



## 2016 Position Statements

---

### **Veterans For Peace Calls on U.S. Government to End Persecution of Julian Assange and Wikileaks**

*Date: 2/10/16*

Wikileaks founder Julian Assange has been **wrongly subjected to arbitrary detention for five and a half years**, according to a ruling by the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. The ruling is critical of Swedish prosecutors, who have refused to interview Assange in London about sex crimes allegations. It is also critical of the UK government, which is prepared to arrest Julian Assange as soon as he leaves the London Embassy of Ecuador, which has granted Assange political asylum. **The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention says that Assange should be able to leave the embassy without facing arrest or extradition.**

**Veterans For Peace agrees with the UN panel.** It is clear that Julian Assange is facing political persecution due to Wikileaks' release of U.S. military and diplomatic cables, much of it provided by Chelsea Manning, who is serving a 35-year prison sentence in the U.S.

*"Of course, we cannot dismiss Swedish allegations of rape and sexual assault,"* said Michael McPhearson, Executive Director of Veterans For Peace. *"However, the political agendas of several governments have sabotaged opportunities for Assange to be held accountable or clear his name."*

Swedish prosecutors have refused to question Assange in London and have insisted on extradition to Sweden, where Assange has not been charged with any crimes. The UK government, a close ally of the U.S. in its wars in the Middle East, have not disguised their hostility toward Assange.

A Grand Jury empaneled in Virginia has issued a secret indictment of Julian Assange, according to leaked email from Stratfor, a private intelligence group.

*"The elephant in the room is the United States government, which made Assange public enemy number one for his courageous whistleblower journalism,"* said Michael McPhearson. Whatever the truth regarding the Swedish allegations against Assange, he has legitimate concerns that an extradition to Sweden could lead to an extradition to the U.S., where he would face the same fate as Chelsea Manning, maybe even worse.

*"So it is the United States government that is holding up justice in this case,"* said McPhearson. *"If they would come out and publicly state that they have no intention to prosecute or otherwise persecute Julian Assange or Wikileaks, then Julian Assange would probably have no problem traveling to Sweden to answer charges there."*

Anthony Romero, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union, said the UN panel's findings should force the US government to end its investigations into Assange over the Wikileaks disclosures: "In light of this decision, it's clear that any criminal charges against Mr. Assange in connection with WikiLeaks' publishing operations would be unprecedented and unconstitutional.

"Indeed, even the prolonged criminal investigation of WikiLeaks itself has had a profound chilling effect. The justice department should end that investigation and make clear that no publisher will ever be prosecuted for the act of journalism."

Veterans For Peace agrees with the American Civil Liberties Union. **We call on the U.S. government to end its investigation and persecution of Julian Assange.**

---

## **Veterans For Peace Statement on Torture Rhetoric In 2016 Presidential Campaign**

*Date: 2/23/16*

Veterans For Peace strongly condemns and denounces the pro-torture rhetoric being used in the 2016 presidential campaign. Recent statements by several presidential candidates, most notably Donald Trump, but also Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio and others, have advocated the use of waterboarding and other torture techniques, euphemistically-dubbed “enhanced interrogation,” or have failed to rule out torture in the interrogation of terror suspects. In doing so, these candidates have effectively admitted they would violate U.S. and international law should they win the presidency.

Since the revelations of the CIA torture program came to light, numerous legal, military, medical and other experts have testified that torture does not work – that it is more likely to produce false testimony than valuable information and causes severe trauma to those who administer it. John Kiriakou, CIA anti-torture whistleblower, recently wrote that “torture may have made some of us feel better in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. It may have made us feel that we were avenging our fallen compatriots who were killed that day. But there was no information gathered through torture that saved American lives.”

The Geneva Conventions of 1949 and additional protocols of 1977 explicitly prohibit torture and other cruel or inhuman treatment. The United Nations Convention Against Torture, ratified by the U.S. Senate in 1990, states that “torture means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person.” The purposes for which the use of torture is explicitly barred include obtaining information or confession, punishment, or for intimidation or coercion. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has repeatedly declared that waterboarding is a form of torture.

President Obama issued an executive order in 2009 banning the CIA’s torture techniques and signed into law a defense authorization bill in 2015 that included a provision strengthening the U.S. ban on torture. While these actions were praiseworthy (though redundant), Veterans For Peace maintains that the lack of torture accountability and prosecution was misguided and set a dangerous precedent, a precedent which may have opened the door for the torture rhetoric being heard today.

Veterans For Peace believes all torture, including waterboarding, is a human rights violation and constitutes a war crime. We will not defeat terrorism by adopting terrorist tactics. We will not achieve peace by practicing revenge. We will not preserve our precious democracy by abandoning our commitment to human rights. It is appalling that the efficacy of torture is now part of the American conversation. It dehumanizes us when we resort to such baseness. This is not what millions of U.S. military veterans fought for. We should reject such simplistic and vengeful suggestions on the campaign trail. Instead of doubling down on a shameful era, Americans should be turning the page to a new era of peace at home and peace abroad. The tortured logic of waterboarding is not the way to get there.

Veterans For Peace also contends that the torture rhetoric is connected to Islamophobia. Because virtually all of the waterboarding (and other torture methods) was committed against

Muslims, it is our position that the call for continued use of torture is tied to anti-Muslim hate and bigotry. By continuing to demonize and vilify Muslims, it makes it much easier to wage war against them, and to propose, in contravention of international law and our own Constitution, the use of torture. If waterboarding were to be suggested for application against, say, people from the Christian or Jewish faiths, Veterans For Peace believes there would be much more widespread outrage and condemnation. This is racism and Islamophobia at the core.

---

## **Veterans Express Condolences to the Victims of Terrorism And Call for a New Approach to Confront It**

*Date: 4/1/16*

Veterans For Peace is appalled by the ongoing acts of political violence in Brussels, Belgium, in Istanbul and Ankara, Turkey, in Iraq, in dozens of other places across the globe and most recently in Lahore, Pakistan.

As a community of veterans, military families and friends, many of us know the pain of losing a loved one to violence. We offer our deeply felt condolences to the families and communities affected. We mourn with you and you are in our thoughts as we carry on the effort of working for peace. We remind the people of the world to not only mourn for those killed and injured in Europe and the United States, but to remember that lives lost and bodies maimed by terrorism anywhere is a loss for all of us.

The world must confront this scourge of violence just as we must confront the plague of war. Terrorism is a tactic of war, and for the civilians and non-combatants on the battlefield caught in the middle, war itself is terrorism.

In the face of the latest round of attacks, world governments scramble to respond and attempt to reassure us that they can keep us safe. Yet they continue to call for more drone and air strikes, more weapons sent to the conflicts and more U.S. troops on the ground - supposedly in support of others doing the fighting. These calls are absurd because this is the very brew that has accelerated the pace of ever escalating violence.

From the time President Bush proclaimed, "...and the people who knocked these buildings down will here all of us soon," in response the events of September 11, retaliation and revenge have become the accepted pattern of behavior and prism through which our government decides what to do next. Nearly fifteen years later, the results are at least four countries in ruins -- Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria -- others with teetering governments, millions of displaced people, an unknown number of people injured or killed by war, and the politics of hate marching across the Middle East, Europe and the United States.

It should be clear after more than a decade of war that we cannot bomb our way to peace. In the past, Veterans For Peace and others have proposed alternative ways to confront ISIL. We find some hope in the Obama administration's diplomatic efforts to end the conflict in Syria. This is one of the key elements to any plan to end the violence in the region that feeds the spreading chaos. But the U.S. must also;

- Stop drone and air strikes in the region because the Sunni leaders and militia, who President Obama acknowledges must be persuaded to break with ISIL, see them as the U.S. as acting as the air force for the Kurds and Shia against Sunnis.
- Stop the slippery slope of sending troops to Iraq. The U.S. should withdraw from Afghanistan and Iraq immediately, stop sending weapons that fuel the conflict by killing more civilians, and stop ignoring human rights violations committed by "allies."
- Make diplomacy the number one priority. Since it is clear there is no military solution, seriously engage with everyone in the region, including Iran, who is needed to force the Iraqi government to be more inclusive with Sunni leaders.

- Massively increase humanitarian efforts in the region through the UN and any other means. Real and effective efforts to relieve suffering will go a long way in convincing people to break with ISIL.

