



2019 Position Statements

Veterans Respond to Decision on Transgender Ban

Date: 1/23/19

Veterans For Peace is disappointed with the decision of the Supreme Court to give a green light to Trump's attempt to ban transgender people from serving in the military. The Supreme Court voted 5-4 to strike down Federal Court injunctions on implementation of the Transgender ban. Fortunately, [according to Chase Strangio of the ACLU](#), there is still another nationwide injunction in place that will stop the ban from going into effect immediately.

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

Further, the disregard of transgender people's service dishonors all who have participated in the U.S. military. There are varying estimates that there are 6,000-15,000 transgender service members in the U.S. military today. As a volunteer force, these individuals have the right to choose to join the military. That should be respected, and they should not be targeted for who they are. They should be judged by the content of their character and the quality of their work.

Veterans Call to Resist U.S. Coup in Venezuela

Date: 1/27/19

Veterans For Peace is outraged at the unfolding coup d'état in Venezuela, which is [clearly being orchestrated by the U.S. government](#). Two hundred years of blatant U.S. intervention in Latin America must come to an end. Veterans For Peace was founded in 1985, in part prompted by the U.S.-backed “contra” war in Nicaragua, and U.S. support for the rightwing government in the bloody civil war in neighboring El Salvador. We did not want to see another Vietnam War in Central America.

Years of increasingly crippling U.S. sanctions have succeeded in destabilizing the Venezuelan economy and created great unrest, division and migration. The U.S. government encouraged Venezuelan opposition parties to boycott last year’s election. Now they are calling the election fraudulent, and attempting to install a little-known politician more to their liking. This is part of a dangerous game that the U.S. continues to play throughout Latin America.

President Trump’s National Security Advisor John Bolton has called Venezuela, Nicaragua and Cuba the “Troika of Tyranny,” and boasted that they have now “met their match.” Right-wing Cuban American Senator Marco Rubio of Florida, [said to be deeply involved in orchestrating this coup](#), has implied that U.S. military intervention may be next. Responding to questions about possible military intervention, President Trump says that “all options are on the table.” Trump and Vice President Mike Pence have openly encouraged the Venezuelan military to stage a coup and U.S. officials have even met with potential coup leaders. Right-wing governments in Colombia and Brazil could also possibly be involved in U.S.-coordinated military action against the democratically elected government of Venezuela.

In our Statement of Purpose, Veterans For Peace promises to “restrain our governments from intervening, overtly and covertly, in the internal affairs of other nations.” We call on our members in over 100 U.S. cities and internationally, to make their voices heard. We must do all we can to prevent a bloody civil war from taking a huge toll on the Venezuelan people, and the peace-loving people of the hemisphere.

Call your political representatives, write letters to the editors, protest in the streets, resist yet another blow against democracy and human rights in this hemisphere and the world.

For more historical context details about the current situation in Venezuela, please read this [Open Letter](#) signed by 70 academics, Latin America experts and activists, including Veterans For Peace Advisory Board members, Medea Benjamin and Phyllis Bennis.

Veterans Support Rep. Ilhan Omar

Date: 3/8/19

Veterans For Peace applauds Rep. Ilhan Omar for her courageous truth-telling in the face of tremendous reaction. Her criticism of Israel's inordinate influence in U.S. politics is welcome, and can no longer be silenced by fact-free accusations of "antisemitism."

The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees freedom to criticize our government without censorship or retribution. Representative Ilhan Omar's statements criticizing Israeli influence in Congress are protected speech like that of every other citizen. Moreover, her criticism of the unconditional support for Israel despite their relentless and continuing violations of international law and the human rights of Palestinians is badly needed and long overdue.

The international community has issued over one hundred United Nations General Assembly resolutions and 46 UN Security Council resolutions to censure or sanction Israel for its terrible crimes and abuses against Palestinians. All people of conscience should criticize any country that steals lands and resources, targets nonviolent protesters, utilizes mass incarceration, denies refugees their right of return, and occupies with military force.

