, as a peace organization based in the United States—the major diplomatic, financial, and military underwriter of the State of Israel—Veterans For Peace (VFP) has a special duty to work for a just peace in Palestine, and

Whereas, the current ethnic/religious segregation, inequality, and injustice in Palestine and implicit in the 'two-state solution,' i.e. the creation of a Palestinian state in some part of the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories, are not consistent with the values of VFP;

Therefore Be It Resolved by Veterans For Peace National Convention assembled in Portland, Oregon, August 3-7, 2011, that the Israel-Palestine conflict is a major area of concern and involvement for VFP;

Be It Further Resolved that Veterans For Peace expresses concern that the 'two-state solution,' may result in a Palestinian state that is sovereign in name only while obscuring and leaving unresolved fundamental injustices done to Palestinians in the creation, expansion, and continuation of the State of Israel;

Be It Further Resolved that Veterans For Peace stands in solidarity with the growing number of Palestinians, Israelis, and others calling for the peaceful creation of one democratic state in

Palestine with equality for all of its citizens and we express our strong preference for such a resolution to the conflict.

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# **Resolution 2011-7: Impeachment Of President Barack H. Obama For War Crimes**

*Approved at the 2011 VFP National Convention*

Whereas, Barack H. Obama is Commander In Chief of the U.S. Armed Forces and the head of the Executive Branch of the United States government, and

Whereas, President Obama, on 19 March 2011, committed a criminal act by ordering the U.S. military to war in Libya without first obtaining the consent of the U.S. Congress in a direct violation of the U.S. Constitution, and

Whereas, the illegal U.S. invasion, bombing and occupation of Iraq initiated by the Bush administration continues under the Obama administration; and

Whereas, the U.S. government is currently engaged in illegal wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, and Libya, and President Obama pledged to increase the number of military personnel and tax dollars spent on the these wars, and

Whereas, the U.S. military used and continues to use depleted uranium munitions, cluster bombs and white phosphorous in densely populated areas in violation of U.S. laws and international laws and treaties prohibiting the indiscriminate killing of civilians; and,

Whereas, the Geneva Conventions specifically prohibit the use of especially injurious weapons and materials causing unnecessary harm that remain active and lethal after battle, and over large areas of land, and

Whereas, large numbers of babies born in Iraq and Afghanistan suffer life-long illness and deformity like severe disfigurements and brain damage, Down's syndrome, and weak hearts doctors state are caused by the U.S. military's massive and widespread use of toxic and radioactive materials, and

Whereas, millions upon millions of Iraqi, Afghani, Pakistani, Yemeni, Somali, and Libyan civilians have been maimed, poisoned, displaced from their homes, and killed in a direct result of ongoing, illegal acts of war by the United States, and

Whereas, illegal, immoral and counterproductive detainee torture and brutalization at the hands of the U.S. military's Immediate Reaction Force continue at Guantanamo under the Obama administration and in particular, the torture of Pfc. Bradley Manning at Quantico, Virginia, and

Whereas, President Obama is an accessory after the fact in obstructing justice by failing to order the Department of Justice to initiate investigations into numerous and blatant U.S. war crimes committed by the Bush administration, for which it is manifestly accountable under the law, and

Whereas, Millions of Americans, including Veterans For Peace and Prosecute Them Now, supported the impeachment of Bush/Cheney for the same war crimes that are being committed now by Obama in violation of the U.S. Constitution, U.S. federal laws, the United Nations Charter, the Hague Convention, the Geneva Conventions, The United Nations Convention Against Torture and the Nuremberg Tribunal Charter, and

Whereas, Veterans For Peace and Prosecute Them Now are committed to the stated mission to restrain our government from intervening overtly and covertly in the internal affairs of other nations, to seek justice for veterans and victims of war, to increase public awareness of the exact costs of war, and to abolish war as an instrument of national policy;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Veterans For Peace call on the U.S. House of Representatives to immediately begin impeachment proceedings against President Barack H. Obama for failure to uphold his sworn oath to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States of America from all enemies foreign and domestic, and for his commission of war crimes, crimes against humanity, obstruction of justice and the violation of numerous national and international laws, treaties and conventions.

