



2010 Position Statements

Call for Real Korea Peace Treaty on 60th Anniversary of the War

Date: 6/25/2010

ON THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF AN ONGOING WAR, WITH SIGNS OF PRESENT-DAY INCREASED U.S. MILITARY BUILDUP, VETERANS OF THE KOREAN WAR CALL FOR A REAL PEACE TREATY

The rising military tensions on the Korean Peninsula prove again the urgent need to achieve permanent peace in Korea. Veterans For Peace (VFP) continues to call for the replacement of the outdated Armistice Agreement with a true peace treaty.

Enlisting at 18 and having served in the Korean War, VFP member Woody Powell says, "As a combatant in 1952-53, I am in total disagreement with my government's policy in the Far East, part of which is the deliberate continuation of a sixty-year-old war against a hopelessly impoverished North Korea. It saddens and terrifies me to see the expansion of U.S. military bases throughout South Korea, at Pyong-Taek, Cheju Island, Mugeon-ri, in direct opposition to the will of the South Koreans themselves." Powell was an Airman First Class in the 58th Air Police, K-9 Unit, from Berkeley, CA.

With numerous skirmishes over the years involving both Koreas, and on the anniversary of the U.S. war in Korea, the Korea Peace Campaign of Veterans For Peace urges not only military restraint by both Koreas, but the cessation of additional U.S.- ROK naval exercises and other military buildups in the Korean Peninsula.

While President Obama directed the U. S. military to coordinate with South Korea, "to insure readiness against other future aggression," in May, according to Reuters, Veterans For Peace calls upon the parties to restrain from public discussions on "military preparedness and response to aggression" while entering into discussions that would result in a permanent understanding, a lasting peace agreement, and a reunification of the two Koreas.

Veterans For Peace President Mike Ferner says, "The recent unfortunate sinking of the South Korean warship, Cheonan, should not be used as an excuse by any parties to renew the armed conflict that the armistice was supposed to address on July 27, 1953. Rivers of blood, mountains of pain and a permanent war economy in the U.S. are the true costs of this conflict. This sad anniversary renews VFP's commitment to abolish war as an instrument of national policy."

As we observe the 60th anniversary of the Korean War of 1950-1953 today, it is time to end this tragic war, not re-ignite it. We urge all concerned parties in the Korean War--both Koreas,

the United States, and China--to begin negotiations for a peace treaty and an official end to the war.

The Iraq Debacle

Date: 8/14/2010

THE IRAQ DEBACLE: THE LEGACY OF SEVEN YEARS OF WAR

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, mark the August 31st partial withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq with the following evaluation and recommendations:

- The U.S. occupation of Iraq continues and the reduction of U.S. troops in Iraq can at best be called only a rebranded occupation. While the number of U.S. troops in Iraq will be reduced from a high of 165,000, there will still be 50,000 troops left behind, some 75,000 contractors, five huge "enduring bases" and an Embassy the size of Vatican City.
- The U.S. military's overthrow of the brutal dictatorship of Saddam Hussein did not lead to a better life for Iraqis-just the opposite. It resulted in the further destruction of basic infrastructure-electricity, water, sewage-that continues to this day. The U.S. dropped more tons of bombs on Iraq than in all of WWII, destroying Iraq's electrical, water and sewage systems. Iraq's health care and higher education systems, once the best in the entire region, have been decimated. The U.S. war on Iraq unleashed a wave of violence that has left over one million Iraqis dead and four million displaced, as well as ethnic rivalries that continue to plague the nation. We have seriously wounded millions of Iraqis, creating a lifetime of suffering and economic hardship for them, their communities and the entire nation as it struggles to rebuild.
- Life expectancy for Iraqis fell from 71 years in 1996 to 67 years in 2007 due to the war and destruction of the healthcare system. The U.S. use of weapons such as depleted uranium and white phosphorous has taken a severe toll, with the cancer rate in Fallujah, for example, now worse than that of Hiroshima.
- The majority of the refugees and internally displaced persons created by the US intervention have been abandoned. Of the nearly 4 million refugees, many are now living in increasingly desperate circumstances in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and around the world. As undocumented refugees, most are not allowed to work and are forced to take extremely low paying, illegal jobs (\$3/day) or rely on the UN and charity to survive. The United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR) has documented a spike in the sex trafficking of Iraqi women.
- Iraq still does not have a functioning government. Many months after the March 7 elections, there is still a political vacuum and violence that is killing roughly 300 civilians a month. There is no functioning democracy in place and little sign there will be one in the near future.
- The Iraq War has left a terrible toll on the U.S. troops. More than one million American service members have deployed in the Iraq War effort. Over 4,400 U.S. troops have been killed and tens of thousands severely injured. More than one in four U.S. troops have come home from the Iraq war with health problems that require medical or

mental health treatment. PTSD rates in the military have skyrocketed. In 2009, a record number of 245 soldiers committed suicide.

