



The Peace Letter

Washington Peace Center

Winter 2010

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Founded in 1963

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5th Decade
Working for
Peace and Justice
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THE TRUE COSTS OF WAR

Complex Realities: How War Impacts Each of Us

by Julian Forth

Unlike how the media portrays the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, war sacrifices the well-being of our communities and our environment. It is a dangerous practice that contributes to the destabilization of the societies of all who are involved. Like many other elements of society, war is far more complex and diverse than is often realized. War is no longer simply an official declaration of aggression between two "Powers." Rather, many wars have taken the form of conflicts, some of which have very little relationship to political territories or governing parties.

In fact, this is the nature of much of the current armed conflict around the world, as seen with terrorism, ethnic conflict, civil war and guerrilla warfare. In these cases, violence usually occurs among groups formed according to socioeconomic interests, religious persuasions, or ethnicity rather than national allegiances. Additionally, cold wars, arms-trading and long-term military operations are some of the frequently overlooked dimensions of war. All of these forms only generate more violence and in the service of the economic interest of the Western elite, but at too high a cost for our societies.

One could look at the cost of warfare in economic terms. Excessive military spending is a worldwide epidemic, reaching a combined total of \$1.5 trillion USD spent on military efforts by all nations in 2008 alone. It is no surprise that the United States, alone, comprises half of this total. In addition to monetary resources, inordinate amounts of oil and food are employed to carry out conflict, the methods of which can render land infertile and useless for generations. It is difficult not to think of the innumerable positive efforts and programs that these resources could benefit (i.e. humanitarian aid, environmental conservation, education reform, affordable housing and healthcare programs), which would provide long-term advantages for any community.

One could turn to the various death tolls of current and past wars—with their various inflated or diminished figures according to the source's political

Continued on page 11

...there are between **770** and **1000** U.S. military bases in over **60** countries.
Source: www.militarybudget.info/overseas.html

...military spending as of 2010: **\$534 billion** dollars as proposed by Defense Secretary Gates.
Source: White House Office of Management

...number of **US troops worldwide**: about **310,000**.
Source: Department of Defense Deployment numbers 2010

— HOW DOES IT AFFECT YOU? —



Bankruptcy of the
American Dream

page 3

Global Voices
Speak Out

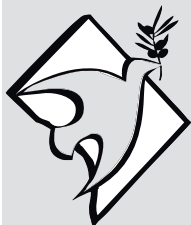
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In Our Backyard:
War Comes Home

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The *Washington Peace Letter* is published biannually to support local, national and international struggles against oppression. It seeks to present analysis of current events, covering information not available in the corporate media.

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SUBMISSIONS: The *Peace Letter* welcomes submissions of articles, announcements, letters to the editor and artwork from the progressive community. Contact us at peaceletter@washingtonpeacecenter.org.

The WASHINGTON PEACE CENTER is a multi-issue, anti-racist grassroots organization working for peace, justice and nonviolent social change in the metropolitan Washington D.C. area since 1963. We provide education, resources, and action for peace and social justice.

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From the Director:

What truly is the cost of war? With the ongoing recession confronting people every day with job losses and foreclosures, and the massive imbalance of military and human funding in our federal budget, it's hard not to see the economic impact of our national prioritization of war.

But the costs of war are more than economic; they are far-reaching and affect each of us on international, national and local levels. As a multi-issue group, the WASHINGTON PEACE CENTER works to build connections and cast light on the ways that different causes overlap – the environment, women's rights, the unjust education system, the lives of veterans – and how war impacts each. This issue of the *Peace Letter* explores many of the ways war impacts our world in ways you might not have expected.

We believe that by building connections between causes, we can build a stronger, more unified movement for peace and justice, giving us more ways to deepen our understanding and collaborate to change the world. There is inspirational organizing happening every day, and just a few projects making a difference are highlighted throughout this issue.

We hope that you use some of the information provided in the *Peace Letter* to think differently about the causes that you care about, to see the ways in which so much of what we're working for is inter-related and to think creatively about how to bring about the change we need. I hope you'll support the important work of building a stronger, multi-issue movement by donating to the WASHINGTON PEACE CENTER, using the slip on page 11.

Thank you, as always, for your ongoing support and all the important work you do to build a movement for peace and justice.