We also commend Representative Ilhan Omar for her work for peace inside the U.S. House of Representatives. We note that she has pledged to bring an end to ongoing U.S. military conflicts. She uses her experiences as a refugee to educate thousands of U.S. citizens about the devastating realities of decisions made in Washington DC. Her voice is a refreshing addition to the national dialogue on issues of war and peace.

The attempts to silence, intimidate or censure U.S. Representative Omar must stop. Opposition to Israeli oppression of the Palestinian people and active collusion by the U.S. government is the responsibility of all peace-loving people. We are thankful to Rep. Omar for setting a good example. We will continue to defend her from the rightwing attacks and threats of violence that have been unleashed against her.

Veterans Call on U.S. Troops to Resist Illegal Orders to Invade Venezuela

Date: 3/14/19

President Donald Trump has called on Venezuelan soldiers to disobey orders and join coup perpetrators headed by U.S.-backed opposition leader, Juan Guaidó. If they do not do this, [President Trump threatened](#): "You will find no safe harbor, no easy exit and no way out. You will lose everything."

While President Trump speaks of supporting democracy in Venezuela and Latin America, the real purpose of the U.S. assault on the Venezuelan government is to fully open the vast Venezuelan oil reserves to U.S. and other Western oil corporations as well as to destroy progressive governments in Latin America that put their own peoples' needs above the profits of foreign corporations.

The Veterans For Peace Statement of Purpose states that, "we will work, with others both nationally and internationally:

1. To increase public awareness of the causes and costs of war
2. To restrain our governments from intervening, overtly and covertly, in the internal affairs of other nations
3. To end the arms race and to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons
4. To seek justice for veterans and victims of war
5. To abolish war as an instrument of national policy."

In this spirit, Veterans For Peace (VFP) calls on all members of the U.S. military to refuse illegal orders to intervene in Venezuela. Furthermore, VFP urges all U.S. military leaders to inform the president that they will order their units to stand down from preparations to invade Venezuela.

Illegal, immoral and irresponsible U.S. actions, including "sanctions" (economic war) have already taken a great toll on the people Venezuela. Nonetheless, the vast majority of Venezuelan people and military are standing firm against foreign intervention. Now there is a very real possibility that President Trump will order U.S. troops to intervene in Venezuela, whether through a direct invasion and occupation, or through support for irregular counter-revolutionary forces. This would likely lead to a widening war that could spread to other Latin American countries and the Caribbean, bringing increasing suffering to the peoples of Latin America and the U.S.

It is illegal under both U.S. and international law to launch a military attack against another nation unless it is clearly in self-defense, and is approved by the United Nations. There are a number of options for GI's who do not wish to follow illegal orders. Veterans For Peace wants service-members to be fully informed as they make profound choices with possibly serious consequences. We urge GI's facing possible deployment to contact the National Lawyers Guild [Military Law Task Force](#) at (619) 463-2369 and/or help@militarylawhelp.com for referral to a civilian attorney to discuss your options. Many of their member lawyers are willing to do an initial pro-bono (free) consultation.

Refuse to be used in an illegal war. Follow your conscience and be on the right side of history.

Veterans For Peace Supports Chelsea Manning

Date: 3/22/19

Veterans For Peace stands strongly in solidarity with Chelsea Manning. Chelsea has been a remarkable example of principled dissent. She showed great courage in releasing documents and now again standing firm against the questionable practices of a grand jury. Veterans For Peace calls on Chelsea to be released immediately.

Veterans For Peace and many VFP members were among the most committed supporters of Chelsea Manning when [she was arrested in May, 2010](#) and eventually court-martialed for releasing the Collateral Murder video and other critical information about the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that the public had the right and need to know.

Veterans For Peace members were arrested outside the Marine Base at Quantico, Virginia, where Chelsea was being held in torturous solitary confinement. Members rallied outside her court martial at Fort Meade, Maryland, and sat in the courtroom every day. Veterans For Peace helped raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for Chelsea's defense, in conjunction with Courage To Resist and the Chelsea Manning Support Network.