- The war has drained our treasury. As of August 2010, U.S. taxpayers have spent over \$750 billion on the Iraq War effort. Counting the cost of lifetime care of wounded vets and the interest payments on the money we borrowed to pay for this war, the real cost will be in the trillions. This misappropriation of funds has contributed to the economic crises we are experiencing, including the lack of funds for our schools, healthcare, infrastructure and investments in clean, green jobs.
- The U.S. officials who got us into this disastrous war on the basis of lies have not been held accountable. Not George Bush, Dick Cheney, Condoleezza Rice, Colin Powell, Karl Rove, Donald Rumsfeld. No one. Neither have the Bush administration lawyers who authorized torture, including Jay Bybee and John Yoo. The "think tanks," journalists and pundits who perpetuated the lies have not been fired-most are today cheerleading for the war in Afghanistan.
- The war has led to the pillaging of Iraqi resources. The U.S. Department of Defense has been unable to account for \$8.7 billion of Iraqi oil and gas money meant for humanitarian needs and reconstruction after the 2003 invasion. The invasion has also led to the dismantling of Iraqi government control over the nation's oil. In 2001, Vice President Dick Cheney's energy task force, which included executives of America's largest energy companies, recommended opening up areas of their energy sectors to foreign investment. The resulting Iraq Oil Law has led to the global grab for Iraq's resources.
- The war has not made us more secure. The US policy of torture, extraordinary rendition, indefinite detention, violent and deadly raids on civilian homes, gunning down innocent civilians in the streets and absence of habeas corpus has fueled the fires of hatred and extremism toward Americans. The very presence of our troops in Iraq and other Muslim nations has become a recruiting tool.

Given the above, we, the undersigned individuals and organizations, mark the occasion of this partial troop withdrawal by calling on the Administration and Congress to take the following actions:

- Withdrawal of all U.S. troops and military contractors from Iraq and the closing of all U.S. bases
- Reparations to help the Iraqis repair their basic infrastructure and increased funds for the millions of internally and externally displaced Iraqis
- Full support for the U.S. troops who suffer from the internal and external wounds of war
- Prosecution of those officials responsible for dragging our country into this disaster
- Transfer of funds from war into resources to rebuild America, with a focus on green jobs
- The lessons of this disastrous intervention should also be an impetus for Congress and the administration to end the war in Afghanistan. It's time to focus on creating real security here at home and rebuilding America.

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- * Veterans For Peace
 - * Bay Area Labor Committee for Peace & Justice
 - * CODEPINK: Women for Peace
 - * Community Organizing Center
 - * Courage to Resist
 - * Fellowship of Reconciliation
 - * Global Exchange
 - * Institute for Policy Studies' New Internationalism Project
 - * Iraq Veterans Against the War
 - * Jeannette Rankin Peace Center
 - * Just Foreign Policy
 - * Mid-Missouri Peaceworks
 - * Military Families Speak Out
 - * Pax Christi - USA
 - * Under the Hood
 - * US Labor Against the War
 - * Voices for Creative Nonviolence
 - * Voters for Peace
 - * War Is a Crime
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Obama Leaves 'Non-Combat' Troops in Iraq

Date: 8/31/2010

IF WE WERE OBAMA...A RESPONSE TO OBAMA'S TROOP "WITHDRAWAL"

Written by Mike Ferner

A veteran's perspective makes it clear that two major points must be made in response to President Obama's announcement regarding combat troops leaving Iraq.

First, there is no such thing as "non-combat troops." It is a contradiction in terms. It is internally inconsistent. It is illogical. It is simply not true.

Ask any of the millions of men and women who went through basic training and they can tell you that every U.S. troop anywhere in the world was indoctrinated and trained in the basics of combat. While in Iraq, the transition from mechanics or communications back to combat-ready soldier takes but an order. "Non-combat troops" is simply the latest in a long line of military euphemisms meant to obscure painful reality.

The second point can best be made by drafting a section of the President's remarks for him. If Veterans For Peace were to do that it would read something like this.

"And now, fellow Americans, let us begin a new era of candor and honesty about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Specifically, I'm referring to the true costs of war - something that must be considered if we are to judge if continued war is worth it.

You have seen that the cost to taxpayers of these wars has exceeded one trillion dollars, nearly all of which has been considered 'off budget,' appropriated by extraordinary or 'supplemental' spending bills. It may be hard to believe that, large though that figure may be, it is but the smaller portion of what we will spend in total.

We are already investing unprecedented amounts in Veterans Administration staff and facilities to try and cope with the millions of men and women who have cycled through a war zone deployment - and of course many have been through multiple deployments.

Our experience thus far tells us to expect literally hundreds of thousands of cases of PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injuries - injuries that are often difficult to diagnose at first and difficult to treat. These are, of course, in addition to the many thousands of visibly wounded who, at great expense, must go through rehabilitation and a lifetime of support in order to function to their fullest. Thousands more will require years, perhaps decades, of long-term care because their injuries have left them so broken they require round-the-clock attention.

But since we are initiating an era of candor, we go farther - and by that I mean the cost to families, communities and society as a whole. Volumes have literally been written on this point, but let me leave you with a brief example you can easily expand for yourself.

We have already heard of the abnormally high rate of suicides among returning veterans. The real number is undoubtedly higher since some will always remain a mystery. We've heard also of a growing tide of domestic violence that leaves families broken and terrorized.

Beyond the draining medical, psychological and emotional costs to the individuals directly involved, imagine the cost to the communities where this occurs: whole battalions of police, fire, EMT, courts, probation officers, social workers and sadly, prison guards will be needed to deal with the true costs of war. It is uncomfortable to admit, but this is indeed one area of the economy I can guarantee will grow significantly.

Then there is an exponentially greater cost borne by the people of Iraq and Afghanistan - greater in every way: emotionally, economically, in human suffering, in destroyed opportunities, in shattered lives and minds, in hearts that will remain forever broken. We can do precious little to repair much of that kind of damage. But I can tell you this, my fellow Americans, we must at least pay the bill to rebuild the roads, water and sewer plants, hospitals, schools and residences we have destroyed.