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## **Resolution 2011-8: U.S. Dumping Of Toxic Chemicals In South Korea**

*Approved at the 2011 VFP National Convention*

Whereas, on May 13, a Phoenix-based TV station KPHO aired an investigation report, based on the testimony of three U.S. veterans, regarding a secret burial of hundreds of 55-gallon toxic chemical drums, including Agent Orange, at a U.S. military base, Camp Carroll, South Korea in 1978, and

Whereas, ever since this news broke out, Korean media have reported similar stories of reckless U.S. dumping of various toxic chemicals at other U.S. military bases as well as onto road sides and into rivers in South Korea, and

Whereas, it is now known that the U.S. military sprayed Agent Orange and other toxic chemicals in the DMZ and the nearby Civilian Control Zone below the DMZ from 1955 to early 1970s, in violation of the international customary law prohibiting the use of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases, and

Whereas, tens of thousands of U.S. and South Korean veterans, as well as South Korean civilians, have lost their lives or are currently sick due to their exposure to the Agent Orange in South Korea;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Veterans For Peace (VFP), meeting at its national convention in Portland, Oregon, August 6, 2011...

- 1) Applauds the courageous declarations of conscience on the Agent Orange scandal by Stephen House and other U.S. veterans who had been directly involved in the secret burial of the Agent Orange drums in South Korea, and calls upon other veterans who have further information on this issue to come forward with their accounts;
  - 2) Calls upon the Congress to hold its own independent and full investigation and hearing on this dangerous scandal, and provide a free Agent Orange medical check-up to all U.S. veterans who served in South Korea in the past;
  - 3) Calls upon the Obama administration to disclose all information and documents regarding the past use and abuse of toxic chemicals in South Korea, conduct a full investigation into the possible burial of toxic chemicals at all U.S. military bases in South Korea, clean up the polluted land, offer a full apology and remedy, including just compensation, to all the victims—both U.S. and Korean veterans as well as South Korean civilians—of the reckless use or dumping of toxic chemicals in South Korea by the U.S. military; 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.
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## **Resolution 2011-9: Reuniting Ireland**

*Not Approved at the 2011 VFP National Convention*

Whereas, Veterans For Peace is a national organization of men and women veterans of all eras and duty stations including from the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), World War II, the Korean, Vietnam, Gulf and Current Iraq/Afghanistan wars, as well as other conflicts, and

Whereas, Veterans For Peace, having dutifully served our nation, affirm our greater responsibility to serve the cause of world peace. Furthermore, included in our Statement of Purpose, are the goals to seek justice for veterans and victims of war and to abolish war as an instrument of national policy, and

Whereas, the island nation of Ireland has been subjected to a long history of often violent conflict spanning more than eight centuries stemming from invasion, occupation, internal divisions, civil war – and finally partition by the Government of Ireland Act of 1920 into a southern 26-county Republic and a northern 6-county statelet of the United Kingdom, and

Whereas, this artificial division of the Irish Nation was designed to be a transitory solution to the conflicts of the past, and

Whereas, all major political parties in Ireland: Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and Sinn Fein have stated in their constitutions the goal 'to secure in peace and agreement the unity of Ireland and its people, and

Whereas, the majority of all sides of this conflict: Republican, Nationalist, Unionist and Loyalist voted in a island-nationwide referendum in 1998 to support the peaceful end of hostilities in the north of Ireland with the passage of the Good Friday Agreement, and with the creation of All-Ireland institutions of governance, and

Whereas, the historic Good Friday Agreement, negotiated with American support, and ratified by the English and Irish governments, includes provisions for achieving a United Ireland through purely democratic and peaceful means;

Therefore Be It Resolved, that the national American organization of Veterans For Peace joins in the continuation of this peace process toward full equality with political representation for all communities, and joins the state legislatures of four U.S. states (California, New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts) and numerous American cities, governmental bodies, individual officials, and trade union, human rights, and numerous diverse organizations calling for Irish Reunification by all electoral and diplomatic means necessary;

Be It Further Resolved that national Veterans For Peace does hereby call on the English and Irish governments to take immediate steps necessary to bring to fullness the promises of the all-Ireland institutions called for and envisioned by the Good Friday Agreement, and respectfully requests the Irish government to formally study the implications of a United Ireland, outline steps fundamental to restore the Irish nation and publicly report their finding and plans; and respectfully suggests that the Irish government move without delay to further the peaceful healing of the Irish nation by granting duly elected Northern Members of Parliament "Speaking Rights" in the Irish parliament and by expanding the voting rights for the Irish president to the citizens of the six counties of the north of Ireland;

Be It Further Resolved, that a copy of this resolution will be sent by the San Francisco, California Chapter of Veterans For Peace to the City Council of Portland, Oregon (which passed a United Ireland resolution on March 17, 2011), and to the Friends of a United Ireland, the Irish American Unity Conference, and to all appropriate organizations, media outlets and to above-mentioned governmental bodies.