Veterans For Peace calls on the people of the United States to recognize that more war is not the answer, just as hate and discrimination is not the answer here at home. Targeting and alienating Muslims here in the U.S. as responsible for terrorism and bombing and killing of innocent people abroad is not only morally wrong and hurtful to innocent people, it confirms ISIL's narrative that the West, led by the U.S., is conducting a war on Islam and that the lives of Muslims mean little to us. We, the people of all faiths, beliefs and backgrounds, must unite against terrorism here at home and we must act to restrain our government's wars that wreak havoc and terror on people abroad. The war on terror is itself terrorism. Invasions, bombing and killing have not worked. They are only bringing us more of the same. It is clearly time for a new way.

---

## **Veteran For Peace Statement: Stop U.S. Intervention in Syria**

*Date: 4/29/16*

**The war in Syria appears to be heating back up.** A surprisingly widespread “cessation of hostilities” had reduced violence considerably for several weeks. But U.N. sponsored peace talks got nowhere fast, with rebel factions insisting that the Assad government must go or they will keep on fighting. Now all sides in the conflict appear to be preparing for a resumption of hostilities – even an escalation – in which tens of thousands more Syrians will die or become homeless refugees.

**Veterans For Peace is especially concerned about recent actions of the U.S. government.** President Obama announced this week that he is quintupling the number of U.S. troops on the ground in Syria (from 50 to 250). The White House, the Pentagon, the State Department and the CIA are said be discussing arming their “moderate rebel” friends in Syria with even more lethal weaponry, in particular “MANPAD” portable anti-aircraft missiles.

The relative lull in the fighting has allowed many Syrians to take a deep breath of fresh air and do their daily errands without worrying that their families will be bombed. The parties to the conflict, including the United States, should have seized on this hopeful moment to initiate courageous diplomatic moves toward a peaceful solution. Instead, they appear to be doubling down on Dante’s Inferno.

The U.S. invasion of Iraq in March 2003, and its subsequent eight-year occupation, created the conditions for the current wars in Syria and Iraq, including the emergence of ISIL. The U.S./NATO intervention in Libya destroyed that nation, leading to yet more violence and war. Yet “regime change” is still at the top of the menu for the neocolonial powers that be.

Similarly, the increase of U.S. troops in Iraq, now estimated to be over 5,000, is not making Iraq or the world any safer. Nor are the 10,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan, rumored to be actually increasing rather than drawing down, as promised.

**Veterans For Peace calls on the U.S. government to come to its senses and to represent the interests of the U.S. people, 99% of whom have no interest in this state of “permanent war.”** We call on the U.S. government to:

1. Withdraw all U.S. troops from Syria, from Iraq and from Afghanistan;
2. Stop feeding arms and ammunition to the war in Syria, and certainly do not arm rebels with sophisticated anti-aircraft missiles;
3. Maintain and extend the current “cessation of hostilities” in Syria into a broad ceasefire;
4. Seriously engage in bold diplomacy for a real and lasting peace in Syria;
5. Increase support for Syrian refugees, including accepting many more into the United States; and
6. Provide adequate medical care to all returning veterans, who have also been victimized by repeated deployments to wars that were unnecessary, illegal and immoral.

**The war in Syria is at a crossroads.** The intractable, many-sided war threatens to spill over Syria's borders and engulf the entire Middle East in more death, destruction, chaos and despair. Now is the time to seize the opportunity for peace, not to escalate toward a war without end.

---

## **Veterans For Peace Calls for Nuclear Disarmament in Our Lifetime**

*Date: 5/30/16*

### **Obama at Hiroshima: “We must change our mindset about war itself.”**

President Obama’s visit to Hiroshima has been the subject of much commentary and debate. Peace activists, scientists and even the New York Times called on Obama to use the occasion to announce meaningful steps toward worldwide nuclear disarmament, as he famously promised before receiving his premature Nobel Peace Prize.

At Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, Barack Obama delivered the kind of eloquent speech he is known for – some say his most eloquent yet. He called for an end to nuclear weapons. He said that the nuclear powers “...must have the courage to escape the logic of fear, and pursue a world without them.” Incisively, Obama added “We must change our mindset about war itself.”

President Obama announced no new steps, however, to achieve nuclear disarmament. Disappointingly, he stated, “We may not realize this goal in my lifetime.” Certainly not if Obama hands the next administration his initiative to “modernize” the entire U.S. nuclear arsenal. That is a 30-year program estimated to cost One Trillion Dollars, or \$1,000,000,000,000. Smaller, more precise and “usable” nukes would be in the mix. There are other bad signs. Standing next to Obama at Hiroshima was Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe who is shredding [Article 9 of the Japanese constitution](#), the “pacifist” clause that bars Japan from sending troops abroad or engaging in war. The alarmingly militaristic Abe has even hinted that Japan itself should become a nuclear power.

The Obama administration is encouraging Japan to have a more aggressive military posture, as part of a U.S. backed regional response to China’s assertion of primacy in the South China Sea. That is also the context for Obama’s announcement that he is lifting the U.S. embargo of weapons sales to Vietnam. The U.S. “normalizes” relations by selling weapons of war.

The so-called Asia Pivot, which would see 60% of U.S. military forces stationed in the Pacific, is only one current assertion of U.S. global hegemony. The U.S. is involved in multiple wars in the Middle East, it continues its longest war in Afghanistan, and it is pushing NATO, including Germany, to station significant military forces on Russia’s borders. The U.S. nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which killed 200,000 civilians, were inexcusable and morally reprehensible, especially since, according to many U.S. military leaders, they were [absolutely unnecessary](#), as the Japanese were already defeated and were looking for a way to surrender.

### **Veterans For Peace Apologizes to Japanese People and the World**

U.S. presidents may never apologize for what our country did at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But we do. Veterans For Peace expresses our deepest condolences to all those who were killed and maimed, and to their families. We apologize to the [Hibakusha, the survivors](#) of the nuclear bombings, and we thank them for their courageous, continuing witness.

We apologize to all the Japanese people and to all the people of the world. This hugely atrocious crime against humanity should never have happened. As military veterans who have come to see the tragic futility of war, we promise that we will continue working for peace and disarmament. We want to see nuclear disarmament in our lifetime.

It is a miracle that that there have been no nuclear wars since the U.S. bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We now know that the world has been close to nuclear annihilation on several occasions. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty calls on the nuclear powers (nine nations and growing), to negotiate in good faith to reduce and eventually eliminate all nuclear weapons. Nothing of the sort is taking place.

The aggressive U.S. military posture, including its development of new nuclear weapons, has prompted China and Russia to respond in kind. China will soon be launching nuclear-armed submarines to cruise the Pacific Ocean. Russia, threatened by the placement of “defensive” U.S. missile systems near its borders, is upgrading its nuclear capacities, and is touting new submarine-fired nuclear-armed cruise missiles. U.S. and Russian missiles remain on a hair-trigger alert. The U.S. reserves the right to a first strike.

### **Is Nuclear War Inevitable?**

India and Pakistan continue to test nuclear weapons and to fight over the territory of Kashmir, constantly risking the possibility of a greater war in which nuclear weapons might be used. North Korea, threatened by the presence of nuclear weapons on U.S. Navy ships, and by the refusal of the U.S. to negotiate an end to the Korean War, brandishes its own nuclear weapons.

Israel has as many as 200 nuclear weapons with which they intend to maintain their dominance in the Middle East.

The possession of nuclear weapons earned the former colonial powers Britain and France their seats at the UN Security Council.

Iran does not have nuclear weapons, was not even close to acquiring them, and they claim they do not want them. But one could certainly understand if they and other countries who feel threatened by nuclear powers might want to acquire the ultimate deterrent. If Saddam Hussein had actually had nuclear weapons, the U.S. would not have invaded Iraq.

There is a very real possibility that nuclear weapons could fall into the hands of terrorist organizations, or just be inherited by governments that are more militarist than the last. In short, the danger of nuclear war, or even multiple nuclear wars, has never been greater. Given the current trajectory, nuclear war actually appears inevitable.

Nuclear disarmament will likely occur only when the powers that be, beginning with the United States, are pressured by millions of peace-loving people into abandoning militarism and adopting a peaceful, cooperative foreign policy. President Obama is right when he says that “we must rethink war itself.”

Veterans For Peace is committed to opposing U.S. wars, both overt and covert. Our Mission Statement also calls on us to expose the true costs of war, to heal the wounds of war, and to push for the elimination of all nuclear weapons. We want to abolish war once and for all.

### **The Golden Rule Sails for a Nuclear-Free World**

Last year Veterans For Peace (VFP) dramatically stepped up our efforts to educate people about the dangers of nuclear weapons when we relaunched the [historic antinuclear sailboat, the Golden Rule](#). The 34-foot peace boat was the star of the VFP Convention in San Diego last August, and stopped in ports along the California coast for unique public events. Now the Golden Rule is beginning a 4-1/2 month voyage (June – October) throughout the waterways of Oregon, Washington and British Columbia. The Golden Rule will be sailing for a nuclear-free world and a peaceful, sustainable future.