It is not pleasant to describe such things and indeed, these costs will continue to weigh heavily on our nation well into our grandchildren's generation. But we cannot pretend otherwise."

This is the message that should come from the White House tonight if truth were indeed the coin of the realm. We won't hear it, but that will make it no less true.

Pentagon Statements on Wikileaks Aim to Cloud Real Issues

Date: 9/16/2010

VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES SAY PENTAGON STATEMENTS ON WIKILEAKS AIM TO CLOUD REAL ISSUES

Our organizations represent veterans and military families. We have personally carried the burden of the war in Afghanistan, along with wars past. We are glad that the truth about the war is getting out to the public with the recent 92,000 documents on Wikileaks. Hopefully, this will inspire a massive outcry against this war that is wreaking so much destruction to our exhausted and demoralized troops and their families while draining our national coffers.

Obama administration officials are trying to spin events in their favor. Their words must be carefully examined. On the one hand, in an effort to downplay the significance of the release, we are told the documents contain no new information.

On the other hand, some high-ranking members of the U.S. military are trying to: 1) intimidate anyone else from doing the same thing and 2) turn public opinion against whoever leaked the current documents. Towards those goals, we are told that grievous harm will surely come to many Afghans and U.S. military personnel – if not now then certainly later.

A more damning statement could hardly be imagined than this one from Admiral Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, “The truth is they might already have on their hands the blood of some young soldier or that of an Afghan family.”

While we certainly do not wish to see one additional person put at risk in this tragic, wrongheaded war, we must state the following as clearly as we can.

As veterans and families with members in the military, we consider statements like Admiral Mullen’s to be nothing more than calculated attempts to turn public attention away from the real problem – the ongoing occupation of Afghanistan that has already caused the deaths and injuries of many thousands of innocent people all the while millions of Americans are jobless and face foreclosure or eviction.

This suffering in Afghanistan and this bleeding at home will continue as long as our troops remain in that country. Congress must stop funding this war. We must bring our troops home now, take care of them properly when they return and pay to rebuild the damage we have caused to Afghanistan.

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Founded in 1985, Veterans For Peace is a national organization of men and women veterans of all eras and duty stations spanning the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), World War II, the Korean, Vietnam, Gulf and current Iraq wars as well as other conflicts cold or hot. It has chapters in nearly every state in the union and is headquartered in St. Louis, MO. Our collective experience tells us wars are easy to start and hard to stop and that those hurt are often the innocent. Thus, other means of problem solving are necessary. Veterans For Peace: Exposing the true costs of war and militarism since 1985.

Military Families Speak Out is an organization of people opposed to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan who have relatives or loved ones who are currently in the military or who have served in the military since the fall of 2002.

Iraq Veterans Against the War is a national organization comprised of active duty, guard, and reserve troops and veterans who have served since 9/11. We call for immediate withdrawal of all occupying forces from Iraq and Afghanistan, reparations to the people of those countries, and full benefits for returning service members.



2011 Position Statements

Military Intervention in Libya

Date: 4/21/2011

VFP STATEMENT ON MILITARY INTERVENTION IN LIBYA

“The President does not have power under the Constitution to unilaterally authorize a military attack in a situation that does not involve stopping an actual or imminent threat to the nation.”
-Senator Barack Obama, 2007

On March 19, 2011, the President, without Congressional approval, ordered the attack on multiple targets in Libya. Under the guise of enforcing a “no-fly zone” the United States launched over 110 Tomahawk cruise missiles and flew over 113 sorties. At a cost of \$1,066,465 per missile that amounts to \$117,311,150 for just the munitions, not to mention the fuel and operating costs for the ships and planes used in the attacks. A USAF F-15E Strike Eagle was also lost in the conflict at a cost of \$31.1 million. There was also the unseen cost of the aircraft used in the rescue mission and an unknown number of civilians injured.

From 1979 to 1989, the United States Central Intelligence Agency conducted Operation Cyclone, the largest and most expensive CIA operation in its history. Hailed as a great success, Operation Cyclone successfully led to the unseating of the USSR supported People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). Operation Cyclone exploited fundamentalist Islam to motivate a group which became known as the Mujahedeen, funding and arming them to push the PDPA and the Soviet Union out militarily. Members of the Mujahedeen included Osama Bin Laden, and many other global figures in the group we now refer to as Al Qaeda.

Operation Cyclone, aside from being almost entirely covert, bears a striking resemblance to the current US operation wherein a sectarian and rather brutal totalitarian regime is being overthrown with US support by exploiting Islamic fundamentalists. While we know little about the rebels the US is aiding, we do know that many have fought against the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan. The US has a long history of fomenting the overthrow of governments not supporting our financial interest. That history also shows repeated violent backlash against the US both by those supported, and those who have been overthrown.

Oil prices have also climbed to their highest levels since 2008, another unseen cost of war. As unemployment continues at 9.2%, many Americans will be unable to keep up with rising fuel costs. This problem may lead to increased unemployment if people can't afford to get to their jobs, leading to a further downward spiral of the economy. In Yemen and Bahrain

uprisings seen as part of the “Arab Spring” have been violently suppressed without significant action from the US; it is worth noting that both governments have been extremely compliant with US corporate interests in reference to our energy interests, and both nations allow US bases to be housed on their soil.