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## **Resolution 2011-10: Conducting A Study Concerning The Relocation Of The National VFP Office To Washington, D.C.**

*Not Approved at the 2011 VFP National Convention*

Whereas, due to the increasing visibility and relevance of Veterans For Peace as a national veterans organization, and

Whereas, the relocation of the national office from Washington, D.C. to St. Louis in September, 2001, was based primarily on the fact that the new executive director resided in St. Louis, and

Whereas, at the time of the relocation of the national office from Washington, D.C. to St. Louis, VFP had only 1026 veteran and associate members (verified from September 12, 2001 VFP Roster), and was not the robust, assertive organization that is it today, and

Whereas, the national office should be in a location where VFP can have the most impact;

Therefore Be It Resolved, that the board of directors conduct a study for the purpose of determining whether it is in the best interest of Veterans For Peace to relocate the national office to Washington, D.C.;

Be It Further Resolved, that in making their determination, the Board Of Directors should request input from every chapter and every member;

Be It Further Resolved, that, in making their determination, the Board Of Directors should consider the following non-exclusive factors: the advantages and disadvantages of remaining in St. Louis; the advantages and disadvantages of locating in Washington, D.C.; the cost of a move, both current and long-term; any disruption to personnel and operations;

Be It Further Resolved, that the board of directors shall report to the national membership on or before the 2012 national convention as to their findings and recommendations in that regard, and their reasons therefore, and specifically as to the feasibility and desirability of said relocation.

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## **Resolution 2011-11: Supporting Red Por La Paz Y La Justicia (Network For Peace And Justice) In Mexico**

*Approved at the 2011 VFP National Convention*

Supporting Red Por La Paz Y La Justicia (Network For Peace And Justice) In Mexico

Whereas, the United States war on drugs, as President Obama acknowledged four years prior to taking office, has been an utter failure, and

Whereas, the Global Commission on Drug Policies, in a report issued June 2, 2011, has called upon the United States and other governments “to replace drug policies and strategies driven by ideology and political convenience with fiscally responsible policies and strategies grounded in science, health, security and human rights;” and

Whereas, the United States, at taxpayer expense, has exported the war on drugs to Mexico through Plan Mérida, and

Whereas, weapons from the United States have illegally armed Mexican drug cartels, and the continuing demand for drugs in the United States has provided them with their principle market, and

Whereas, more than 40,000 people, many of them innocent victims, have died in Mexico in drug-related violence since 2006, when President Felipe Calderón decided to deploy the army to fight violence with violence, and

Whereas, growing numbers of people in Mexico have expressed their unwillingness to accept further bloodshed and have voiced their support of reforms and alternative strategies being demanded by Red por la Paz y la Justicia;

Therefore, Be It Resolved that Veterans For Peace supports Red por la Paz y la Justicia in their struggle to end a failed drug strategy which has devastated the social fabric of the country at great human cost;

Be It Further Resolved that all Chapters and all members are urged to undertake actions and initiatives which aid, assist and support Red por la Paz y la Justicia in their quest to bring peace and justice to the people of Mexico.

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## **Resolution 2011-12: Depleted Uranium Suppressed Study**

*Approved at the 2011 VFP National Convention*

Whereas, from 2002 through 2004, scientists at the Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute (AFRRI) in Bethesda MD carried out an important experiment designed to assess the ability of depleted uranium to cause gene mutations in various tissues and organs of mice, and

Whereas, in this experiment, 80% of the mice exposed to the highest dose of depleted uranium developed cancers, and

Whereas, these cancers included testicular cancer, bladder cancer and thyroid cancer which are malignancies not commonly linked to uranium exposure, and

Whereas, these experiments have important public health implications not only for military personnel who have served in Iraq and other lands contaminated with depleted uranium dust but also for the civilians who live in those lands, and

Whereas, no detailed report describing the results of these experiments has been published in the more than seven years since these experiments have been completed;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Veterans for Peace calls upon the Secretary of Defense to release a full report on the results of the experiments on uranium-exposed mice which were concisely summarized at a conference titled: "Depleted Uranium Weapons: Toxic Contaminant or Necessary Technology?" held on March 6, 2004 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and to provide an explanation of why the results of these experiments have been suppressed for more than seven years; and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a Registry of Veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars [GWI and the ongoing Iraq War] who have developed malignancies or whose children have developed malignancies; and Congress to support epidemiological studies of all veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars and their families, and of the rising incidence of cancer among Iraqi civilians, including studies designed to assess the possibility that depleted uranium may act as a transgenerational carcinogen, i.e., that D.U. may increase the incidence of malignancies in the children of individuals exposed to D.U.