As an organization, we were dejected when Chelsea was convicted and sentenced to 35 years in prison. We were very grateful when President Obama commuted Chelsea's sentence. Our members have watched with admiration as Chelsea has evolved into an important activist for transparency (the public's right to know) and for transgender rights. Once again, Chelsea Manning is demonstrating remarkable, principled courage. And once again, the powers-that-be are persecuting her. Chelsea has refused to participate in a grand jury fishing expedition against Julian Assange and Wikileaks. A grand jury is rumored to have already issued a secret indictment against Julian Assange.

Chelsea Manning has been arrested and jailed, and is facing a possible 18 months in prison. As she was being taken back into custody on March 8, Chelsea declared, *"I will not participate in a secret process that I morally object to, particularly one that has been historically used to entrap and persecute activists for protected political speech."*

Daniel Ellsberg, a member of VFP's Advisory Board, responded,

"Chelsea Manning is again acting heroically in the name of press freedom, and it's a travesty that she has been sent back to jail for refusing to testify to a grand jury. An investigation into WikiLeaks for publishing is a grave threat to all journalists' rights, and Chelsea is doing us all a service for fighting it. She has already been tortured, spent years in jail, and has suffered more than enough. She should be released immediately."

Veterans For Peace agrees with Daniel Ellsberg. We are proud to stand with Chelsea Manning once again. We will add our voice and our energies to supporting her in her courageous stance.

FREE CHELSEA MANNING (again)!

Useful information and resources are [available from Courage To Resist](#).

Veterans For Peace Stands with Chelsea Manning and Julian Assange

Date: 4/12/19

The People Have the Need to Know

Veterans For Peace Stands with Chelsea Manning and Julian Assange

Julian Assange and Chelsea Manning are both in jail right now. They are being persecuted by the very elite who are pursuing regime change wars around the globe and who do not want the people to know the truth about what they are up to.

Curiously, Assange has been charged with conspiring with Chelsea Manning to break into a classified Army computer in 2010. Regardless of the questionable allegations that WikiLeaks collaborated with Trump and the Russians to undermine Hillary Clinton's presidential bid, WikiLeaks did a great service by publishing evidence of U.S. war crimes. The charges against Assange go back nine years to when Chelsea Manning provided WikiLeaks with the "Collateral Murder" video and the Army's daily after action reports from Iraq and Afghanistan. That is what the U.S. government is choosing to focus on, at least initially.

What Chelsea Manning released through WikiLeaks was evidence of the routine killing of civilians by US forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the routine cover-up of these war crimes. The Iraq War Logs and the Afghan War Diaries also revealed that military and civilian leaders were lying to the U.S. people when they presented rosy assessments of the progress of those wars. If more people had paid attention to these revelations, many thousands of lives could have been saved.

One of the most moving aspects of Manning's court martial testimony in 2013 was her explanation as to why she released the so-called "[Collateral Murder](#)" video, which shows the gunning down in Baghdad of two Reuters journalists and bystanders by American soldiers in a US Apache helicopter. Manning described being deeply troubled by the video, especially the crew's "lack of concern for human life" and lack of "concern for injured children at the scene."

Chelsea explained her own motivation:

"I believed if the public, particularly the American public, could see this it could spark a debate on the military and our foreign policy in general as it applied to Iraq and Afghanistan. It might cause society to reconsider the need to engage in counter terrorism while ignoring the human situation of the people we engaged with every day.... I felt I accomplished something that would allow me to have a clear conscience."

Chelsea Manning is a hero to Veterans For Peace for releasing documents that the public had every right to see. Julian Assange is a hero to Veterans For Peace for providing a platform for whistleblowers like Chelsea Manning. Both Chelsea Manning and Julian Assange should be celebrated. They should be up for the Nobel Peace Prize and for awards in journalism and courageous truth-telling. Instead they are being persecuted by the very warmongers who continue to lie about the wars in Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, Iraq and Somalia, and who are now promoting regime change wars with Venezuela and Iran.