We will make common cause with many people in the Pacific Northwest who are concerned about the devastation of climate change, and are organizing against dangerous coal, oil and natural gas infrastructure in their port towns. We will remind them that the risk of nuclear war is also a threat to the very existence of human civilization.

Veterans For Peace will encourage climate justice activists to work also for peace and nuclear disarmament. The peace movement, in turn, will grow as it embraces the movement for climate justice. We will build a profound international movement and work hopefully together for a peaceful, sustainable future for all.

---

## **Veterans For Peace Honors “The Greatest” Muhammad Ali**

*Date: 6/10/16*

Veterans For Peace recognizes the extraordinary life and courage of Muhammad Ali. Ali was, without question, the greatest heavyweight boxer in history because of his prowess in the ring and because he was a champion who did not shrink from the responsibilities of his times. Winning the world heavyweight boxing championship on February 15, 1964 when the U.S. faced extremely tumultuous times, he could have easily ridden a wave of celebrity and adulation. Instead, Ali challenged the status quo of the nation. He made the U.S. question the war it conducted in Vietnam, the role of racism in the war, and the right of a person to follow their conscience and not the dictates of government. By saying no to war, speaking out against racism and forgoing the riches and fame he would have received by going along to get along, Ali was a living example in action of resisting Martin Luther King's triple evils of racism, war and materialism.

Ali was a Vietnam-Era conscientious objector, consummate peace activist, civil rights advocate and lover of all humanity.

The physical courage he had to stand in the ring, taking painful punishment to his body, pales in comparison to his moral courage in standing up for his principles. In 1966, when Ali was informed that he was reclassified as 1-A, which meant he was eligible for the draft and induction into the U.S. Army, he publicly declared that he would refuse to serve and considered himself a conscientious objector.

Why did he take this stance? Perhaps his own words on the subject of peace and conscience say it best, "My conscience won't let me go shoot my brother, or some darker people, or some poor hungry people in the mud for big powerful America. And shoot them for what? They never called me nigger, they never lynched me, they didn't put no dogs on me, they didn't rob me of my nationality, rape and kill my mother and father... Shoot them for what? ...How can I shoot them poor people? Just take me to jail."

On April 28, 1967, when he appeared at his scheduled induction into the Armed Forces in Houston, as expected when his name was called he refused to step forward. Facing a \$10,000 fine and 5 years in prison, Ali found strength in his newly adopted religion of Islam, saying "War is against the teachings of the Holy Qur'an. I'm not trying to dodge the draft. We are not supposed to take part in no wars unless declared by Allah or The Messenger. We don't take part in Christian wars or wars of any unbelievers."

He was stripped of his heavyweight title, restricted from fighting in the U.S. and denied a visa to fight abroad while his case was pending. He was not able to work as a fighter from March 1967 to October 1970, at the age which many consider prime physical time in a fighter's career. During this period, he toured speaking out against the Vietnam War and advocating African American pride and racial justice. Of course, this period of time was very hard on Ali financially, but he stood his ground on principle.

June 28, 1971, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld Ali's status as a conscientious objector. By this time, much of the nation had caught up with Ali realizing the war in Vietnam was at best questionable. He had regained license to enter the ring and was on the road to regaining his

title as world champion which he did. In 1974, he defeated then champion George Foreman in the famous fight known by many as the Rumble in the Jungle. Some call it the greatest sporting event of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was also a kind of moral victory for Ali and all who supported him and the stance he took against the Vietnam War.

Losing his title to Leon Spinks in 1978, Ali fought a rematch against Spinks and won it back for an unprecedented third time as heavyweight champion. Ali retired from boxing in 1980. He continued to be an advocate for peace and a lover of humanity. He is perhaps the most famous person of our time. His moral courage was finally recognized by the same government who tried to force him into war and punish him with imprisonment. On November 9, 2005, then President George W Bush awarded Ali with the nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Muhammad Ali never stopped standing up for what is right. As recently as December 2015, though he did not mention Donald Trump by name, he released a statement titled "Presidential Candidates Proposing to Ban Muslim Immigration to the United States" The statement spoke out against the violent acts of "so called Islamic Jihadists", and, "those who use Islam to advance their own personal agenda."

Today the world needs people to follow the example of The Greatest, Muhammad Ali. We already miss him. Presente!

**Here's the champ's full statement from last December:**

**Presidential Candidates Proposing to Ban Muslim Immigration to the United States**

I am a Muslim and there is nothing Islamic about killing innocent people in Paris, San Bernardino, or anywhere else in the world. True Muslims know that the ruthless violence of so-called Islamic Jihadists goes against the very tenets of our religion.

We as Muslims have to stand up to those who use Islam to advance their own personal agenda. They have alienated many from learning about Islam. True Muslims know or should know that it goes against our religion to try and force Islam on anybody.

Speaking as someone who has never been accused of political correctness, I believe that our political leaders should use their position to bring understanding about the religion of Islam and clarify that these misguided murderers have perverted people's views on what Islam really is.

---

# **Statement of Veterans for Peace, Ryukyu/Okinawa (VFP ROC) and VFP Ryukyu Working Group on the May, 2016 crime committed against an Okinawan woman in Uruma City**

*Date: 6/11/2016*

平和を求める元軍人の会 琉球・沖縄 国際チャプター (VFP-ROC) および米

VFP リュウキュウ・ワーキング・グループ (VFP-RWG) による2016年5月う

るま市で発生した沖縄県民女性に対する犯罪に関する声明

Condolences

弔辞

We wish to express our grief, horror, and outrage at the rape and murder of Ms. Shimabukuro Rina, a 20- year old office worker in Uruma City, Okinawa. Among the membership of VFP ROC are US military veterans who, like the suspect in this case, live in Okinawa. We feel shamed that a person who is in some sense “one of us” could have committed a crime of this nature. We extend our condolences to the victim’s parents, her relatives, her friends, and the members of the community in which she lived. We also send our condolences to the suspect’s wife, mother, and child, who will face a hard future regardless of the verdict of the court.

沖縄県うるま市で発生した、島袋里奈さんという二十歳の会社員の強姦殺人事件に対し、深い悲しみと憎悪、憤りを表明します。VFP-ROCには、本事件の容疑者と同じく沖縄に住む元米軍人の会員がいます。ある意味では「我々の一人」とも言える人物が、この種の犯罪を犯したことを恥ずかしく思います。被害者のご両親をはじめとするご遺族、ご友人、また被害者居住地域の方々に対して心からのお悔やみを申し上げます。また判決に関わらず、今後辛苦に直面する容疑者の家族の皆様のことを思うと胸が痛みます

## **On the statements by the US President and others**

米国大統領等の発言について

Okinawa has been occupied by the US military since before President Barak Obama was born. Perhaps he imagined that his condolences and promises sounded fresh and eloquent, but they did not. The words he, and all the other US government apologizers, used have

been repeated in Okinawa again and again and then again, for over 70 years. All these words are dead, killed by overuse. Every time a US official has said, “We will see to it that it won’t happen again,” it has happened again. So that’s what those words have come to mean now, in Okinawa. When a US official says, “We will see to it that it won’t happen again”, people here understand that to mean,

1. We are not going to leave,
2. We will not do anything very different from what we did before, and therefore
3. It will happen again. It’s the same this time.

Obama said, “. . . we are . . . working with the Japanese government to . . . prevent these kinds of crimes from happening again”, and people thought, “Ah, it will happen again. The American President himself has said so.”

沖縄は、バラク・オバマ大統領が生まれる前から米軍に占拠されてきました。オバマ大統領は、この度表明した自身の哀悼の意と約束が新鮮で感銘を与えるものと考えたかもしれませんが、そうではありません。オバマ大統領やその他米政府関係者が謝罪に用いた言葉は、これまで70年間にわたり沖縄で幾度となく繰り返され、この度またも繰り返されたものだからです。これらのセリフは使い古されてもはや意味を持たず、死んだ言葉となっています。米当局が「このような犯罪の再発防止に努める」と言う度に、犯罪が繰り返されてきました。そのため今や沖縄では、このような言葉は逆に犯罪の再発を意味するようになったのです。米当局が「米国はこのような犯罪の再発防止に努める」と発言するとき、沖縄の人々は、1) 米軍が沖縄から撤退するつもりはない、2) これまでの対策から特に何も変わらない、そのため3) 犯罪は再発するとの意味だと捉えます。今回も同じです。オバマ大統領は「米国は...日本政府と協力して...このような犯罪の再発防止に努める」と述べ、それを聞いて沖縄県民は「ああ、また起きるに決まっている。アメリカの大統領自身がそう言っているじゃないか」と思うのです。

Similarly, Prime Minister Abe’s posturing and lecturing to Obama is understood as routine political performance, and entirely unpersuasive. Everyone knows that it is the political impact of the crime that troubles him the most.