In solidarity,

Sonia Silbert

Sonia Silbert
Director

Thanks to our amazing *Peace Letter* team –

Editor: Hierald E. Kane-Osorto

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Peace Organizing Interns:

Amy McDonald & Emily Loranger



Left to right: Director Sonia Silbert, Intern Emily Loranger, Organizing Fellow Hierald Kane-Osorto, and Intern Amy McDonald at APPALACHIA RISING RALLY AGAINST MOUNTAIN-TOP REMOVAL

U.S. SOCIAL FORUM REPORT BACK:

ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE, ANOTHER US IS NECESSARY, ANOTHER D.C. AREA IS HAPPENING!

Over 15,000 progressives from around the country and world converged upon Detroit last June for the US Social Forum (USSF). The Washington Peace Center (WPC) ran a workshop called "D.C. is Not Your Protest Playground" where we discussed the impact of national mobilizations on local organizing here in the District and how they could be more beneficial for our local progressive movement.

Here in the D.C. area we used the USSF as an opportunity to strengthen our local progressive movements and strategize about the future we want to see.

(Continued on page 6)

BANKRUPTCY OF THE AMERICAN DREAM

Militarism and the Environment: What's the Connection?

In an era of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, war has become an extremely destructive enterprise.

Warfare has become an event that predominantly affects civilian populations instead of opposing militaries, and the damage to ecosystems that results from warfare has become more intensive than at any other time in human history.

However, war is not just an event. Even in so-called "times of peace," the physical preparations for war, the diversion of resources from domestic infrastructure, and the militaristic values that pervade our society incur an unaccounted for degree of violence upon the Earth and its people. This "peacetime" violence is difficult to differentiate from the sort of violence inflicted during times of war, except that the responsible parties are most often our government and the militaries that are supposed to be protecting us.



- Virtually all of the world's nuclear bomb test sites, as well as most uranium mines and radioactive dumps, occupy Native lands.
- The Defense Department is the country's largest user of the carcinogen trichloroethylene (TCE) and the ozone-destroyer chlorofluorocarbon (CFC), and is the largest purchaser of oil.
- **The military has generated more toxins annually than the five top chemical companies combined for the last several years.**

Veterans: the Numbers and Beyond by Sergio Espana

form of sexual harassment. Though recognized by the Department of Defense, Military Sexual Trauma (MST), does not have proper resources for MST and general gender-specific treatment within the military, despite the mushrooming number of women serving in the military.

\$700 Billion. A Harvard Study found that medical care and compensation benefits will continue to soar as more of our brothers and sisters experience military service and return from combat. The cost of providing services for veterans of Iraq, alone, will range between \$350-750 billion. And despite these ever increasing costs, somehow **fewer and fewer service members are able to find mental health care** on their bases or at the VA, as reported by *Time Magazine* this summer.

THE QUESTION MUST THEREFORE BE ASKED: If the institutions that are supposed to protect us foul our air and water at an alarming rate, drain vast amounts of domestic resources and foster a culture of violence and exploitation, what is it that these institutions are trying to protect?

Take Action! The environmental community cannot afford to be silent on the issue of militarism any longer. We must recognize that the Defense Department is one of the world's largest polluters, and is responsible for a degree of environmental degradation that can only be referred to as ecological genocide across the globe.

Excerpt taken from:
Student Environmental Action Coalition (SEAC)
www.seac.org/campaigns/militarism.shtml

No #s. The hidden costs of war go beyond quantitative measurements; they tear at the very fabric of human decency and well-being. **We as a society must continue to bring to light the hidden costs of the occupations and our government's bloated military budget**, but we must do so with a strong and committed voice.

Iraq Veterans Against the War has launched *Operation Recovery: Stop the Deployment of Traumatized Troops*, and they need our support. For further information on how to get plugged in, visit their website: www.ivaw.org. If you are a civilian organizer, you can also visit www.civsol.org to find out more about Operation Recovery and how best to help and support the men and women who are affected daily by our government's choices.

*Sergio España is a steering committee member of the **Civilian Soldier Alliance**, www.civsol.org, a fiscal sponsoree of the WASHINGTON PEACE CENTER.*

18 a day. More than 300,000 service members have been deployed on 3 or more tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Pentagon's own studies have shown that increased exposure to traumatic events increases the likelihood of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). As a result, **18 veterans claim their own lives every day in the United States.**

33%. One-third of women serving in the military are raped by someone in the military. Two-thirds will be sexually assaulted, and 90% of all women will experience some

While the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq rage on, the U.S. peace movement's focus has been to the east. There is, however, another longer war that has continued unabated since its declaration in June 1971 by then President Nixon: *the War on Drugs*.