While Gadhafi's actions against the Libyan people are reprehensible, the air strikes have not prevented his ground forces from being able to attack rebels and civilians. There are many atrocities occurring around the globe, but the United States government does not have the capability to fix them all. Additionally, bombing military targets and imposing a no-fly zone does very little to assist starving people and prevent human rights violations. Turkey has proposed diplomatic solutions to this crisis, yet the UN and NATO have continued military strikes. With no clear goal in mind, when is the end of the mission? Is the ousting of Gadhafi the only goal? Is it the role of the UN, NATO, and US to set up a new government by use of force? Is collateral damage and enormous costs from air strikes worthwhile without an endgame in site? Has the US government not learned from interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan that going to war without a plan leads to exorbitant and never-ending costs? History shows us that this type of intervention rarely goes without blowback and unintended consequences, perhaps with a \$1.4 trillion deficit and a domestic budget in crisis our best outcome would be to support peaceful alternatives and not add to the violence of a Libyan civil war at all.

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Chapter 89

Will Hopkins
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Veterans Denounce Obama's Claimed Authority to Kill Anybody He Wants to, as Long as They Are Overseas

Date: 10/4/2011

As of September 29, 2011, we are only one step away from a government where the top official can kill anybody, anywhere, any time he feels it necessary – and do it in complete secret.

With last week's lawless killings of two U.S. citizens living in Yemen, Anwar Al-Awlaqi and Samir Khan, among others, President Obama took another step closer to that frightful day by assuming the roles of judge, jury and executioner. The two citizens were reportedly executed by a combined drone strike and the same unit that killed Osama bin Laden earlier this year.

Veterans For Peace believes these killings, which violated domestic and international law, expose yet another true cost of war – we can see our nation drift ever closer to the terrible waters of tyranny. The Obama administration claims evidence that shows Awlaqi and Khan were violent, implacable foes of the U.S. But isn't one of our most basic beliefs, enshrined in our Bill of Rights, the principle that all accused deserve a fair trial and that all, no matter how dreadful the allegations against them, are innocent until proven guilty? The summary killing of two citizens without trial abandons that principle and charts a course to a totalitarian government.

According to McClatchy Newspapers, "Awlaqi spent his first seven years in the United States, before his family moved back to Yemen. He returned in 1991 to attend Colorado State University, and then earned a master's degree at San Diego State University. He married and had three children in the United States before leaving the country in 2003."

Khan, born in NY, moved with his family to Charlotte, NC in 2004, where he edited an English-language magazine for Al-Qaida. A spokesman for the Islamic Center of Charlotte told the Charlotte Observer last year that Khan's views were "widely rejected in the local Muslim community (and) Khan was not allowed to speak at any of the major mosques."

The Obama administration said the authority to execute citizens was first given to George W. Bush by Congress after the attacks of 9/11. Consequently, the U.S. Department of Justice argued last October that "The (president's) judgment as to whether force is authorized against (al Qaida) or any other organization is informed by changing circumstances and sensitive intelligence that cannot be disclosed." In other words, Obama contends that the authority to execute citizens without trial still stands, even if circumstances have changed. Furthermore, he is not required to explain anything.

That Justice Department's argument was made in opposition to a [lawsuit filed by the ACLU](#) and the Center for Constitutional Rights on behalf of Awlaqi's father in an attempt to save his son. But Judge John Bates dismissed the lawsuit, stating he lacked the authority to get involved, ruling "There are circumstances in which the (president's) unilateral decision to kill a U.S. citizen overseas is...judicially unreviewable."

ACLU Deputy Legal Director, Jameel Jaffer, said the administration's targeted killing program allows the government to execute American citizens far from any battlefield with no judicial process and on evidence "...kept secret not just from the public but from the courts."

The Obama administration maintains that none of this matters as long as the proper secret procedures are followed. This is indeed a frightening notion.

It is time to bring all of our troops home from Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and elsewhere. We must return to a civil society that takes care of its people, not a militarized one that inches closer to despotism by the day.

Statement from Freedom Plaza, D.C.

Date: 10/8/2011

VETERANS FOR PEACE ISSUES THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT FROM FREEDOM PLAZA, WASHINGTON D.C., 6PM SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8

Approximately 50 members of Veterans For Peace participated in a march this afternoon from Freedom Plaza to the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum on the National Mall. The museum was featuring an exhibit on unmanned drone bombers that a group of about 250 people from the October2011.org encampment at Freedom Plaza intended to protest.

The marchers ascended the museum steps, chanting, "When drones fly, children die."

They opened the doors at one of the three entrances, and when that entryway became full, they went to the second and third entrances.

VFP Acting Director Mike Ferner said, "I was at the first entranceway, holding the door open for people to enter. I saw a police or security officer in a white shirt hold his hands up, telling people to stop. The marchers continued and the officer began pepper-spraying everyone. From everything I saw until that moment, there was no reason for the pepper-spraying. The door of the museum clearly said 'free admission.' It did not say 'Free admission if you are quiet' or 'Free admission unless you have opinions contrary to government policy.'

"This was a clear abuse of authority and a use of force far beyond what was called for. Our members are consulting with National Lawyers Guild attorneys who are working with the October2011.org encampment."

"We are aware that one of the marchers shoved aside one of the officers. We do not condone this behavior."

Veterans For Peace is one of several groups organizing the October2011.org encampment. VFP is an organization composed of U.S. military veterans from WWII, the Korean War, Vietnam, Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, and Iraq wars and every period in between.