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## **Resolution 2011-13: Support for Afghan National Solidarity Program Concurrent with U.S Troop Withdrawal**

*Not Approved at the 2011 VFP National Convention*

Support for Afghan National Solidarity Program Concurrent with U.S Troop Withdrawal

Whereas, almost a decade of military in Afghanistan have failed to bring peace any closer and have in fact alienated our allies and motivated our foes, and

Whereas, the cost of military and foreign contractor reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan have produced unaccountable waste contributing significantly to the drain on the US budget that severely weakened our economy with devastating consequences to American citizens, and

Whereas, the overall US mission in Afghanistan has never been clearly defined, the “end-game” is not achievable through military means and the War cannot be winnable, and

Whereas, it is widely recognized that sustainable stability in Afghanistan can only be beneficial to all parties foreign and domestic, and

Whereas, US military leaders from the theater of Afghanistan have stated that key to victory is winning the hearts and minds of Afghan civilians, and

Whereas, the Afghan people have suffered over 30 years of unrelenting war which have produced 40% unemployment, unmapped land minds making it too risky to till the soil, destruction of infrastructure that sustainable living conditions such as water and sewerage and inhibits normal human opportunities such as medical needs, travel and education, and

Whereas, failing to follow through with attempting to assist in establishing any civilian stability in Afghanistan in 1989 after financing Islamic religious extremists, and

Whereas, as the occupying power the US is centrally responsible for the decline in living conditions in Afghanistan, according to Article 55 of the Geneva Convention, and

Whereas, the Special Inspector General for the Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR,) established by Congress in 2008 to evaluate the efficiency of reconstruction programs in Afghanistan, has issued a glowing report on the Afghan-run National Solidarity Program (NSP) finding found that more than 70% of NSP funding has reached small Afghan communities, a far greater ratio than foreign contractors, and

Whereas, Lt. Colonel Edward Corcoran, USA-retired, Ph.D., and Senior Fellow on national security issues at GlobalSecurity.org, writes that Afghanistan is now at a "tipping point" in which the time is ripe for transition from military to economic strategies. He cites the NSP as an example of a program in which the "narrative" will shift from "government-to-government" programs to ones in which "individual Afghans can and will transform their own country, and the United States will help," and

Whereas, Col. Chris Kolenda, a special adviser to ISAF commander Gen. Stanley McChrystal and his director of strategy for reintegration in Afghanistan, said to the Army Times of the NSP: “The Afghans have this great saying — ‘If you sweat for it, you protect it’ — and so getting highly localized development in the hands of communities is critical...The Ministry of Rural

Rehabilitation and Development has a great program called the National Solidarity Program, where money is given in block grants from an Afghan reconstruction trust fund directly to a village, so the village owns the project, the village operates the project, the people in the village are employed," , and

Whereas, Congressman John Tierney found that a substantial portion of Pentagon funds for the overland transportation of U.S. military supplies goes directly to insurgent groups as "protection payments.", and

Whereas, Ambassador Karl Eikenberry, commander of U.S. forces in 2007, told Congress in testimony that year: ""Much of the enemy force is drawn from the ranks of unemployed men looking for wages to support their families." He praised the NSP in testimony in 2009 as having "proven effective in giving Afghans a greater stake in their government,";

Therefore Be It Resolved that Veterans For Peace (VFP) shall support the immediate withdrawal of US and NATO forces in Afghanistan; Be It Further Resolved, VFP shall furthermore urge the diverting of funds equal to 2 weeks of military spending in Afghanistan (approximately US \$5 billion) to funding the National Solidarity Program (NSP) for Afghan civilians rebuilding their own infrastructure establishing sustainable sovereignty and stability. This shall be done through the conduit of the World Bank's Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund which works in partnership with the NSP, and has so far spent over \$1.5 billion for small infrastructure projects in a responsible fashion, and which enjoys wide popularity in Afghanistan among all tribes; Be It Further Resolved VFP supports a National Rally for Afghan Solidarity to bring this common-sense solution to the public eye.