War always has a cost and that of the War on Drugs hits very close to home. Americans consume more illegal drugs than any other country in the world and those drugs are overwhelmingly supplied by and trafficked through our neighboring countries to the south. While the war against terror is fought in far-off lands, the drug war is fought here at home.

The drug war kicked into high gear in 1999 with the unveiling of Plan Colombia. The Plan committed some \$7.5 billion in military training, equipment and drug eradication programs over a six-year period. The results have been increased brutality on the part of security forces against social movements: the rural poor, indigenous, and afro descendent people. To top it off, Plan Colombia failed to reduce coca cultivation and cocaine production.

The same failed policy has now been exported to Mexico. In 2008, the U.S. approved the Mérida Initiative, an aid package that supports the Mexican government's war on drug cartels in its territory. So far, U.S. Congress has approved about \$1.5 billion for the Initiative.

Drug-related violence was on the rise in Mexico prior to U.S. involvement. However, the **Mérida Initiative** makes the U.S. government party to the Mexican military's human rights violations. How can violations of Mexicans' human rights be justified in the War on Drugs when the drug industry is fueled by U.S. drug consumption?

The drug war is costly for civilians: they pay for the war with their taxes, their freedom, and their lives. Moreover, drug trafficking is a multi-billion dollar industry, and banks like Wachovia and Bank

of America make considerable sums laundering that money. The head of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime went so far as to state that billions in drug money kept the global economy afloat at the peak of the financial crisis in 2008.

In essence, Americans are participating on all sides of the War on Drugs, and there seems to be very little incentive to win the war – let alone end it.

Both the War on Drugs and the War on Terror follow the Pentagon's "Long War" strategy. These wars have extensive trajectories and are backed by corporate interests that would like nothing more than for these wars to last indefinitely. The majority of Mérida Initiative funds are paid to defense contractors (DynCorp and JWD to name two) to deliver equipment and carry out training for the Mexican government. The War on Terror made the "Long War" strategy famous, but George W. Bush didn't invent the concept. The U.S. government has fought its "Long War" on drugs at home and abroad for decades. **As the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq wind down, the military industrial complex will always have the War on Drugs to fall back on.**

Monica Wooters is a board member of CASA a solidarity organization comprised of allies organizing with grassroots efforts in Oaxaca, Mexico, and currently volunteers at the WASHINGTON PEACE CENTER.

NO TO U.S. MILITARIZATION IN THE AMERICAS, October 11th protest in solidarity with Honduran Artists in Resistance

**The LONG WAR:
America's 39 Year
War on Drugs**
by Monica Wooters

The OTHER Terrorism: Militarism & Violence Against Women

Excerpt adapted from the text of The 'Other' Terrorism: Militarism and Violence Against Women, a talk delivered at the University of Dayton in April, 2010 by Lucinda Marshall

In order to fully understand militarism, it is necessary to view it from a gendered lens and to address the question of what it is about militarism that places women at particular risk.

Militarism, and the patriarchy it defends, are based on the notion of power over, and place women at particular risk for victimization, violation and harm.

Civilian casualties now make up as much as 70% of the total casualties of any military action. Since women and children are the majority of these civilian populations, they make up the majority of civilian casualties. Factors that make women particularly vulnerable include: breakdown in government and law enforcement, separation from family (especially men who may have provided protection), loss of income, loss of homes and becoming refugees.

In addition, wars are not fought on battlefields anymore—they are fought in cities and towns and villages. Women's bodies frequently become part of the battleground over which opposing forces struggle and their bodies are often considered the spoils of war, or invisibilized under the catch-all euphemism 'collateral damage'. And finally, violence against women does not end when the fighting ends. We've all heard reports of rapes committed by U.N. peacekeepers, of soldiers who come home and assault or murder their wives.

The connection between militarism and violence against women is a global issue; however it is important to note that the U.S. is the biggest military power in the world and therefore our actions, as it were, pack the biggest punch and we need to examine what we can be faulted for and what we can take responsibility for changing before pointing our fingers at others.

Clearly militarism is perpetrated by military forces other than the U.S. as well, and that violence also needs to be addressed, whether it is in Indonesia, the Darfur region of Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo or anywhere else.