2012 Position Statements

New US-DPRK Agreement

Date: 3/6/2012

VFP STATEMENT ON NEW US-DPRK AGREEMENT

On Feb. 29, the US and DPRK (North Korea) each made a public announcement, following their bilateral talks in Beijing. North Korea's Foreign Ministry stated that, "upon request by the U.S. and with a view to maintaining positive atmosphere for the DPRK-U.S. high-level talks," it agreed to "a moratorium on nuclear tests, long-range missile launches, and uranium enrichment activity at Nyongbyon and allow the IAEA to monitor the moratorium on uranium enrichment while productive dialogues continue." In return, the US State Department stated that it would "take steps to increase people-to-people exchanges, including in the areas of culture, education, and sports" with DPRK, and agreed to meet with the DPRK "to finalize administrative details necessary to move forward with our proposed package of 240,000 metric tons of nutritional assistance."

VFP welcome this new development for confidence-building and human security in the tense Korean Peninsula, and urge both parties to implement their commitments in good faith in the coming weeks and months.

At the same time, we are deeply disappointed and concerned with the US Empire's "stick and carrot" policy toward DPRK, which is shamelessly using "nutritional assistance" to achieve its political/military objectives. This is profoundly an anti-humanitarian, bankrupt policy, which betrays the fundamental values of our country for "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." On the one hand, Uncle Sam had imposed harsh economic sanctions against DPRK for more than a half century from the beginning of the Korean War in 1950, which inevitably inflicted much sufferings on the North Korean people; on the other hand, it now talks about offering "nutritional assistance" to children in North Korea, instead of lifting the harsh economic sanctions.

Furthermore, the U.S. military in South Korea is currently leading massive joint war games ("Key Resolve"/"Foal Eagle") against DPRK with some 200,000 ROK troops, which will last until the end of April. Again, this is the sinister nature of the U.S. Empire's "stick and carrot" policy.

What is needed at this time is a fundamental change in the US policy toward Korea as a whole. End the lingering Korean War officially by replacing the outdated Armistice Agreement of 1953 with a peace treaty. Establish normal diplomatic relations with DPRK and bring our

troops home from Korea. Support self-determination of Korean people for a peaceful reunification of their country, which the US government was largely responsible for dividing it into two arbitrarily in 1945.

VFP Statement on the 11th Anniversary of the U.S. Invasion of Afghanistan

Date: 10/12/2012

US / NATO OUT OF AFGHANISTAN NOW!
How Many More Will Die for a Lie?

Veterans For Peace opposed the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001. We did not believe it was justified. As military veterans, we did not think that war and occupation were what the world needed. Eleven years later in our nation's longest war, it is apparent that the US / NATO occupation of Afghanistan has been based on a series of lies. One of the biggest lies today is that the U.S. strategy in Afghanistan is succeeding, and the American people should therefore be patient with a phased withdrawal over several years.

The Pentagon's Afghanistan strategy is up in smoke, more exposed than ever in recent news reports. The now-ended "surge" failed to break the momentum of the Afghan resistance, and officials have now abandoned their hope for a peace deal with the Taliban. Even so, there are twice as many U.S. troops, contractors and mercenaries in Afghanistan as when Obama took office.

A "withdrawal" strategy based on training Afghan police and military has been smashed by "insider killings. The Afghan people, like all people, do not want to live under foreign occupation.

The generals and politicians know their war can never be won, and they admit this behind closed doors. But they refuse to take responsibility for a 'military defeat' on their watch. So they lie to the public, say all is going as planned, and continue sending young men and women into a failed mission to save face.

Tens of thousands of Afghan civilians have been killed and maimed. Innocent civilians, including children, are killed by US/NATO forces on a regular basis. The Afghan people had no role in the 9/11 attacks. Rather, 9/11 was made the rationale for an invasion that was already in the planning—not for freedom, democracy or human rights, but for Washington's and Wall Street's economic and geostrategic interests.

Over 2,134 U.S. troops have been killed in Afghanistan – more than 250 so far this year alone, This figure does not include another one thousand NATO deaths, or contractors and mercenaries.

The seen and unseen wounds of this unjustified and failed war are killing soldiers at a higher rate than combat. A June [New York Times article](#) reported more suicides among active duty troops than soldiers dying on the battlefield with at that time 154 taking their own lives, averaging one a day. This is in contrast to 124 fatalities from fighting in Afghanistan. The deaths continue at home as veterans return to devastated communities with services cut, no jobs to be found and suffering from physical and mental injuries. According to a [widely cited VA report](#), [18 veterans commit suicide every-day. Or to put it another way, 1 every 80 minutes.](#)

“How many more men must die in support of a mission that is not succeeding?” asks Army LTC Daniel Davis, who traveled 9,000 miles through 8 provinces in Afghanistan before [writing a grim assessment](#) of the US/NATO occupation. Colonel Davis is right—nobody else should be sacrificed in a lost cause.

Withdrawing all U.S. troops immediately—as favored by a large majority of American people— would be the right thing to do. Instead, our elected 'leaders' in government and unelected 'leaders' in the Pentagon are forcing troops into multiple deployments simply because they don't want to be embarrassed.

Soldiers have alternatives to going to war, and Veterans For Peace is actively engaged in reaching out to GIs about those alternatives. For example, they may seek to be discharged as Conscientious Objectors. Or they can demand real treatment for their physical and psychological wounds, instead of redeployment to war.

Tens of thousands of military personnel have gone AWOL since 2001. Many are living discreetly in the U.S. or seeking sanctuary in Canada, Germany and elsewhere. We support war resisters. And in contrast to cynical politicians and generals, we actually do “support the troops.”