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## **Resolution 2011-14: Support Of Palestinian Rights Under International Law**

*Approved at the 2011 VFP National Convention*

Whereas, the indigenous Arab population of Palestine, representing two-thirds the population and owning over 90% of the land in 1948, were denied their right of self-determination specified in Article 55 of the United Nations Charter, and

Whereas, almost one million Palestinian Arabs were deprived of their property between 1948 and 1950 and hundreds of thousands more between 1967 and 2011 in violation of Article 17 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, who along with their descendants have been denied their right of return in violation of Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UN Resolution 194, and Israel's pledge as a condition of its 1949 admission to the UN, and

Whereas, the United States has continued to arm Israel in violation of our Arms Export Control Act, Foreign Assistance Act and Foreign Operations Appropriation Act and has on 43 occasions protected Israel from sanctions by the international community through UN Security Council vetoes, thereby acting in complicity with the above Israeli violations of human rights and international law, and has failed to act as an honest broker in the so-called "peace process" negotiations, and

Whereas, Israel has made no serious efforts towards a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict in the nearly twenty years since the "peace process" negotiations began in Madrid, has instead continued its illegal seizure of Palestinian property, and deserves no U.S. support, and

Whereas, the ongoing construction and expansion of illegal Jewish settlements, the segregation wall, and Jewish-use-only roads in the West Bank have made any just and equitable two-state solution increasingly impossible, and Whereas, the recently released Palestine Papers exposed the failure of the Palestinian Authority to negotiate honestly on behalf of the population it represents and its failure to include the refugees outside occupied Palestine, the international diaspora, Hamas and the Palestinians of Gaza without whom no legally valid solution can be concluded, and Whereas, despite U.S. claims to support democracy, our government refused to recognize the democratic election of Hamas in a 2006 parliamentary election observed as free and fair by international monitors including the Carter Center, and

Whereas, VFP remembers the observation by President John F. Kennedy that "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable" and recognizes that peace cannot be achieved under conditions of injustice; and

Whereas, in their stated objectives for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions by international civil society, which VFP supports, Palestinians have claimed their right for self-determination under international law to include ending Israeli occupation and colonization of all Palestinian land, recognizing the rights of Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality, and respecting, protecting and promoting the right of return for dispossessed Palestinians as stipulated in UN Resolution 194, and

Whereas, the only two-state model under long and detailed discussion has been the "Geneva Initiative" which fails to satisfy the requirements of international law, abrogates the right of return for Palestinian refugees, fails to provide Palestinian sovereignty including the right of self-

defense, and fails to address the apartheid system within Israel that severely discriminates against its 20% Palestinian minority, and

Whereas, Palestinians have consequently discussed alternative models including that of a single, democratic, secular state including all of historic Palestine that would secure the right of return, the complete end of occupation, and equal rights for all citizens irrespective of religion or ethnicity;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Veterans For Peace urges... 1. The U.S. government to recognize and support the right of self-determination for Palestinians and discontinue imposition of pre-conceived projections of what Palestinians may choose for their future. 2. The U.S. government to only adopt policies that conform with international law including the UN Charter, the Fourth Geneva Convention, and UN resolutions. 3. The U.S. government to discontinue commitment to the "two-state solution" known as the Geneva Initiative and support the consideration of other alternatives for peace and justice acceptable to Palestinians including creation of a single, secular, democratic state with equal rights for all ethnic and religious populations. 4. U.S. confirmation of all rights of Palestinian refugees under international law, which cannot be negotiated away by others, and establishment of mechanisms for all Palestinian populations to participate in crafting a solution for the future of Palestine. 5. The U.S. government to acknowledge the majority representation won by Hamas in the Palestinian parliamentary election of January 2006 and to accept Hamas within the unity government of occupied Palestine. 6. The U.S. government to recuse itself from "peace process" negotiations due to its reflexive, unconditional support for Israel and allow more objective international mediators approved by all negotiating parties.

Be It Further Resolved that this resolution shall supersede any previous VFP resolutions endorsing a "two-state solution."