同じように、安倍首相の見せかけの態度やオバマ大統領への抗議もおさまりの政治的パフォーマンスと解され、全く説得力がありません。安倍首相が最も気にしているのは、今回の犯罪が及ぼす政治的影響であることは周知の通りです。

## On “training and discipline”

「教育と綱紀粛正」について

The media tell us that Japan’s Defense Secretary Nakatani Gen asked the US military commanding officer in Okinawa, Lt. Gen. Lawrence Nicholson to “increase soldier training and discipline.” This, too, is something that is said after each incident. But “soldier training and discipline” faces a dilemma. The troops need to be trained to be both good neighbors and effective killers. To achieve this, training is carried out at two levels. The “good neighbor” training manuals contain lots of good advice. But if that were all there was to military training, the troops would not be able to fight wars.

To fight in real wars, they need the informal training not written down anywhere, but passed on by word of mouth on the drill fields and in the barracks and the barrooms – training in the cynicism that makes it possible to destroy a human life. And think: the suspect in this case had been an E-5 sergeant in the US Marines. In the Marines, E-5 sergeants are the very ones who enforce discipline and carry out this informal training. If there is any strengthening of “soldier training and discipline, who more than the E-5s will carry that out? If the present suspect turns out to be the guilty one, can we not conclude that it was the very culture of “Marine Corps training and discipline” that produced this crime?

中谷元・防衛相がローレンス・ニコルソン在沖縄米四軍調整官に「軍人教育と綱紀粛正の強化」を要請したことが報じられました。この言葉もまた、事件が起きる度に使われてきたものです。しかし「軍人教育と綱紀粛正」はジレンマを抱えています。軍隊は良き隣人となると同時に、効果的な殺人者となるよう教育を受ける必要があるからです。この両方の目標を達成するために、二つの水準で教育が行われています。「良き隣人」訓練マニュアルには、優れたアドバイスが多く掲載されています。しかし軍人教育がそれだけでは、軍隊は戦場で戦うことができません。実際の戦争で戦うためには、文

書化されていない非公式の教育が口頭で行われる必要があります。演習場や兵舎、酒場で、人命を破壊できる人間を育てるシニシズム（無規範・冷笑主義）教育が行われています。考えてみてください。今回の事件の容疑者は米海兵隊の三等軍曹（E-5）でした。海兵隊で綱紀を正し、非公式の教育を実施する役目を担っているのは、この三等軍曹です。何らかの「軍人教育と綱紀粛正」の強化が行われる場合、三等軍曹の他に誰が実施するのでしょうか。もし現在の容疑者が有罪であるならば、まさにこの「海兵隊教育と綱紀粛正」の文化こそが、今回の犯罪を生み出したと結論付けられないでしょうか。

## On Terror

### テロについて

Terror is a tactic by which you can multiply the fear effect of the violence you do by choosing your victims at random: not, for example, only uniformed enemy troops, but “anybody”. That way everybody on the enemy side feels the fear: “I could be next.”

テロとは、被害者を無作為に選択することで、暴力的行為の脅威を増幅するため用いられる手段です。軍服の敵兵等に限らず、「誰でも」被害者になり得るのです。この手を用いると、「次は自分かもしれない」と敵側の全員に不安を与えることができます。

The newspapers tell us that the assailant in this case, having supplied himself with a rod, a knife and a suitcase, drove around for two hours searching for his victim. How many scores of women did he look over, and reject? “Too old.” “Too young.” “Too many people nearby.” “Jogging – she would run away.” “Not my taste.” And then, “There she is!”

新聞によると、今回の事件の加害者は棒とナイフ、スーツケースを用意し、2時間車を運転しながら乱暴する相手を物色していました。何名の女性を品定めし、やり過ごしたのでしょうか。「年を取っている」、「若すぎる」、「周りに人が多すぎる」、「ジョギングしているから、走って逃げられるかもしれない」、「好みじゃない」。そして、「見つけた、あの女だ！」と。

Okinawan women are saying they are afraid to go out at night. That's not an ideological position or an exaggeration, that's fear felt for good reason: "I could be next." Who can say there is not another car roaming around right now, carrying a rod, a knife, a suitcase, and a predator. No one can. This is what is called terror.

沖縄の女性達は夜に外出するのが怖いと話しています。これは思想上の立ち場や誇張などではなく、もっともな理由から来る不安です。「次は私かもしれない。」棒、ナイフ、スーツケース、そして強姦魔を乗せた車が、今現在徘徊していないと誰が言えるでしょうか。誰も保証できません。これがてろと呼ばれるものなのです。

Of course, we understand the US is not carrying out an intentional terror campaign in Okinawa. But looked at from this side, the situation is one of terror. If the US and Japan want to carry out a campaign against terror, they need to start here.

もちろん、米国が沖縄で意図的なテロ運動（terror campaign）を展開しているわけではないことは承知しています。しかしこの側面から沖縄の「状況」を見ると、まさにテロ）のそれなのです。日米両国が反テロ運動に取り組むのであれば、ここ沖縄から始めなければなりません

## **Good Neighbors**

良き隣人

Good neighbors

are first of all, "neighbors".

They live somewhere in the neighborhood.

They don't camp in your living room without being invited

and stay there year after year.

If you give a party, and invite them,

they might come for a visit.

But when the party's over,

Good neighbors go home.

And in Okinawa,

the party is over.

良き隣人とは、

まず「隣人」である。

近所のどこかに住んでいるのであって、

招待されない限り、あなたの居間で寝泊まりすることはない。

ましては何年も居座ることはない。

ホームパーティーに招待されれば、

立ち寄ることもあるかもしれない。

しかしお開きになれば、

良き隣人は自宅に戻る。

そして沖縄では、

パーティーはとっくに終わっているのだ。

---

## **Veterans For Peace Express Condolences to the Friends and Families Impacted by the Tragedies at the Pulse Nightclub**

*Date: 6/14/16*

Text: We at Veterans For Peace express our deep condolences to the families who have become victims of the horrific tragedy that took place Sunday night in Orlando, Florida. We join with peace-loving people everywhere in grieving this senseless loss of life. Despite many recent legal recognitions of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people's rights and positive changes in social attitude in the U.S., this tragedy is a reminder of the violence that the LGBTQ community continues to experience. It is also not lost on us that this horrific tragedy occurred during LGBTQ Pride month, which this year coincides with the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, a time of peace and intense self-reflection. It pains us to see that these periods of joy, celebration, and peace have been marred so violently with such horror.

Tragedies like this often lead people to look for someone or something to blame. Veterans For Peace rejects attempts to perpetuate hatred against the LGBTQ and Muslim communities. We ask all to resist this temptation. We call on all people to challenge the forces of division and hatred, and to stand against all forms of hate; and at this time particularly against homophobia, Islamophobia and anti-Muslim bigotry. Let us instead recommit ourselves to working toward a world without hatred and prejudice.

Mass shootings have become all too common. After each incident we search for answers in many places. As a nation, in order to find answers that will help create the change we seek, we must accept that this horrific event is one link in a now long chain of tragedies of wars, hate, violence and fear. We must work to end violence both at home and abroad.

Transportation and communication have made our global home smaller. Emotions, ideas and information travel at the speed of data into our homes and over our phones. We can no longer ignore the fact that what happens in communities thousands of miles apart affects billions of people. Wars abroad take a toll on families and communities here in the U.S. Therefore, we must work for peace at home and abroad. We cannot have one without the other. They are inextricably linked. We must begin to question all who attempt to divide us. We must reject those who teach that somehow the "Other" is stealing our jobs or conspiring against us, because of our religion, our sex, the color of our skin or our freedoms. We must reject that violence is the solution.

If you are ready to make a difference, it is time to get off the violence merry-go-round. Join peace, labor and justice groups or any group that is working for peace, justice, equal rights and the global environment for a sustainable future. We must put forth a greater effort to transform our society. Let us work for a world where everyone is valued, people's basic needs are met and human dignity is recognized.