Veterans For Peace is joining forces with the young veterans of March Forward in the Our Lives Our Rights campaign. We are reaching out to active duty GI's with a message of hope. “If you wish to avoid returning to war, we will help you. You don't have to go to Afghanistan.”

For more information about Our Lives Our Rights, visit the campaign website at www.ourlivesourrights.org.



2013 Position Statements

Veterans for Peace: Don't Attack Iraq Iran or Any Other Nation 4/1/2013

Date: 4/1/2013

With the 10-year anniversary of the invasion of Iraq behind us, the task lies before us of preventing the next one.

The Iraq war, like all wars, was launched on the basis of false answers to false questions. We are now being told to ask whether Iran or Syria has weapons, as though possession of weapons were grounds for bombing a nation, and as if we've learned nothing.

The Iraq war, like all wars, was launched by people who wanted war. War is never the last resort. We are now being told that war with Iran must come, and the best we can do is delay it. But this next war is being chosen, and it is not too late to make a different choice. The sanctions we are imposing on Iran are killing and hurting the people of Iran, but only strengthening the resolve of their government. The funding and training of terrorist groups like the MEK makes war more likely. The U.S. Senate's efforts to effectively give the Israeli government the power to declare war for the United States (with Senate Resolution 65) makes war more likely. The gift of billions of dollars in weapons to Israel made by the U.S. government every year makes war more likely. The ongoing outrageous funding of U.S. war preparations at a rate far exceeding the Cold War or the Vietnam War makes war more likely. The false rhetoric about the history of Palestine delivered by President Obama only antagonizes those suffering from U.S. actions. The failure of Congress to repeal the 2002 Authorization for the Use of Military Force in Iraq and its 2001 predecessor makes war more likely. All of these policies can be changed.

U.S. support for brutal human rights abuses in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, increased CIA operations in Iraq, and threats made against Iran in violation of the U.N. Charter, all make U.S. statements about concern for the lives of Syrians ring false. The degradation of human rights in Iraq and Afghanistan under U.S. occupation make claims that concern for women or homosexuals motivate missile strikes incredible. The ongoing U.S. military presence and increased drone strikes in Western Asia work against prospects for peace. And, fundamentally, the decision of the Obama Administration and the U.S. Congress to pursue various possibilities for war, but none for peace, makes war far more likely. Peace is not just restraint from the last step into deeper war. Peace takes work. Peace takes investment. Peace requires planning. Right now all the plans are being made in the other direction.

The Iraq war, like all wars, was far more damaging than we have been told. U.S. deaths, over 4,000, have been a national disaster. Veterans with traumatic brain injuries, post traumatic stress disorder, and major depression number in the hundreds of thousands. But U.S. deaths

are 0.3% of the deaths. By the most scientifically respected studies available, we know that Operation Iraqi Liberation (its original name) killed 1.4 million Iraqis, above the extremely high death rate of 2003, which followed the worst sanctions in modern history and the longest bombing campaign. That's 5.4% of the Iraqi population killed, a higher percentage and a higher number than the United States lost in its Civil War, or than Japan, France, the U.K. or the U.S. lost in World War II.*

Over 4 million additional Iraqis have been wounded, and over 4 million made refugees. Iraqi infrastructure remains in ruins, its environment poisoned, cancer and birth defects skyrocketing, health and education and nutritional resources in tatters. Sectarian divisions, created by the war, are only growing. Terrorism, created by the war, is only rising. Iraq is unstable, unprosperous, undemocratic, and absolutely unable to serve as a model to justify another war of preemption or liberation.*

Former speech writers, pundits, museums, and textbook writers are beautifying the war. Former President George W. Bush is about to be honored at the opening of his library (which protesters are calling the Lie Bury). It's our job to make sure that awareness of lies about war is not buried. It's all of our responsibility to speak to our friends and neighbors about past wars until future wars become unthinkable.

Veterans For Peace is a national organization, founded in 1985 with approximately 5,000 members in 150 chapters located in every U.S. state and several countries. It is a 501(c)3 non-profit educational organization recognized as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) by the United Nations, and is the only national veterans' organization calling for the abolishment of war.

*Statistics drawn from this report: <http://warisacrime.org/iraq>

Veterans For Peace: Reject Military Spending on April 15 4/3/2013

Date: 4/3/2013

With 47% of federal discretionary spending going into the cost of war preparations and wars in 2013, it is time once and for all that we forbid the common American practice of opposing taxes and supporting wars.*

Veterans For Peace is joining with many other organizations to create a Global Day of Action on Military Spending this April 15th. See: <http://demilitarize.org>

Taxes are a byproduct of wars. "War has been the most important catalyst for long-term, structural change in the nation's fiscal system. Indeed, the history of America's tax system can be written largely as a history of America's wars," write Steven Bank, Kirk Stark, and Joseph Thorndike in *War and Taxes*.

Alexander Hamilton argued in Federalist No. 30, as he and his allies argued elsewhere, for the federal power to tax precisely because the federal government might need to fight wars. Between 1789 and 1815, tariffs produced 90 percent of government revenue. But taxes were needed for wars, including wars against protests of the taxes -- such as President Washington's quashing of the Whiskey Rebellion. A property tax was put in place in 1789 in order to build up a Navy. But taxation really got going with the War of 1812, and the income tax was created for the Civil War, by both sides.