The question we need to ask is what can be done, on both a national and international level, to change the paradigm that allows for the victimization of women as a result of militarism. There are a number of useful tools that we can use, including



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GLOBAL VOICES SPEAK OUT

CEDAW, The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which addresses the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women and recognizes the need to include women in the conflict resolution and peace-building process, stressing the importance of their equal and full participation as active agents in peace and security. The **International Criminal Court** classifies sexual violence as a war crime and provides a means by which perpetrators can be held accountable.

In order to truly achieve a women-inclusive peace, we need to make the connection between the othering that enables militarism and the othering that enables sexual violence. We are simply not looking at the full picture unless we include the ways that militarism affects women and listen, really listen, to women's voices when we look towards resolution of conflict and the creation of peace.

Rather than seeing others as adversaries, let's look at how we can partner to create solutions and make meaningful and just relationships. Then we will be truly empowered.

Lucinda Marshall is the Founder and Director of the **Feminist Peace Network**, www.feministpeacenet.org. She is the author of the **FPN blog** as well as **Reclaiming Medusa**, www.lucindamarshall.com and writes and speaks often about militarism and violence against women.

**EN ESTA CASA
QUEREMOS UNA
VIDA LIBRE
DE VIOLENCIA
HACIA LAS MUJERES**

In this house we want a life
free of violence against women.

LETTER FROM
OKINAWA

Dear Citizens of the United States of America...

As an Okinawan, I know all too well how the lives of many are intertwined with the U.S. military. Protesting against the military could mean no food or shelter for some of us. Others do not see that the fenced-off plots of our beloved land, some 20% of the Island's area, should be utilized to fulfill the Okinawan's needs.

I am furious that the U.S. militarization of Okinawa has developed in such a way that our lives have become entangled in this mess. The military has seeped into our lives in Okinawa causing us to find it difficult to imagine that an alternative, a different and authentically peaceful Okinawa and world, is possible. Okinawa will not thrive as long as Japan and the United States depend and insist on keeping your military establishment here. I have met countless children of single Okinawan mothers whose fathers were in the U.S. military and who struggle to find a sense of belonging due to stigmatization and lack of social and economical support from Japan and the U.S. Deforestation, land acquisition and toxic waste from military development, as well as base plans in the north, an endangered dugong habitat, give rise to environmental devastation. All in all, aren't we, Okinawans and military personnel both, just expendable in the eyes of our respective governments? Do our voices, when we raise them with sincerity and urgency, even reach your ears?

We are deceived into thinking that U.S. militarization of Okinawa is another fact of life and many become apathetic. But others see right through your strategy and empty promises. We detest the lack of autonomy we have on a personal, prefectural and national level.

OKINAWA CAN RISE UP ON ITS OWN AND FOR THAT WE NEED YOU OUT.

Sincerely,
Seira Ikeuchi

U.S. SOCIAL FORUM REPORT BACK: *(Continued from page 2)*

Prior to the USSF the Washington Peace Center was part of the core organizing committee within the D.C. Metro Social Forum to plan the Greater D.C. People's Assembly. On May 15, over 125 local organizers came together and strategized with other D.C. groups who wouldn't normally work together to discuss the state of the local progressive movement and build a vision for its future. As a part of the Metro D.C. Social Forum, we also raised \$4500 to send 20 local low-income, youth and people of color to USSF!

Overall, the USSF process was inspiring and an amazing opportunity to connect with progressives from around the country and the world. Most importantly, it allowed us to strengthen our own progressive community right here in the D.C. metro area as we continue to work for a peaceful and just world.

—**Sonia Silbert**, *Director*, WASHINGTON PEACE CENTER

“At the USSF I was able to connect my activism with different workshops/forums relating to immigrant workers issues. I also had access to materials and made connections with other day laborer organizing efforts across the country. I was able to bring back those resources and experiences to the Union de Trabajadores and strengthen the work of our group here in D.C.”

BENJAMIN, *Organizer*

UNION DE TRABAJADORES
www.uniondetrabajadores.org

“Though this was my first US Social Forum, I attended workshops that allowed me to meet and network with other Education organizers from around the country. Some of these workshops helped me learn new tools for my meetings here in D.C. The D.C. Metro Social Forum helped me to realize how we (different D.C. organizations) are actually creating a change through our different organizations.”