---

## **Veterans For Peace Statement on Recent Violence at Home and Abroad**

*Date: 7/16/16*

We at Veterans For Peace call on all to turn away from violence and seek peaceful means for a just change. We know war and violence are not the answer. Our members have dealt in violence and killing as a profession, and we know the moral injury and suffering it brings. We know that violence leads to more violence, which can easily spiral out of control into a cycle of death. Only those directing the violence benefit from it. Those of us who do the killing and dying—combatants or innocent victims caught in the crossfire, gain little if anything and are forever scarred. Whether it is the streets of Orlando, St. Paul, Dallas and Nice or Baghdad, Aleppo and Kandahar. We call on the world to work for global peace based on justice in each and every community as the means to end this cycle of death.

July has seen immense death and destruction from violence by war, terrorism and police repression. And while the news media in the U.S. provide hours and hours of coverage of the tragedies in our country and Europe, by far the greatest numbers of people facing this violence and dying from terrorism are in places like Baghdad, Iraq; Aden, Yemen; and Dhaka, Bangladesh. More than 80 incidents are outlined on a Wikipedia page titled [List of terrorist incidents in July 2016](#). This international violence, along with the recent ongoing police violence here in the United States and subsequent killing of police officers in Dallas and other communities, has made July 2016 a heartbreaking time. In the dark shadow of the horrible mass shooting in Orlando, the ongoing violence in our communities nationwide, such as shootings of civilians by police, necessitates that we begin to examine what is happening in our global community. We must look at these incidents not as isolated and separate from each other, but as one intertwined challenge. We must begin to understand that we have created a global culture of violence. That leaders around the world have failed the common person. That we the people of the global community must come together and confront our differences. If we continue to follow those who have brought us to this point, then there will only be more violence and deaths.

Martin Luther King Jr. wrote, "We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools." Let us not be fooled by those who are leading us down a path of division and hate. Veterans For Peace calls on everyone to put forth at least as much effort and resources toward understanding each other as we have toward hurting and killing each other. We believe peace is possible and working together we will bring about the world we seek, i.e., peace at home, peace abroad.

Veterans For Peace would like to express deep sadness at the violence and loss of life that has spread like a plague around the globe. We express our heartfelt sympathies to all who have lost loved ones. We call for an end to violence at home and around the world.

Veterans For Peace condemns Newt Gingrich's call for a test of every U.S. Muslim and deportation of those who do not pass this test. It is a prime example of cultivating division and demonizing whole communities. Gingrich and others who call for similar responses to acts of violence are leading the world down the same ruinous path of dehumanization, violence and war that we have followed since the U.S. invaded Afghanistan and Iraq.

---

# **Statement Opposing U.S. THAAD 'Missile Defense' System Deployment in South Korea**

*Date: 7/25/16*

*Submitted by VFP members Bruce Gagnon (Maine), Will Griffin (San Diego), and Ken Jones (Asheville) who are going to South Korea next week and would like to release this to media while there.*

*Veterans for Peace, a global organization of military veterans and allies, opposes the recent decision of the U.S. and South Korean governments to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile defense system in South Korea. We stand in solidarity with the people of Seongju in North Gyeongsang Province in their courageous fight to oppose the deployment of the THAAD system in their hometown.*

The U.S. and South Korean governments justify their decision by pointing to the so-called North Korean missile threat. But THAAD is not for the defense of South Korea. Its aim is to neutralize Chinese missile capability and protect U.S. military assets in the region. The U.S. Congressional Research Service stated, as early as in 2013, that THAAD, if deployed in South Korea, would be ineffective in intercepting North Korean incoming missiles flying on a low trajectory. And as Theodore Postol (MIT), former advisor to the U.S. Chief of Naval Operations has noted, THAAD is designed to track Chinese intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM).

Yet it is the people of South Korea, who will pay the highest price for a missile defense system that is ultimately useless in their defense. Seongju residents are justified in their concern about the potential impact of the THAAD system's AN/TPY-2 radar on their health and environment. In Kyoto Japan, which houses the U.S. X-band radar, local residents complain of unendurable headaches and insomnia due to exposure to the continuous low-frequency noise caused by the radar's engines running 24 hours a day. Long-term exposure to high frequency electromagnetic waves emitted by the THAAD radar and noise caused by its engines may cause similar health issues in Seongju, where 20,000 residents, mostly melon farmers, live within 2 kilometers of the designated site. The decision to deploy THAAD in South Korea was undemocratic with no input from South Korean citizens, who will inevitably be burdened with the biggest share of the bill for operating the costly weapon system, estimated at \$1.5 billion.

U.S. deployment of missile defense systems around the world fuels a dangerous global arms race. Since walking away from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty in 2002, the United States has been in full speed mode to deploy missile defense systems encircling China and Russia. Despite China and Russia's repeated warnings that it would destroy any hope for nuclear disarmament, the United States continues to build and deploy missile defense systems to neutralize China and Russia's deterrence capabilities and strengthen its own first-strike capability.

THAAD deployment in Korea is also a key component of the U.S. military's new operation plan and first-strike strategy vis a vis North Korea. What the U.S. media does not show - hence few U.S. citizens know - is that the U.S. military, which has had its troops in South Korea for the past 65 years, regularly conducts massive war games that simulate the use of

strategic nuclear weapons and the collapse of the North Korean regime. The new 'Operation Plan 5015' calls for preventive strikes on North Korea's core military facilities to take out its nuclear capability. Clearly, U.S. deployment of the THAAD system in South Korea is a provocative move against North Korea, China and Russia that will redraw Cold War lines and escalate tensions in a region that is already heavily militarized with weapons of mass destruction.

The people of the United States are tired of paying for endless U.S. wars that dehumanize entire nations and create a culture of violence around the world, as well as costly weapon systems that wreak senseless destruction and drain precious resources away from critical human needs. The burden of producing and operating the THAAD system will ultimately be borne by U.S. and South Korean taxpayers. At a time when people's lives are increasingly burdened with chronic unemployment, lack of healthcare access and diminishing social services, this is unacceptable. U.S. reliance on endless wars to preserve its economy and maintain its hegemonic grip on the rest of the world is unsustainable and unsupported by its people.

Veterans for Peace stands in solidarity with the residents of Seongju, South Korea and is resolute in its opposition to THAAD deployment in Korea. U.S. missile defense is the greatest obstacle to global nuclear disarmament. We call on the U.S. government to change course from perpetuating endless wars and producing and proliferating weapons of mass destruction and refocus its resources to solving pressing needs that face our world today, such as creating a sustainable economy and fighting climate change. We call on the U.S. government to rescind its decision on THAAD deployment, abolish missile defense, stop provocative war games, and finally bring the 65-year old Korean War to an end to ensure peace and security in Northeast Asia.

---

## **Statement on Syria: STOP THE WAR IN SYRIA! Don't be fooled by war propaganda!**

*Date: 8/26/16*

Recently, a compelling photo of a bleeding and seemingly confused young Syrian boy seated in an ambulance in Aleppo was widely distributed and commented upon in domestic and international news media. In response, some journalists have called for the Obama Administration to "take action," including bombing government military targets in Syria. Veterans For Peace feels great sympathy for all of the victims in Syria, and for all who have lost family members, friends and loved ones in this terrible war.

Many of us are veterans of military conflicts that were sold to the American public with emotionally compelling but misleading messages and images. We recognize and denounce the manipulation of selected images of human suffering as propaganda used to justify yet further military violence, which will only lead to more death and suffering. Why are we not seeing images of suffering on both sides of the war in Syria? Why is an image of an injured boy used to call for yet more violence?

The "no fly zones" and "safe zones" that some pundits are calling for in Syria are acts of war that would lead to more violence and destruction, as happened in Libya, a nation that was virtually destroyed by a so-called "humanitarian intervention."

"No-fly zones" and "safe zones" would put U.S. Air Force pilots in direct military confrontation with Russian Air Force pilots, leading to a dangerous military escalation between two nuclear powers - an existential threat to all life on earth.

The widely seen photo of the young Syrian boy is just the latest and most graphic example of the psychological warfare being waged against public opinion in the U.S. and worldwide. Almost every day, the media misrepresents the conflict in Syria as a fight between democracy-loving "rebels" and the "brutal dictator Assad." What is actually happening in Syria is foreign intervention to destroy the last secular, multi-religious nation in the Middle East. Violent extremist groups are receiving arms, training, and support from the United States, and billions of dollars from Saudi Arabia and Qatar, two undemocratic monarchies who have their own reasons for seeking "regime change" in Syria.

We believe that the only way to resolve the crisis in Syria and to assist the victims of this conflict is to end the fighting, not to escalate it. The Syrian people have the right to elect their leaders and to determine their own future.

We call on the United States government to cease all military, political and economic assistance to armed opposition groups in Syria and to take actions to pressure US allies to do the same.

Veterans For Peace further calls for an end to all economic sanctions against Syria, especially of medicines, including much needed cancer medicines.