Only World War I, however, and a public relations campaign promoting wartime sacrifice allowed a full scale shift from heavy reliance on customs duties to reliance on the income tax and other taxes. Heavy taxation survived the outbreak of peace and was then expanded for World War II long before Pearl Harbor. And with World War II, taxation shifted from being a burden primarily imposed on the wealthy to seeing over 90% of Americans filing income tax returns in 1945. "It takes taxes to beat the Axis!" sang Donald Duck.

Since World War II the taxes and the military spending haven't gone away. But the burden has shifted ever more heavily onto the shoulders of working people. Corporations and billionaires and multi-millionaires are paying less and less. And in the absence of a major enemy, the U.S. government is spending more on war preparations than during the Cold War or the war on Vietnam.

April 15th should be a day to move the conversation from cutting Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid to cutting reckless preparations for war and foreign weapons sales that are driving the militarization of the globe and making more wars more likely. Veterans For Peace is a national organization, founded in 1985 with approximately 5,000 members in 150 chapters located in every U.S. state and several countries. It is a 501(c)3 non-profit educational organization recognized as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) by the United Nations, and is the only national veterans' organization calling for the abolishment of war.

* Statistics taken from this study:

<http://www.warresisters.org/content/how-pie-chart-figures-were-determined-fy2013>

Veterans For Peace: Time to Finally End Korean War

Date: 4/12/2013

As a major U.S. peace organization of veterans, including members who served in the Korean War, Veterans For Peace (VFP) is deeply concerned about the increasing risk of another open conflict on the Korean Peninsula at this time.

CNN reported on Thursday that, "Developments in and around North Korea are so worrisome that they appear to have frightened Dick Cheney." Bellicose rhetoric and maneuvers are indeed extremely worrisome, but it is important that we understand where the hostility is originating if we are going to be able to counter it.

North Korea has withdrawn from the armistice agreement that supposedly ended war over half a century ago. North Korea is threatening military action. Yet, North Korea spends some 0.8% of what the United States spends on war preparation. The United States has the ability to obliterate North Korea. The United States is not just threatening war on North Korea, but practicing it by dropping inert bombs on Korean soil. And, of course, North Korea has not forgotten the United States' primary role in destroying its cities and killing millions of its people over a half century ago.

The United States this year, for the first time, has been using B-2 bombers and F-22 stealth jets in Korean air space in clear violation of the Korean War Armistice Agreement, which prohibits "introduction into Korea of reinforcing military personnel... (and) combat aircraft, armored vehicles, weapons, and ammunition." (Paragraph 13C & D) North Korea's declaration that it, too, will abandon the armistice was not the first move in this dance of death.

That Korean War has never fully ended, not in terms of the elimination of hostilities, and not in terms of the withdrawal of foreign troops. The United States has maintained operational control over the South Korean Army all of these years, an army of 650,000 troops today. Last year President Barack Obama allowed South Korea to maintain cruise missiles with greater range than before, missiles now capable of hitting anywhere in the North. Obama is also providing South Korea with drones for the purpose of spying on or attacking the North. The Obama administration is, at the same time, promoting the construction of new and larger military bases around the region and in South Korea, including on Jeju Island -- the strategic purpose of which appears to be purely to "contain" (that is, provoke) China. U.S. military "exercises" in the region are predictably provoking threats from the North to attack the U.S. bases from which its bombers are taking off.

Although U.S. officials have been accusing DPRK (North Korea) of "provocative acts," a careful review of events shows that the United States bears greater responsibility in provoking and threatening DPRK with new sanctions, military build-ups, and major war drills under the name "Key Resolve/Foal Eagle."

North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un, according to the only American to talk to him, basketball player Dennis Rodman, said, "Tell President Obama to call me. Because if we can

talk, we can work this out." Our Nobel Peace Laureate president responded by sending over stealth bombers to simulate nuclear bombing attacks.

This year's joint war game for U.S. and ROK (South Korean) troops is far more threatening in its scope, intensity, and length, than other recent exercises. More than 10,000 U.S. and 200,000 ROK troops are taking part in the war drill for 2 months. The United States is, for the first time, using multiple strategic assets, including B-52s, B-2 stealth bombers, and the nuclear attack submarine USS Cheyenne, to practice nuclear attacks on North Korea. This is in the context of a major U.S. military build-up in the region, a build-up being accelerated, using North Korean bellicosity as justification. The United States has increased its troop strength in South Korea from 28,500 to 37,000; beefed up its so-called missile defense system around Korea and Japan; sent Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles to South Korea last fall; and moved 12 F-22 Raptors and 300 staff to [Okinawa](#) on January 14, 2013.

And this new militarization is in a historical context that is probably better understood by Koreans than by most Americans. The U.S. decision in August 1945 to artificially divide an ancient homogenous Korea into two, upon the surrender of the Japanese; the subsequent U.S.-directed reign of terror in South Korea, 1945-1948; the U.S. sponsorship of a separate regime in South Korea in 1948; and then, consequently, the open Korean War, 1950-1953, which included U.S. carpet bombing of the country, killing at least 20% of the population, surely must rank as one of the cruelest tragedies of the Twentieth Century. This is virtually unknown history in the West, and today's issues relating to Korea cannot be understood without knowing about this diabolical assault on the Korean nation's rights to integrity, independence and self-determination.

