

The "War on Terrorism" Will Not End Terrorism

The government and media are trying to portray the antiwar movement as naive and misguided, if not traitorous, but we have a Constitutional and moral right, and responsibility, to dissent.

We condemn the terrorism of bin Laden and the al Qaeda network. We also condemn human rights violations committed by both the Taliban and the Northern Alliance.

We oppose the US war on Afghanistan:

- It has no clear enemy, no achievable goals, no timetable, and no accountability.
- It will continue to compound the devastation of the people of Afghanistan, disrupting precious food aid and leaving political and social chaos behind. Doctors Without Borders and the International Red Cross are among those appalled by the shortsighted vision of the US Government regarding the refugee crisis. Refugee camps are unable to sustain the fleeing Afghans without aid. In addition, the U.S. bombing has killed unknown numbers of civilian men, women and children.
- It is very likely to lead to a wider conflict, fulfilling bin Laden's hopes for a wide-scale war between the Muslim world and the West. The U.S. war strategy has the potential to lead to greater instability and an increase in tension in many states in the Mideast, Central Asia and South Asia, some of which have nuclear weapons.
- It continues and expands the long-standing policy of US interference in the affairs of the people of the Muslim and Arab world without being accountable in any way to the people of that region.
- Islam is not the enemy. Even though the Bush Administration has called for tolerance, racial profiling by both the government and citizens of the US continues. People have been harassed--some even beaten, shot and killed by US citizens--because they appear to be Middle Eastern or South Asian, and approximately 1000 people have been detained in the U.S. Some have been denied access to lawyers and otherwise deprived of their rights, according to defense attorneys, civil rights organizations and some government officials.
- The current domestic policy is leading to the repression of basic rights, loss of our civil liberties and privacy, government surveillance, and racial and "patriotic" profiling (harassment of dissenters). The antiterrorism bill referred to as the USA Act of 2001 has been passed, with only limited sunset clauses. This dangerous legislation seriously curtails civil liberties provided by the U.S. Constitution. In addition, George Bush issued an executive order giving emergency approval for a military tribunal to try terrorism suspects "caught and charged in the wake of the Sep 11 attacks" (AP). The White House says no American citizens will be tried in this tribunal, and that both the workings of the tribunal and the evidence against the suspects may be kept secret for reasons of "national security."

It is dangerous to avoid dealing with the political roots of this conflict:

- Since WWII, the US has tried to impose its will on the region by supporting oppressive dictatorships (Saudi Arabia), overthrowing reformist governments (e.g. in Iran in 1953), uncritically supporting Israel's denial of Palestinian rights, and reducing the region to an oil

pipeline. The earlier prolonged CIA-backed war in Afghanistan resulted in more than 5 million refugees and an estimated 1 million civilian casualties. If we do not address the issue of US intervention in the region, and the impoverishment and disempowerment of the region's people, the situation will only get worse.

Solutions:

- It is not possible to secure people completely against determined terrorists. The horrific attacks of Sept. 11 have brought home to many Americans the terror that infects the lives of too many peoples all over the world. Terrorism is a world problem that can only be addressed by a genuine multinational approach. We need to replace the current unilateral US campaign with a multilateral effort that empowers international organizations such as the UN and World Court.
- We need to transform US foreign policy by ending the destructive sanctions against the people of Iraq, supporting a viable homeland for the Palestinians, and turning away from globalization policies that impoverish, disempower and endanger the large majority of people in the world and at home.

We call for an end to the war in Afghanistan and immediate restoration of civil liberties for all people in the United States.

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November 19, 2001