We call on the U.S. government to provide massive humanitarian assistance for the millions of Syrian refugees, and to allow more Syrian refugees into the United States.

The Syrian Government has the right to defend itself from foreign aggression and the “regime change” schemes of the United States and its allies. We call on the all parties to do their utmost to avoid killing innocent civilians.

It is time to bring the Syrian war to an end. It is time to begin the hard work of healing the wounds of the terrible war that has been imposed upon the people of Syria. We must take responsibility for the role of our own government. We must allow the people of Syria and the Middle East to live in peace.

---

## **Veterans For Peace Statement in Support of Colin Kaepernick**

*Date: 9/6/16*

Recently Colin Kaepernick has been in the national news for refusing to stand during the singing of the United States national anthem before the start of National Football League preseason games. His choice to remain seated or kneeling is to protest police misconduct and violence faced by Black people and other people of color. He has been maligned, accused of being unpatriotic and disrespecting active duty service members and veterans.

Veterans For Peace supports every person's right to freedom of speech. To serve in the U.S. armed forces, our military veteran members were required to take a pledge to defend the Constitution of the United States. One of the most closely held rights recognized in the Bill of Rights is the free exercise of speech.

Veterans For Peace also recognizes that just as Kaepernick has the right to stand or not stand for the national anthem, people have the right to criticize the way he has chosen to express himself. But to question his patriotism and use smear tactics to quiet him is in direct contradiction to the spirit of the right to freedom of expression. His act of protest is a political act to register his discontent with the actions of his government. It is a nonviolent act that demands positive change for a better future for all of us. It is exactly the kind of speech the First Amendment was designed to protect and as veterans we applaud his use of his rights for the cause of equality and justice; rights and ideals that we are told we served to defend.

Veterans For Peace is a diverse organization with members who have varying perspectives about what to do during the singing of the Star Spangled Banner. However, all are disappointed in the U.S. government's disregard for the wellbeing and safety of people here at home and abroad. Police shootings of unarmed people are the deadliest outcome of U.S. domestic policies. But the indifference and unjust nature of many laws, policies and national social attitudes are reflected in the nation's failure to meet basic human needs and treatment of the marginalized and most vulnerable. Immigrants are demonized. Members of the LGBTQ and Muslim communities are under fear of physical harm and face persecution. Native Americans continue to fight for their land and self-determination. People go hungry, find themselves homeless or in poor housing. Millions remain jobless, and without access to quality education and mental and physical healthcare. Yet the wealthy of our nation grow richer and candidates fall over each other to pledge to increase spending for militarization of the police, war and preparation for war. On the international stage the U.S. continues an endless war policy that has killed hundreds of thousands if not millions of innocent civilians and displaced millions more. Our nation continues drone warfare that has killed hundreds to thousands of noncombatants caught in the crossfire of failed and immoral war policies. Many of those killed are children.

Veterans For Peace supports Kaepernick's right to freedom of expression. We applaud his choice to exercise that right and call on others with high visibility to speak out and take action in various ways for peace and justice and demand a fair and just national response to address these and many other critical issues faced by people both here in the U.S. and abroad.

---

## **Veterans For Peace Supports the Pipeline Resistance at Standing Rock**

*Date: 9/9/16*

Veterans For Peace stands in solidarity with the historic resistance at the Camp of the Sacred Stones in North Dakota. We join our Indigenous sisters and brothers in opposing the construction of an oil pipeline by the Dakota Access company that threatens drinking water and sacred burial grounds.

We acknowledge that the courageous stand of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and many allied tribes is being carried out by caretakers of the earth who are protecting and defending their ancestral lands and the water that runs through it for current and future generations. The continued assault against the sacred land and water as well as the destruction and desecration of sacred sites is an atrocity and must be stopped. The United States must honor its treaties and recognize Indigenous rights.

We strongly condemn the violence being used against the resistance and believe it to be both a crime and a human rights abuse.

We consider the violation of Indigenous lands, culture and tradition to be another example of specific geographic regions -- those typically home to vulnerable and marginalized populations -- being deemed exploitable and expendable by our government and certain corporations. These are areas that VFP advisory board member and investigative journalist Chris Hedges has referred to as "sacrifice zones."

As veterans, we see the connections between greed, racism, violence and environmental destruction in our own communities, and war and militarism abroad. We strive to achieve "Peace at Home and Peace Abroad" as a lens through which we view our mission. We believe the Standing Rock action is consistent with our philosophy and approach to help build a more just, peaceful and sustainable world.

We understand that different nonviolent struggles for social and ecological justice are linked by the common thread of resistance to subjugation and oppression.

As Veterans For Peace we are committed to acting nonviolently and many of our members are trained and experienced in nonviolent resistance. We have responded to the Standing Rock Sioux call for international observers by facilitating the presence of VFP members at the Camp of the Sacred Stones.

Four Arrows (Wahinkpe Topa), aka Don Trent Jacobs, an American Indian scholar and activist and co-founder of the Northern Arizona chapter of Veterans For Peace, has this to say regarding the Standing Rock resistance: "The last healthy land masses on our planet are not coincidentally those occupied by Indigenous Peoples. That they are on the front lines in standing against oil and mining operations threatening to destroy waterways should not be surprising. The Indigenous worldview, one that guided humans to live in relative ecological harmony, sees this place as sacred...At this crossing point in American history, at the threshold of a mass extinction, the Standing Rock protest is much more than symbolic and deserves all the support VFP can give it."

For more information on how you can support this profound and historic struggle, go to: [www.ocetisakowincamp.org](http://www.ocetisakowincamp.org).

---

## Veterans For Peace On International Peace Day

Date: 9/21/16

The General Assembly of the United Nations declared the 21st of September as an International Day of Peace in 1981. This day is devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and peoples. The theme of this year's commemoration is ["The Sustainable Development Goals: Building Blocks for Peace"](#).

*"Sustainability addresses the fundamental needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Modern challenges of poverty, hunger, diminishing natural resources, water scarcity, social inequality, environmental degradation, diseases, corruption, racism and xenophobia, among others, pose challenges for peace and create fertile grounds for conflict. Sustainable development contributes decisively to dissipation and elimination of these causes of conflict and provides the foundation for a lasting peace. Peace, meanwhile, reinforces the conditions for sustainable development and liberates the resources needed for societies to develop and prosper."*

We know that development can look differently for different people and that the UN has presented challenges towards achieving a JUST peace. However, as veterans we know that peace is not achieved in the moments before a conflict, but rather by building communities that meet human needs. We are all too familiar that injustices felt through poverty, racial inequality, collapsing inner cities and infrastructures, lack of universal health care, climate change and quality education contribute to war and insecurity.

As veterans we see the connection between the endless wars abroad, our bloated military industrial complex, and the inequities it brings to the poor and marginalized all over the world. It is not enough that we veterans see and understand the interconnectedness. If we want to abolish war we must help our fellow citizens here at home see the same connection. We need to understand that dropping more bombs, killing innocent civilians in Muslim countries and the resort to military solutions is robbing the world's children of health care, education and meaningful jobs to build a safer and more secure future. We believe that as people see and understand this connection, they will stand up with us against war. We can then work together to put in place the building blocks necessary to build a sustainable and peaceful future.

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

---

## **Veterans Demand North Carolina Immediately Remove National Guard in Charlotte**

*Date: 9/26/16*

Veterans For Peace denounces the ongoing instances of police violence against people of color, this time resulting in the killing of Keith Scott in Charlotte, North Carolina, and Terence Crutcher of Tulsa, Oklahoma. We also stand in opposition to the State of North Carolina's militarized response to protests in Charlotte.

Learning nothing from the now seemingly endless examples of ineffective attempts to silence protests, North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory has deployed National Guard troops to Charlotte, in addition to answering a request from Charlotte Police Chief Kerr Putney for assistance from the North Carolina State Highway Patrol.

Consider this along with recent comments from U.S. Congress member Robert Pittenger from North Carolina, claiming that the protesters "hate white people because white people are successful and they're not." The Congressman's comments are not only blatantly ignorant and racist, but also incite more violence.

And more violence is what we have seen. We are appalled at the lack of response to the shooting death of a Charlotte protester and demand an investigation into how and why this protester was killed. It is the right of all people to participate in protest, and no one should fear for their lives when exercising their rights.

As Veterans For Peace, we know that increased militarization in our communities will never bring peace. We know that peace is only achieved with a strong commitment to justice. We have seen perfectly [reasonable demands](#) from protesters and community members that have so far been ignored by the state and the Charlotte police. The family of Keith Scott deserves justice as do all victims of police violence.