DANIEL DEL PIELAGO,
Education Organizer

EMPOWER D.C.
www.empowerdc.org

“We led a delegation of 75 people to the USSF. We connected with people from all around the US, shared campaign strategies and deepened political analysis. The D.C. Metro Social Forum can provide the space to build labor-community alliances to protect the public sector, but how we connect it with our work, and how we build, are still major questions.”

RUTH CASTEL-BRANCO, *Organizer*

D.C. JOBS WITH JUSTICE
www.dcjwj.org

FOLLOW-UP FROM DETROIT
US SOCIAL FORUM

ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE
D.C. METRO AREA ACTIVISTS REFLECT ON THEIR EXPERIENCES

“The USSF provides the space to reach deeper dialogues on politics and strategic plans for the progressive movement as a whole. Locally, we need to develop a vision for an alternative, ways to work as a movement as a whole, and discuss ways to move toward systemic political change in addition to our own issues that we fight for through our various organizations.”

WALDA KATZ-FISHMAN,
*National Planning Committee Member and
D.C. Metro Social Forum Organizer*

US SOCIAL FORUM
www.ussf2010.org

“While teaching a workshop on transformational media at the USSF, we got to network with many D.C. organizers like Jobs with Justice, CISPES, and Casa. It took that national event to secure relationships with groups that we work with often now. It also moved us directly into the District's social movement itself, since we are located in Silver Spring, MD.”

HEATHER B. KUBO,
Program Manager

GHANDI BRIGADE
www.gandhibrigade.org

“LEDC tenant organizers, together with members of our Tenant Leadership Program, traveled to Detroit to participate in the Social Forum. We went to workshops where we learned new affordable housing organizing strategies that are being used around the country and shared resources with groups doing similar work. The tenant leaders who attended were inspired when they saw how other communities are creating positive change, and came back to D.C. re-energized to continue our struggles here D.C.”

ANNA DUNCAN, *Tenant Organizer*

LATINO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
www.ledcmetro.org

IN OUR BACKYARD: WAR COMES HOME

Stories of Hope: Salvadorans Living in D.C.

by Hierald & Kristen Kane-Osorto

As we turned the dark corner of the basement of Augustana Lutheran church, we entered a kitchen filled with the wonderful aroma of tamales and chatter of women assembling these delicious treats. It was a space filled with the power of community and hope as a group of Salvadoran women made vats of tamales for an upcoming church fundraiser. Each shared a role in an assembly line, making tamales with excitement, and creating memories of hope for future generations.

Suddenly the joy in the room diminished as they began to re-tell stories about El Salvador, entering into a conversation about having to leave their lives behind to seek a "better" life in the United States. The stories began to sound the same; each memory took the women back to El Salvador during a time of turmoil but also a time of joy and laughter.

Behind their stories something deeper was revealed. The lives of these women carried the deep pain of being uprooted and of never being able to return. Reacting to the current situation of El Salvador, classified as the most dangerous country of the Americas, the women knew that El Salvador's violence was a continuation of U.S. intervention and promotion of its own economic interest. The 'loss of home' as one of the costs of war is apparent in the 200,000 Salvadorans living in Washington, D.C. today, long after the country signed the "Peace Accords."

However, something magical was occurring as the stories began to turn into laughter, revealing to us the hope of resistance and of possibilities. Though they would never identify as "activists" or community



Photo by Hierald Kane-Osorto

Members of La Comunidad Santa Maria participating in the ONE NATION RALLY in D.C. organizers, the women have taken small steps to create a community that is actively dreaming of a new world, a new El Salvador. They collectively dream of an El Salvador where future generations can live in sustainable and loving ways, always conscious of their actions. Singing the song that our good friend and mentor once shared with us, "**songs of the future, of peace with justice which we, the Salvadorans, are daring to grab, even by force, from the hands that murder us. We will be home!**" While so many Salvadorans have been displaced, one day these women will be able to return home. It will be up to their children and their children's children to remember to sing the song of the future and to carry the message of hope.

Hierald is currently the Organizing Fellow at the WASHINGTON PEACE CENTER and Kristen is the Program Coordinator for the Steinbruck Center for Urban Studies. Both are doing a year of service through the Lutheran Volunteer Corp and prior to their year they worked in El Salvador at The Center Culture is Peace, the AHA Museum.