Now is the time to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Julian Assange and Chelsea Manning. We will not be distracted by murky rumors or character assassination in the mainstream media. We will join emergency protests, initiate our own protests, contact our Congressional representatives, write letters to the editor, and more.

In defending these two courageous individuals, Veterans For Peace is also defending the people's right to know. And we are defending journalists' right to publish the truth, no matter how inconvenient to the elites who seek to dominate the globe. If the first casualty of war is truth, then the telling the truth is also an antidote to war.

Veterans Support Rep. Ilhan Omar

Date: 4/19/19

Veterans For Peace condemns President Trump for his racist attacks on Rep. Ilhan Omar, one of the first two Muslim women to be elected to the House of Representatives.



Donald Trump is consciously attacking Muslims and women of color to whip up reactionary racism, misogyny, and violence. His actions are reckless and evil.

As veterans, we expect a Commander-in-Chief who will unite the country and tend to the needs of all the people, especially those most in need – the unemployed, the homeless, and immigrants. Instead, we have a fascist-leaning president who thinks it is fun – and good politics – to attack the most vulnerable – to divide and conquer – all to benefit himself and his billionaire buddies.

When we joined the military, we raised our right hands and pledged to defend the Constitution from all enemies, foreign and domestic. We remain committed to fighting for real democracy and human rights for all.

Veterans For Peace stands with Rep. Ilhan Omar and all our Muslim sisters and brothers. We stand with immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. As veterans of too many wars, we stand for Peace at Home and Peace Abroad. We expect our leaders to do the same.

Veterans Want Peace, Not War with Iran

Date: 6/21/19



Veterans For Peace firmly opposes U.S. attempts to increase tensions in the Persian Gulf and create the conditions for war against Iran.

The U.S. has created ongoing tensions with Iran by leaving the Iran Nuclear Deal, by imposing punishing economic sanctions, and by making questionable accusations against Iran. Veterans know firsthand how dangerous lies and exaggerations can lead the American public into war.

It is imperative that the U.S. immediately begins seeking diplomatic solutions to conflicts instead of creating pretexts for war.

Veterans For Peace calls on the U.S. to:

- Draw down all its military forces from the Persian Gulf
- End its economic war against Iran, lifting sanctions immediately
- Re-join the six-country Iran Nuclear Deal
- End the 2001 Authorization of Use of Military Force (AUMF) that administration after administration has used to fund military expeditions around the globe under the guise of fighting the Islamophobic “War on Terror”

We know firsthand the futility of war. And the lies. We believe the days of war and conquest must come to an end. We believe in the sovereignty of all nations and human rights for all people. The last thing we want to see is another war in the Middle East or anywhere, especially given that the U.S. is already engaged in failed warfare in multiple places around the globe.

As veterans who have been involved in too many illegal wars, we are convinced that a U.S. attack against Iran would be a violation of U.S. law and international law. We call on all who are in the U.S. military to consider your situation carefully and conscientiously. We will support GI's who refuse to obey illegal orders or who protest against endless illegal U.S. wars.

Veterans for Peace is sick of the lies, the massacres of innocent people, the waste of our national resources, and the deaths and injuries to our own soldiers. We will organize maximum resistance to the continuing U.S. policy of military aggression. We want peace - not war - with the people of Iran.

- [Send a letter to Congress to Say No to War!](#)
 - [Find more ways to take action!](#)
-

Veterans Condemn Racist Attacks

Date: 7/22/19

Veterans For Peace condemns President Trump for his racist attacks on four congresswomen of color earlier this week via Twitter with calls for these women to go back to their countries on Sunday, July 14. Further, VFP condemns Trump supporters at a rally in Greenville NC who, on July 17, 2019, chanted "Send her back!" when Representative Ilhan Omar was mentioned by Trump.