Veterans For Peace is in solidarity with the [people's resistance](#) in Charlotte. When an already embattled community is subjected to militarized intimidation, their environment becomes a war zone. We call on Governor McCrory to withdraw National Guard troops from Charlotte, and instead utilize community trust building strategies to maintain peace.

---

## **Veterans For Peace Calling for Columbus Day to be Replaced with Indigenous Peoples' Day**

*Date: 10/10/16*

Veterans For Peace believes that the federal holiday commemorating the arrival of Christopher Columbus to the “New World” is an affront to Indigenous peoples everywhere and particularly to native peoples of the Americas. We denounce the celebration of a person who carried out mass killings and genocidal acts against Indigenous peoples and paved the way for European colonization of native lands and enslavement of native peoples.

We recognize that the annual observance of Columbus Day here at home and our continued wars and occupations abroad are rooted in racism, xenophobia and militarism. Our mission of Peace at Home, Peace Abroad includes the commitment to seek justice for all victims of violence and war. Accordingly, we urge our government to no longer honor a person who committed atrocities.

Veterans For Peace understands that the struggle for Indigenous rights cannot be decoupled from other movements for equality and justice, such as Black Lives Matter and Palestinian liberation. We believe that violence and injustice must be challenged and ended in all its forms and that human dignity must be protected and defended. The Columbus Day holiday is a symbol of oppression and a violation of this dignity.

Movements for Indigenous rights and sovereignty are ongoing across the world – from struggles to protect water and sacred land in foreign places such as Latin America, the Caribbean, Mexico, and India to one specific struggle here at home, the Standing Rock resistance against the Dakota Access pipeline in North Dakota (read our solidarity [statement](#)).

Veterans For Peace acknowledges the United Nations [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), which “establishes a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity, well-being and rights of the world’s indigenous peoples.” The United States was one of only four nations to vote against the Declaration in 2007 when it was adopted. However, in 2010, the United States changed course and announced its [support](#) for the Declaration.

In an [open letter](#) to President Obama in 2014, historian and activist Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz beseeched Mr. Obama to change the Columbus Day holiday to Indigenous Peoples’ Day. Dr. Dunbar-Ortiz closed her letter with this appeal: “It’s time for the United States government to make a gesture toward acknowledgement of its colonial past and a commitment to decolonization. Doing away with the celebration of Columbus, the very face of European colonialism, could be that gesture. In its place proclaim that fateful date of the onset of colonialism as a Day of Solidarity and Mourning with the Indigenous Peoples.”

The Columbus Day holiday is one barrier to the healing of the deep wounds of this nation’s violent founding and colonization and to the recognition and protection of Indigenous rights. We, therefore, call on the federal government to join the more than two dozen U.S. cities, including Phoenix, Denver, Seattle and Minneapolis, and the states of South Dakota and Vermont, in replacing Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples’ Day.

## **Veterans For Peace Statement on Election Results**

*Date: 11/9/16*

Text: Veterans For Peace calls for all of our members and those who believe peace is possible to remember that peace is not found in elections, it is found in the work we do to create it. This election season has been one of the darkest and disappointing in recent history. Peace was missing from all the debates. Now that we know who will be the next president, we have a lot of work to do and it begins now!

Soon President-elect Donald Trump will take office. While he does not have a foreign policy record to examine, there are a few things we know. Trump condemned the nuclear agreement Iran made with world powers. He claims he will renegotiate the deal, calling for a “double up and triple up of sanctions.” Trump is not only committed to keeping nuclear weapons, he seems unfazed by the possibility of more countries becoming nuclear powers and talks casually about using nuclear weapons. Trump constantly claimed that the U.S. military is depleted and called for increases in military spending beyond the 2013 sequester levels. Perhaps his best known foreign policy positions that bridge directly into domestic policy are his call to ban Muslims from entering the U.S. and building a wall along the border of the U.S. and Mexico.

On the domestic front, we know President-elect Trump provides great momentum to many of the most repressive and dark social tendencies our nation has struggled to discard. Trump’s campaign ran on the toxic energy of hate. It began with calling Mexicans criminals and rapists. It revved up by calling for a ban on all Muslims entering the United States and it completed its triangle of xenophobia and misogyny by defending sexual assault. The Trump campaign has put on a facade of reaching out to the Black community, however his words make it clear that he is hostile to people of color when he characterizes Black and Hispanic communities as “hell” and called for law and order and stop frisk. His hostility is clear enough to White supremacists that many endorsed him as their candidate.

**The peace movement must stand strong against policies that call for more violence and war. We must resist all forms of hate and xenophobia. We must stand in solidarity with domestic struggles that move forward women’s rights, immigration reform and all forms of racial, economic and social justice. With our allies across all struggles, we must build a full spectrum movement to create peace at home and abroad. Peace is possible if we make it so. It will happen if we build it together. The work begins now!**

---

## **Veterans Call for Everyone to Stand for Peace on Armistice Day**

*Date: 11/11/2016*

Almost a hundred years ago the world celebrated peace as a universal principal. The first World War had just ended and nations mourning their dead collectively called for an end to all wars. Armistice Day was born and was designated as "a day to be dedicated to the cause of world peace and to be thereafter celebrated."

After World War II, the U.S. Congress decided to rebrand November 11 as Veterans Day. Honoring the warrior quickly morphed into honoring the military and glorifying war. Armistice Day was flipped from a day for peace into a day for displays of militarism.

Veterans For Peace has taken the lead in lifting up the original intention of November 11th – as a day for peace. As veterans we know that a day that celebrates peace, not war, is the best way to honor the sacrifices of veterans. We want generations after us to never know the destruction war has wrought on people and the earth.

Veterans For Peace is calling on everyone to stand up for peace this Armistice Day. More than ever, the world faces a critical moment. Tensions are heightened around the world and the U.S. is engaged militarily in multiple countries, without an end in sight. Here at home we have seen the increasing militarization of our police forces and brutal crackdowns on dissent and people's uprisings against state power. This year, with a political arena fueled by hate and fear, the conversation of peace was missing from almost every interaction. It is as urgent as ever to ring the bells for peace. We must press our government to end reckless military interventions that endanger the entire world. We must build a culture of peace.

This Armistice Day, Veterans For Peace calls on the U.S. public to say no to more war and to demand justice and peace, at home and abroad. We know Peace is Possible and call for an end to all oppressive and violent policies, and for equality for all people.

**Join Veterans For Peace in celebrating Armistice Day on November 11th.**

---

## Veterans For Peace Calls for Solidarity with Standing Rock this Thanksgiving

Date: 11/23/16

Once again, Thanksgiving is upon us. As advocates for justice and peace, we all know that this holiday is not the story of unity taught to us. We know that Thanksgiving marks the celebration of a myth, when the truth is that this time in our history resulted in the slaughtering of thousands of Indigenous People, the stealing and pillaging of their land and the spreading of disease among their people.

This Thanksgiving season, we are witnessing, yet again, brutal acts against Indigenous People and their lands. The Dakota Access Pipeline is yet another act of violence and genocide against Native people and reminds us that our colonial past is actually our present. It threatens the safety of land and water across the country, as well as violating treaties. However, the prayerful and powerful resistance at Standing Rock is inspirational and has galvanized worldwide solidarity.

Veterans For Peace understands that the struggle for Indigenous rights cannot be decoupled from other movements for equality and justice. This Thanksgiving we know that there are many struggles around the globe, at home and abroad. As veterans, we are aware of our legacy as military veterans as participants in the ways in which we have perpetuated injustice across the globe and against indigenous people. We believe that violence and injustice must be challenged and ended in all its forms and that human dignity must be protected and defended.

We know that many people have come to see this holiday as a way to value gratitude, reflection and peace. Veterans For Peace continues to be grateful for all those who work for peace and express great admiration for the resistance of all peoples against injustice. This Thanksgiving, we ask that you take action and stand in solidarity with the native resistance at Standing Rock.

[Organizers](#) are now calling for a week of action starting on November 25th that will culminate in a Global Day of Action on December 1st.

*The main targets are financiers of the Dakota Access Pipeline and the police departments that have been brought in from across the Midwest to brutalize water protectors.*

- [Find a target and take action](#)
- If you are doing a public action, [register it here](#)

*The financial footing of the Dakota Access Pipeline is in jeopardy if they do not complete the project by January 1st. If this deadline is missed, a majority of the stakeholders with contracts to ship oil through the pipeline will be able to renegotiate or cancel their contracts. This could be devastating to Energy Transfer Partners and the other pipeline companies behind DAPL. With its vulnerabilities exposed, our solidarity efforts are needed now more than ever.*

[Read the Veterans For Peace Statement in Support of the Pipeline Resistance at Standing Rock](#)

---

## **A Significant Victory at Standing Rock**

*Date: 12/8/16*

On Sunday, Dec. 4, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced it would not grant an easement to allow the Dakota Access Pipeline to cross under Lake Oahe in North Dakota near the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe reservation. [This announcement is a significant victory, though not a final one.](#)

The Oceti Sakowin - Seven Council Fires - the proper name for the people commonly known as the Sioux - and Indigenous people from across the U.S. initiated and led months of non-violent resistance to building the pipeline near Sioux land. **There is no way this victory could have been won without their determined leadership**, and solemn commitment to nonviolence, which they call "Peace and Prayer."