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## **Resolution 2011-15: Clinical Research On The Consequences Of Inhaling Depleted Uranium Dust**

*Approved at the 2011 VFP National Convention*

Whereas, uranium (including depleted uranium) is known to be a kidney toxin, a neurotoxin, an immunotoxin, a carcinogen, a mutagen and an inducer of birth defects, and

Whereas, the vast majority of military personnel and civilians with significant exposures to depleted uranium have inhaled depleted uranium dust particles, and

Whereas, the efforts of the Department of Veterans Affairs to monitor the health effects of exposure to depleted uranium have focused largely on several dozen veterans of the 1991 Gulf War who have embedded depleted uranium shrapnel, and Whereas, the definitive and classic laboratory test or biomarker for identifying individuals with significant exposures to depleted uranium is a urine assay which can detect abnormal ratios of uranium isotopes in the urine, and

Whereas, abnormal results in such a urine assay are often not persistent and durable and consequently such urine assays are not sensitive tests for identifying individuals whose exposure to depleted uranium occurred in the distant past - for example in 1991 or in 2003;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Veterans for Peace calls upon Congress to fund: 1) Clinical studies of adverse health effects occurring in cohorts of veterans who have had documented inhalational exposures to depleted uranium dust particles or who have had, by virtue of their duties, highly probable inhalational exposures to depleted uranium dust particles; and 2) Research aimed at identifying novel biomarkers of uranium exposure which are persistent and durable and which may be useful for identifying individuals whose exposure to depleted uranium occurred in the distant past - for example in 1991 or in 2003.

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## **Resolution 2011-16: Israeli-Palestinian Peace**

*Not Approved at the 2011 VFP National Convention*

Whereas, it is within the mission of Veterans for Peace to facilitate just and peaceful resolution of international conflicts, particularly when our own United States Government has played a significant part in the situation, and

Whereas, both Israelis and Palestinians have legitimate claims to a presence in Israel-Palestine, and Whereas, both peoples have suffered grievously from violence and injustice, and therefore deserve the United States' and the international community's intensive efforts to bring an end to their conflict at the earliest practicable time, and

Whereas, both peoples are entitled to self-determination and security within recognized borders of such States as they agree to establish in Israel-Palestine, as well as to have their individual political, civil and human rights fully upheld in the State where they choose to live, and Whereas, although Veterans for Peace look forward to a day when both Israelis and Palestinians might dwell in harmony in one secular and democratic State, we also recognize that presently foreseeable circumstances indicate that creation of a State of Palestine alongside the State of Israel offers the best means for meeting the needs and aspirations of both peoples, and

Whereas, the United States has had, particularly thru its uncritical support of Israel, a major role in creating the circumstances in which Israelis and Palestinians find themselves, and Whereas, only the United States has the power and influence to bring about decisive change in the Israeli-Palestinian situation any time soon, and

Whereas, it is in the national interest of the United States to bring about a fair and lasting Israeli-Palestinian settlement, and thus to redeem America's reputation across the Middle East, and

Whereas, both the fomenting of hatred between ethnic and religious groups, and the favoring of one group of citizens over another based on ethnicity or religion, are incompatible with American values and ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Veterans for Peace urges the United States Government to take vigorous action to bring about a lasting and just peace based on the following goals and principles:

- Establishment of a Palestinian State alongside the State of Israel, the borders of the two States to be fixed as follows: The lines existing before June 5, 1967, shall be the starting point for any negotiations. No unilateral changes to the borders will be recognized. Minor adjustments of the borders based on exchanges of land equivalent in quality and size may be mutually agreed upon. However, control over the use and distribution of crucial water and other resources presently in the West Bank should be a matter for joint administration by both Israeli and Palestinian authorities.
- Creation of verifiable security arrangements for both Israel and the Palestinian State is essential. If the presence of a multinational force is required to ensure security, the United States should express its willingness to participate, and to take a leading role if agreed upon.