Donald Trump and the supporters in Greenville are consciously attacking Muslims and women of color to whip up reactionary racism, misogyny, and violence. Their actions are reckless, illegal, and evil. This language is reminiscent of calls by white supremacists who, in 1957, called for African-American school children to be sent back to Africa as schools were being

integrated. "Send them/her back" is specifically listed in Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) literature as being a racist phrase that would have gotten anyone in the chanting crowd fired and/or sued if spoken to a co-worker.

As veterans, we expect a Commander-in-Chief who will unite the country and tend to the needs of all the people, especially those most in need – the unemployed, the homeless, and immigrants. Instead, we have a fascist-leaning president who thinks it is fun – and good politics – to attack the most vulnerable – to divide and conquer – all to benefit himself and his billionaire cronies.

When we joined the military, we raised our right hands and pledged to defend the Constitution from all enemies, foreign and domestic. We remain committed to fighting for real democracy and human rights for all.

Veterans For Peace stands with the four congresswomen of color. We stand with immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. As veterans of too many wars, we stand for Peace at Home and Peace Abroad. We expect our leaders to do the same.

Veterans Condemn Racist Violence

Date: 8/7/19

Veterans For Peace strongly condemns the terrorist attack conducted by a white nationalist in El Paso, Texas, and the mass shooting in Dayton, Ohio. We hold Donald Trump accountable for his part in stoking racism and bigotry. We hold news outlets accountable for not taking Trump to task for his racism. We hold the U.S. Congress accountable for not enacting legislation that will, in part, make the National Rifle Association culpable for fomenting an atmosphere of lawlessness in our society. Their lack of will and lack of courage makes attacks by domestic terrorists a far too frequent occurrence. This cowardice continues to allow wanton murder to occur unchecked. We furthermore hold that the U.S. Congress' unwillingness to confront and oppose the racist, bigoted language of the current occupant of the White House to be unconscionable.

As military service members we swore an oath to "...support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic;..." Having done so, we now call on federal, regional and local elected public officials to speak out against racism and violence, both foreign and domestic. We furthermore strongly urge all government entities to pass legislation that supports greater oversight of, and control over, weapon sales. We have come to know all too well that violence does not resolve issues and only foments more violence.

We recognize that the violence inflicted on peoples of foreign countries by U.S. armed forces is reinforced by the level of violence that we have become conditioned to accept here at home. We cannot have "peace at home" until we confront the aggressive, self-serving and violent U.S. foreign policy and make "peace abroad" a central issue of U.S. foreign policy. We stand with all organizations that seek to develop alternatives to violence and conflict resolution a core belief and practice within U.S. society as well as globally.

On International Peace Day, Veterans Say End War and Militarism

Date: 9/16/19

Catastrophic climate change is an imminent danger facing the world. This year for [International Peace Day](#), the U.N. has declared the theme to be “Climate Action for Peace”. Taking action on climate change is vital as a way to promote peace throughout the world. Ending war and militarism are vital if we are to create a sustainable future.



Climate change causes clear threats to international peace and security. Natural disasters displace three times as many people as conflicts, forcing millions to leave their homes and seek safety elsewhere. The salinization of water and crops is endangering food security, and the impact on public health is escalating. The growing tensions over resources and mass movements of people are affecting every country on every continent. Peace can only be achieved if concrete action is taken to combat climate change.

As veterans, we also know that the environment has long been a silent casualty of war and armed conflict. If we are going to win on climate, we must make the connections between the environment and militarism.

For centuries, war has not only involved the annihilation of human life, but also environmental destruction in the forms of both 'collateral damage' and deliberate damage to the environment. In addition, instead of working for a cleaner, cooler future, our tax dollars are being spent on human death and environmental destruction. Money spent on endless war is money not spent reducing our dependence on fossil fuels or supporting the transition to a low-carbon economy.

If we want to abolish war and deal head-on with climate change we must help people here at home uncover these same connections. The U.S. military machine is responsible for catastrophic damages through our endless wars, expansive military bases, (many of which are in violation of environmental regulations), weapons testing and massive consumption of resources. Ending war and holding our government accountable for the damage it does to the environment through war is paramount in achieving “Climate Action for Peace”.