**The Standing Rock Sioux and their many Indigenous allies have inspired thousands of others to join them on the front lines at Standing Rock.** Activists from a spectrum of struggles, including the peace and environmental movements to the Movement for Black Lives and Muslim civil rights, stood on the ground in solidarity. As a result, millions of people have been attracted to the cause. The arrival of thousands of veterans to Standing Rock, covered by national and international media, almost certainly put additional pressure on the Obama administration to do the right thing. The effort and outcome thus far is an example of the power of solidarity and non-violent resistance to right injustice. The people have won an important victory the struggle.

**Veterans For Peace members have had a regular presence at Standing Rock for months.** At least 70 VFP and IVAW members participated in this huge veterans convergence and most will remain for several more days.

**Congratulations are in order. We celebrate the courage of the Indigenous resistance and the many who stood in solidarity, including VFP members, but the struggle is far from over.** The announcement from the Army Corps of Engineers does not rule out approval in the future. Openness to alternative routes may end with the Trump Administration.

Veterans For Peace understands that the road to peace is Peace at Home and Peace Abroad. We will continue to stand in solidarity with oppressed and marginalized people who face economic and social attacks that suppress and exploit their communities. VFP will continue our mission to resist militarism at home, work to abolish war around the world and call for and build peaceful means to end conflicts.

---

## **Veterans For Peace Calls on U.S. To Apologize to Japan**

*Date: 12/20/16*

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is visiting Pearl Harbor at the end of this month, making this the first time that a Japanese political leader has traveled there since the end of World War II. This visit coincides with President Obama's visit to Hiroshima earlier this year. President Obama delivered a speech at Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. He called for an end to nuclear weapons. He said that the nuclear powers "...must have the courage to escape the logic of fear, and pursue a world without them." Incisively, Obama added, "We must change our mindset about war itself."

Unfortunately, President Obama announced no new steps to achieve nuclear disarmament during his speech, and he disappointingly stated, "We may not realize this goal in my lifetime."

Veterans For Peace is heartened to see the steps made towards friendly diplomacy and the focus on nuclear disarmament. As military veterans who have trained for and/or fought in wars, we know that any step, even small ones, make a difference in efforts to reduce violence and death. However, we continue to be dismayed at the lack of accountability that the U.S. has taken towards unleashing the most devastating attack the world has ever seen. The U.S. remains the only country in the world that has used nuclear weapons, of which the side effects are still being felt today.

So while we commend the steps President Obama has taken thus far to foment a friendship with Japan, we know that the foundation for any true friendship is one of trust and accountability. [Veterans For Peace calls on President Obama to publicly apologize for the usage of nuclear weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and to take responsibility for the horrific outcomes those bombs had on Japan.](#)

We ask that veterans join us by [sending this letter](#) to President Obama and to stand with us for a nuclear free world.

Veterans For Peace issued this apology earlier this year in May, after President Obama visited Hiroshima. It was the first visit by a sitting U.S. president. VFP members [continue to carry this message of apology to the people of Japan.](#)

### **Veterans For Peace Apologizes to Japanese People and the World**

**May 30, 2016**

Veterans For Peace expresses our deepest condolences to all those who were killed and maimed, and to their families. We apologize to the [Hibakusha, the survivors](#) of the nuclear bombings, and we thank them for their courageous, continuing witness.

We apologize to all the Japanese people and to all the people of the world. This hugely atrocious crime against humanity should never have happened. As military veterans who have come to see the tragic futility of war, we promise that we will continue working for peace and disarmament. We want to see nuclear disarmament in our lifetime.

---

## **Veterans For Peace Statement on Syria**

*Date: 12/21/16*

The war in Syria has been ongoing for five years, with the situation in Aleppo, once Syria's most populous city, having deteriorated over the past four years into a multi-proxy war and a humanitarian disaster.

We have seen strong disagreements within the peace movement on the reasons behind this war, and on what our response should be. Those disagreements even exist within our ranks. As we struggle through the complexities of the war, we recognize that most of us are far removed from it, fortunate to be safe in our homes and able to voice these disagreements without fear of reprisal.

However, our mission at Veterans For Peace has not changed. We oppose war. We are against the targeting of, as well as the failure to protect, innocent civilians caught up in war, or any other conduct by an individual, group or nation that could be classified as a war crime. We oppose U.S. military involvement in other countries that violates international law.

Veterans For Peace believes we have a great responsibility to hold our government accountable for the atrocities it has committed across the globe. Therefore, we call upon the U.S. to end its wars that violate the Constitution, in particular [Article 1, Section 8](#), as well as its obligations under its treaties, including, but not limited to, the [United Nations Charter](#), [War Powers Act](#), the [Authorization for the Use of Military Force 2001](#) and the [Kellogg-Briand Pact](#). The U.S.-led "War on Terror," and its war and occupation against Iraq, led to the destabilization and destruction of several countries, which contributed to the creation of ISIL and to an increase in terrorist activity throughout the region, including in Syria.

The U.S. is bombing Syria, while supporting armed extremist groups who seek to overthrow one of the last secular, multi-religious states in the Middle East.

A continuation of the war in Syria, which has been waged by many actors, including the U.S., NATO, Russia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, will not be the answer to ending the extreme suffering of the Syrian people.

The U.S. and other countries are responsible for the tragic outcomes of military imperialism. We will continue to demand justice for the people – most of whom are the victims of war, not only in Syria, but also in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere, where militarism and war have brought devastation.

Veterans For Peace knows from experience that civilians are the primary victims of modern warfare. We call on all sides to take extra precautions to protect civilian lives, and to uphold human rights for civilians and combatants alike.

We will continue to urge our government to open its borders to Syrian refugees. The U.S. has done little to accept refugees from the region. We will continue to stand against anti-Muslim hate and bigotry. Veterans For Peace denounces Islamophobia and the rhetoric of the "War

on Terror,” which has been deployed as a means to deny a safe haven to refugees whose very lives are at risk.

We will continue to push for a ban on all U.S. and foreign arms sales to the region. We realize it is the height of hypocrisy that our government condemns arms sales to the region by other countries, while ignoring its own.

We will hold the U.S. media accountable and demand coverage of Syria that engages in critical reporting on our government’s involvement in the war and its influence in the region. We are relieved that the terrible Battle of Aleppo might finally be coming to an end. Many observers believe this could be a real turning point in the Syrian war, bringing it closer to an end. However, many experts believe the war will continue for several more years, wreaking even more death, destruction and displacement on the Syrian people.

We believe that the U.S. has a responsibility, as one of the most powerful nations in the world, to use diplomacy to push for an immediate ceasefire and to apply pressure on other parties who are contributing to civilian deaths, to do the same. We urge all sides to agree to a ceasefire immediately, and to begin sincere efforts toward a just peace for all the Syrian people.

Peace in Syria will only be achieved through a political process.

Veterans For Peace continues to recommend full normalization of relations between the U.S. and Syria, including recognition of Syria’s elected government and constitution, withdrawal of all covert and overt support of internal or external aggression against the Syrian government. We call on the U.S. and all foreign governments, including any armed groups, to bring to a complete halt of their war making in the Middle East, including in Syria, and to withdraw their armed forces and contractors immediately. We also call on these parties to cease “regime change” efforts in the Middle East and elsewhere, to end economic sanctions and all forms of war by other means, and to redirect resources to helping war refugees.

The wars in Syria and throughout the Middle East will continue to cause environmental damage and ecological degradation, further decimating a region already suffering from widespread resource depletion and the devastating effects of climate change, such as severe and prolonged drought and climate driven conflict. Veterans For Peace urgently appeals to all nations and warring factions to end these wars, which are a direct attack on our shared planet and the ecological systems on which all life on Earth depends.

Finally, the wars in the Middle East have heightened tensions between the U.S. and Russia, with the real potential to increase the risk of nuclear war. We urge the U.S. and Russia to reach out to each other to find ways to ensure that no differences or potential conflicts are allowed to escalate beyond the ability of each to control the outcome, without resorting to violence in any form.