To de-escalate the current danger of war on the Korean Peninsula, VFP urges the following steps:

- 1) The U.S., ROK and DPRK governments should immediately stop the current war drills in and around Korea, along with all military threats or cyber attacks against each other;
- 2) The U.S. should withdraw immediately all new U.S. troops and weapons brought into Korea in recent years; and remove all nuclear land- and sea-based missiles and weapons from Korea (and neighboring Japan, if any), and from the Yellow Sea, East China Sea, and Sea of Japan.
- 3) The U.S. Secretary of State or a high-level special U.S. envoy should visit ROK, DPRK, and China to initiate a four-party talk to end the Korean War officially, and finally, with a peace treaty this year.
- 4) The U.S. public should reject and denounce fear-mongering about North Korea. North Korea spends about 0.8% what the United States does and 29% of what South Korea does on its military. North Korea is not a serious threat to the United States. But the United States is recklessly helping to provoke a new war on the Korean peninsula that could prove as horrific as the last one, or worse.

The United Nations is playing a biased role similar to its role in the past, pressuring North Korea, but not the United States or South Korea, on human rights abuses. There have been 9,000 missile launches since World War II. North Korea has had 4. There have been 2,000

nuclear bomb tests. North Korea has had 3. How many countries have been sanctioned by the United Nations over this? Only one: North Korea.

The United States has no business being in Korea. The United States has ignored the North's calls for a peace treaty since 1974. It is time, at long last, to stop posturing for war and begin talking about peace.

Veterans For Peace also supports the [Statement Opposing U.S.-South Korea Joint Military Exercises Key Resolve, Foal Eagle](#), as drafted by the Working Group for Peace and Demilitarization in Asia and the Pacific.

Veterans For Peace: No U.S. Military Intervention in Syria!

Date: 9/5/2013

Veterans For Peace strongly opposes U.S. military intervention, whether direct or indirect, in the war that is currently raging in Syria.

U.S. military aid to rebels in Syria only deepens the suffering and increases the casualties among the Syrian people. It destabilizes the region and risks escalating the conflict into a regional war. It violates the U.N. Charter and international law.

There should be no U.S. military intervention in any form, including a so-called “no-fly zone,” which would be a direct act of military aggression. Only the Syrian people can decide who should govern Syria.

Veterans For Peace calls for an escalation of diplomacy, not war. We call for a ceasefire from all combatants in Syria. We call for urgent diplomacy to stop the bloodshed and address the humanitarian crises in Syria and among Syrian refugees in neighboring countries.

Veterans' Group Responds to President Obama's Call to War

Date: 9/12/2013

Veterans For Peace continues to strongly oppose U.S. military intervention, whether direct or indirect, in the civil war that is currently raging in Syria.

President Obama's September 10th address to the nation failed to provide a compelling argument for intervention and left many basic questions unanswered and set justification for intervention squarely on logical leaps and counterfactual fallacies.

It is a logical fallacy to say, as the President did, that U.S. military inaction will embolden other dictators into "acquiring poison gas[es], and using them." It is a leap to say that U.S. military inaction will create conditions for "al Qaeda [to] only draw strength in a more chaotic" Syria. We reject the President's assertion that it is in the national security interest of the United States to intervene in Syria, and we reject the implication that military might is by default an effective response to atrocities abroad.

VFP strongly urges the Administration to pursue the recent diplomatic opportunity provided by Russian and Syrian leaders regarding Syrian stockpiles of chemical weapons. This international effort also reaffirms the importance of U.S. participation in international treaties like the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the International Criminal Court.

VFP condemns the use of all chemical weapons, as well as the targeting of civilians with conventional weapons. We have watched with horror as the Syrian people have suffered for over two years from violence committed with conventional and non-conventional weapons alike. Peace is served by collecting and destroying chemical weapons and holding perpetrators accountable to international law. This is the course that must be followed if current negotiations fail, not U.S. military intervention which will certainly lead to more lives lost.

The American public is very skeptical of President Obama's case for war. People have different reasons for opposing military intervention, but chief among them is, after nearly 13 years of war in Iraq and Afghanistan, we are tired of war. We have been more than once tricked into supporting unjust wars—most recently with the false pretense of Saddam Hussein's al Qaeda ties and Weapons of Mass Destruction stockpiles provided as pretext to invade Iraq. Those claims, similar to those being used to justify intervention in Syria, caused millions of dead and displaced Iraqis, thousands of dead U.S. service members and—in the end—cost trillions of U.S. dollars.

As a result, the American people have overwhelmingly rejected President Obama's call for military action in Syria. When Congress votes on the President's military plans later this month, Congress should follow the public's lead on this issue.

Indeed, the true WMD in the case of the Iraq War was U.S. propaganda. The world cannot afford another unnecessary war of choice at the hands of the U.S. government—whether approved by Congress or not. We reject the idea that the U.S. or the West should be the standard-bearer of morality in the world.

The truer motivations for wars such as these—profit, access and control of resources such as oil, and the extension of U.S. power—are not more important than the sanctity of human life. VPF supports neither the use of chemical weapons—regardless of who deploys them—nor military intervention in a raging civil war—by the U.S. or anyone else. Put simply, the civil war raging in Syria will not end through more military force, but a robust and sustained diplomatic effort.

As veterans representing every war since WWII, we are not war weary, but rather war wise. We know the cost of war from direct personal experience. We know that, whether a so called “pinprick” or robust but limited strike, military intervention will only exacerbate the conflict, not solve it. The conflict in Syria suffers a problem of too much war and not enough diplomacy, the former of which the United States should in no way contribute. War is not today, nor will it ever be, the way to solve the conflict in Syria.