Veterans Condemn Turkey's Invasion of Rojava

Date: 10/17/20

Text: *Call for Total Withdrawal of U.S. Troops from Syria*

Veterans For Peace condemns the Turkish invasion of Syrian Kurdistan and calls on the United States government to withdraw any support for the incursion, to include arms to all groups involved. We also call for the United States to withdraw all troops from Syria, to include those 200 troops left at Tanf base in Southern Syria who are said to be working with Syrian opposition. And, equally importantly, it is time for the U.S. to reopen its borders to allow more refugees in from this war-torn region.

The U.S. has been illegally intervening in Syria since 2011, by arming and training various factions and by direct military intervention, in the name of fighting terrorism. The U.S. military presence in Syria has only created more death and destruction.

Turkey's recent invasion into Syrian Kurdistan could easily escalate the existing Kurdish refugee crisis and lead to a Kurdish genocide. Over 50,000 Kurds have been killed in the ongoing conflict with Turkey, which began in 1984 and saw a temporary cease-fire in 2015. This week's Turkish airstrikes are said to have targeted civilian populations and have already resulted in more casualties. There have been 160,000 Kurds displaced in the first week of the incursion, and this act of aggression could escalate the calls for Kurdish nationalism and result in a region-wide war. Turkey's president, Erdoğan, has also threatened to expel 3.6 million refugees temporarily living in Turkey if anyone in Europe calls his act an occupation.

The Kurds are the fourth largest ethnic group in Western Asia and the world's largest ethnic group without a country. There are approximately 20-40 million Kurds spread out over a region known as Kurdistan, which comprises lands in southeastern Turkey, northwestern Iran, northern Iraq, and northern Syria. The Kurdish people were deprived of their sovereignty as a result of the British Mandate that divided the Ottoman Empire following World War I. The United States has historically used the Kurdish people to further its own political aims in the region, while turning its back on them when an alliance no longer suits them. This cycle of imperialistic violence must end.

The time is now to raise awareness of the struggle of the Kurdish people. Veterans For Peace members are encouraged to contact the Turkish Embassy (*Address: 2525 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, DC 20008, Phone: 202-612-6700*) to urge a military withdrawal and ceasefire.

Further, all members of VFP are encouraged to contact the Trump administration to demand that the U.S. withdraw any support to Turkey that can be used to attack the Kurdish people and that the U.S. allow more Kurdish refugees to enter the U.S.

The situation in this region may be complicated and there is much to understand, but if we have learned anything as Veterans we know that war is not the solution to the problems we face in the 21st century. This is what makes us Veterans For Peace.

Veterans Condemns Racist Coup in Bolivia

Date: 11/21/19

Military Veterans Demand an End to U.S. Intervention in Latin America

Veterans For Peace strongly condemns the violent U.S.-backed right-wing coup in Bolivia. Evo Morales was the first Indigenous president in Bolivia, which is 65% Indigenous. The openly racist Bolivarian oligarchy, descendants of European colonizers, could not stand to see a government that was led by Indigenous people and whose policies were lifting millions of people out of poverty.

The U.S. government tries to hide its involvement in Latin American coups, but we know that the U.S. and the CIA have a [long history](#) of interfering in Latin America , and USAID has "[invested more than \\$97 million in "decentralization" and "regional autonomy" projects and opposition political parties in Bolivia since 2002](#)". Several of the coup generals [were trained at](#) the infamous School of the Americas (aka School of Assassins) at Fort Benning, Georgia, where Veterans For Peace members have gathered every year - for 30 years – calling SHUT IT DOWN!

For over two centuries, the United States has been dominating and exploiting Latin America, which the powers-that-be considered to be "our backyard." This has included many direct military interventions as well as support for military dictatorships. The U.S. is now intervening all around the globe, but it has been hyperactive in Latin America over the last few years. The Trump Administration is openly attempting to overthrow the socialist government of Venezuela, and is busy undermining progressive forces in the region. The U.S. government was the first to recognize the illegal coup government in Bolivia. Donald Trump immediately called out the governments of Venezuela and Nicaragua, suggesting they could be next. The U.S. has doubled down on its economic blockade of Cuba. The powers-that-be will not tolerate any Latin American government that puts the needs of its people above the greed of foreign corporations.