- There must be complete withdrawal of all Israeli military and security forces from Palestinian territory, withdrawal to be completed in phases agreed upon by the parties. • The Palestinian State may or may not be demilitarized, provided the decision is one agreed to by the Palestinian Government. That Government must have the capacity to sustain its commitments to maintain order and prevent attacks on Israel from its territory.
- There shall be a fair and realistic resolution of the matter of Palestinian refugees displaced during and after the establishment of Israel in 1948. The outcome should acknowledge the legitimacy of refugee claims based on United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194 (1948) and other provisions of international law, but it must also consider the reality of Israeli anxieties. There should be provision for generous financial compensation, and for resettlement of refugees outside the borders of Israel. Full vindication of refugee rights would be ideal, but that ideal must be weighed against the greater good of achieving a reasonably just and sustainable peace.
- Jerusalem should become the capital of both countries, with Jewish-majority areas to fall under Israeli jurisdiction, and predominantly Palestinian ones to be under the control of the Palestinian State. The Old City should either be jointly administered or placed under the jurisdiction of an international body. In either case, access to the Holy Places of Jews, Christians and Muslims must be fully guaranteed.
- Promotion, rather than continued obstruction, of reconciliation between the major Palestinian political factions Fatah and Hamas, as well as with other groups willing to suspend armed actions in favor of negotiations. Such reconciliation is necessary if there is to be a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians. So long as Hamas and other factions observe de facto ceasefire with Israel, there should be no impediment to their participation in negotiations or elections and governance.
- Should either or both parties prove recalcitrant with regard to settlement based on the above measures and principles, they should be warned of the consequences of their actions and, if that is not persuasive, the United States should take the lead in initiating action in the United Nations Security Council on the basis of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which have been the bases for the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

Be It Further Resolved that Veterans for Peace designates the initiator of this Resolution as responsible for distribution of this resolution to the President of the United States, the Secretary of State, Congress and such other recipients as may be pertinent to building public support for American governmental action as proposed.

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## **Resolution 2011-17: 2011 Agent Orange Legislation Support**

*Approved at the 2011 VFP National Convention*

Whereas, The U.S. government, in violation of international law, waged massive chemical warfare in Vietnam, including the use of Agent Orange and other herbicides containing highly toxic dioxin, from 1961 to 1971, and

Whereas, Chemical companies, including Dow Chemical and Monsanto and thirty-six others, knowingly and unnecessarily produced Agent Orange contaminated with dioxin, and

Whereas, Dioxin exposure causes various forms of cancers, reproductive illnesses, immune deficiency, endocrine deficiencies, nervous system damage, physical and developmental disabilities, emotional problems, and epigenetic effects, and

Whereas, In Vietnam more than three million people, and in the U.S. hundreds of thousands of veterans, their children, and Vietnamese-Americans, have been sickened, disabled or died from the effects of Agent Orange/dioxin, and

Whereas, Dioxin residues in the soil, sediment, and food continue to poison many people in numerous areas throughout southern Vietnam, and

Whereas, Vietnamese of least three generations born since the war are now suffering from disabilities due to their parents' exposure to Agent Orange or from direct exposure in the environment, and

Whereas, Many Veterans for Peace members and other veterans suffer from affects of Agent Orange due to their exposure in Vietnam, as do their children, and

Whereas, Vietnamese Americans have the same types and incidence of health problems related to Agent Orange as the Vietnamese and US Veterans, and

Whereas, The U.S. government has refused to recognize its responsibility clean up the contamination it left in Vietnam or to heal the wounds of war, and has failed to provide assistance for the serious health, economic and environmental devastation caused by Agent Orange that continues through to the present day, and

Whereas, Dow Chemical and Monsanto and the other chemical manufacturers have refused to recognize that Agent Orange is deleterious to human health and have refused to recognize their responsibility to compensate their victims in Vietnam, and

Whereas, 2011 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the start of the defoliation program in Vietnam in 1961 without any significant remedial action by the U.S. government or the chemical companies, and

Whereas, Veterans for Peace has a long history of holding the US Government and the chemical companies accountable to all victims of Agent Orange both in Vietnam and in the U.S., and



Whereas, Congressman Bob Filner has in July, 2011, introduced legislation into the House of Representatives—Victims of Agent Orange Relief Act of 2001, HR 2634—that contains four elements: environmental remediation of the widespread dioxin contamination in Vietnam; assistance to Vietnamese Agent Orange victims for health care and other necessary social services; creation of regional medical centers in the US for the Agent-Orange-affected children and grandchildren of US veterans; and medical assistance to the Vietnamese-Americans affected by Agent Orange.

Therefore, Be It Resolved, Veterans for Peace calls for all Congress members to co-sponsor and support HR 2634, Victims of Agent Orange Relief Act of 2011,

And Be It Further Resolved, Veterans for Peace calls on all Senators to enact and support similar legislation.

And Be It Further Resolved, Veterans for Peace calls for Dow Chemical, Monsanto, and the other chemical companies to assume their responsibility by allocating funds to make a significant contribution to meet the needs of victims of Agent Orange in Vietnam.