Evo Morales incurred the wrath of North American corporations when he nationalized the gas industry in Bolivia and was moving to do the same with the mining of lithium, a vital element for electric cars and smart phones. U.S. and Canadian mining companies are now cheering, but the Indigenous majority of Bolivia are not. They are crying foul and they have filed the streets, where many have been killed and wounded by repressive police action.

Veterans For Peace stands in solidarity with the Indigenous majority in Bolivia who are resisting the racist, right-wing takeover of their democracy. We demand that the coup be stopped and democracy restored in Bolivia. As military veterans who have been used and abused in too many unjust wars, we demand an end to 200 years of U.S. intervention in Latin America.

Be sure to check out [About Face-Veterans Against War's statement](#) for action items!

Veterans Demand Accountability for Revelations in Afghanistan Papers

Date: 12/12/19

The release of the [Afghanistan Papers](#) this week has laid out in clear detail the failed policy and the catastrophic level of malfeasance that reach the highest levels of the U.S. government. Every level of government bears responsibility for misleading the American public and for creating the conditions in which an unchecked military operates without accountability.



The Afghanistan Papers are filled with over 300 people detailing the systematic failure of the military to take any responsibility and blaming the “corruption” of the Afghanistan government, all the while revealing the massive corruption and lies that the U.S. is perpetuating. While military commanders bemoaned Afghan leaders enriching themselves off American tax dollars, those self same commanders were climbing government ranks, earning promotions for promoting endless war.

Soldiers, contractors, and Veterans were routinely marginalized or persecuted in order to maintain the status quo in Afghanistan, up to and including the prosecution of Edward Snowden and Chelsea Manning for their

efforts. The integrity of those heroes were questioned while the lies were glorified as truth by a complicit media and government agencies.

Last year the U.S. war on Afghanistan killed [more civilians](#) than any previous year. Every single lie detailed in the #AfghanistanPapers and every single year this went on meant overwhelming consequences for families and individuals in Afghanistan, many who are already living in devastating poverty. The U.S. military has destroyed countless villages and continues to create an atmosphere of fear and hatred with covert drone operations that kill thousands of innocent people.

Furthermore, three days after these documents were released, proving three different administrations lied to the public and spent years covering up mismanagement, abuse and massive waste, Congress voted to pass the largest National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) in history, funneling \$733 billion to an already bloated military budget.

As veterans who have served in these wars and past wars, we are exasperated by leaders that lie to us and lack the moral courage to do anything about it even when there is proof. We demand accountability in real and tangible ways. We are tired of seeing headlines that only result in a Congressional member’s outraged tweet, statements on the campaign trail and slick tv spots, while nothing changes.

We demand real accountability:

- Immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops
- The military IMMEDIATELY release all three hundred names of those quoted in the Afghanistan Papers
- Congressional hearings that include perjury trials for all those officials who knowingly lied in official Congressional testimony, including closed door session of the Armed Forces Committee
- A special Congressional committee to investigate fraud, waste, abuse and mismanagement for the war in Afghanistan
- A Congressional tribunal allowing Afghanistan veterans to testify about their experience.
- Repeal of the AUMF (Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Terrorists) -- which includes any subsequent AUMF to have a sunset clause.
- Recognition of Moral Injury as a legitimate diagnosis
- Reparations to each Afghanistan family who have lost a family member

**SIGN-ON TO
THE STATEMENT**

[Veterans For Peace](#) and [About Face: Veterans Against the War](#) gathered veterans who served in the U.S. War in Afghanistan to write the above statement. If you are a **veteran of the U.S. war in Afghanistan** [sign up here](#) to join a call to strategize on next steps.