Resisting the Impacts of War

The Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) is a grassroots organization that has been working since 1980 to stop U.S. intervention in El Salvador and Central America. During the 1980s, CISPES supported the liberation movement led by Salvadoran social movements and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) guerrilla forces by organizing to stop U.S. military funding for the death squad military government. Though the FMLN has become the governing political party in El Salvador, U.S. intervention has adapted to the changing times and rhetoric.

In recent years, CISPES has worked alongside the Salvadoran social movement to halt the **economic war being waged by multinational corporations and the U.S. government**. The privatization of public resources such as water, health care and the establishment "free trade" agreements have allowed transnational corporations to sue sovereign nations to challenge their environmental and labor protections. Locally in D.C., our committee has been working to **defend immigrant rights and challenge escalating police and military repression** against those hit hardest by neoliberal economic policies, primarily immigrants and people of color. The peoples of the Americas will not be defeated in their struggle for justice if we stand together!

Find out more on how to get involved with CISPES by visiting them at: www.cispes.org

What was the U.S. monetary contribution to the Salvadoran Civil War?

DURING THE CIVIL WAR, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED STATES, THE SALVADORAN MILITARY BUDGET INCREASED FROM \$264.2 MILLION DOLLARS IN 1982 TO \$557.8 MILLION IN 1987 UNDER THE REGAN ADMINISTRATION. IT CONTINUED TO INCREASE IN 1988 WITH THE ELECTION OF GEORGE H.W. BUSH.

Sources: www.mongabay.com/reference/country_studies/el-salvador/GOVERNMENT.html

THE CURRENT SALVADORAN POPULATION IN D.C. IS ABOUT 200,000

Military Recruitment in our Schools

by Pat Elder



Students in a San Diego public school practice marksmanship skills. Live firing ranges were banned in San Diego schools last year.

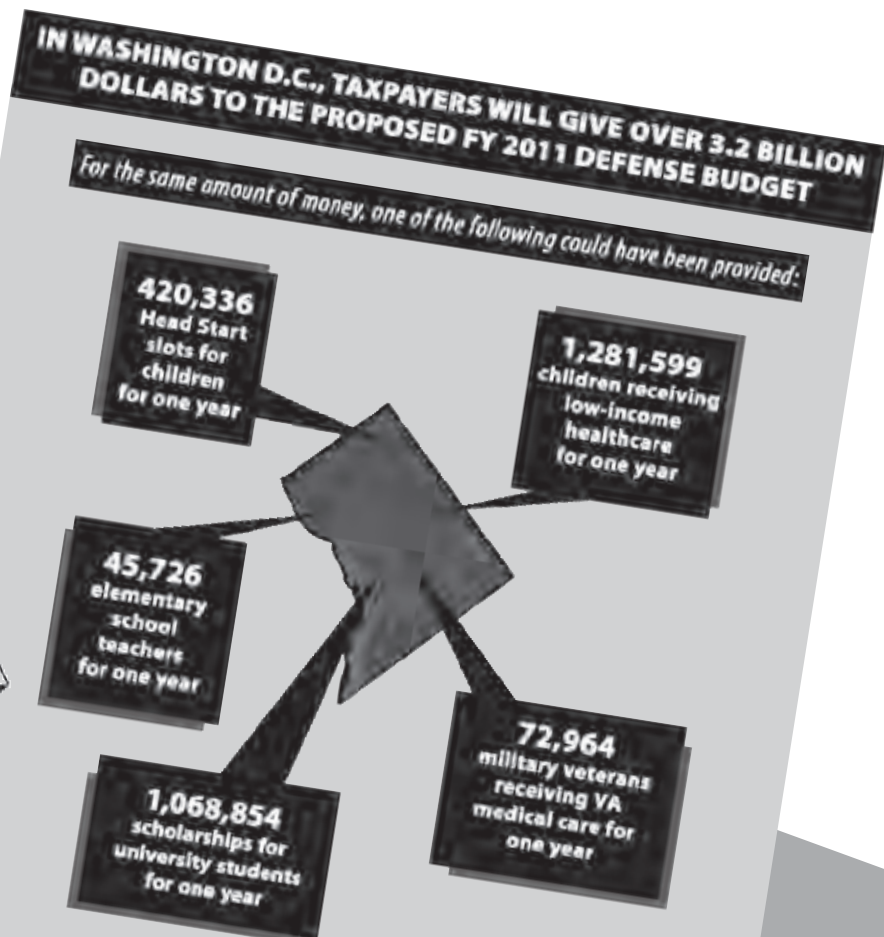
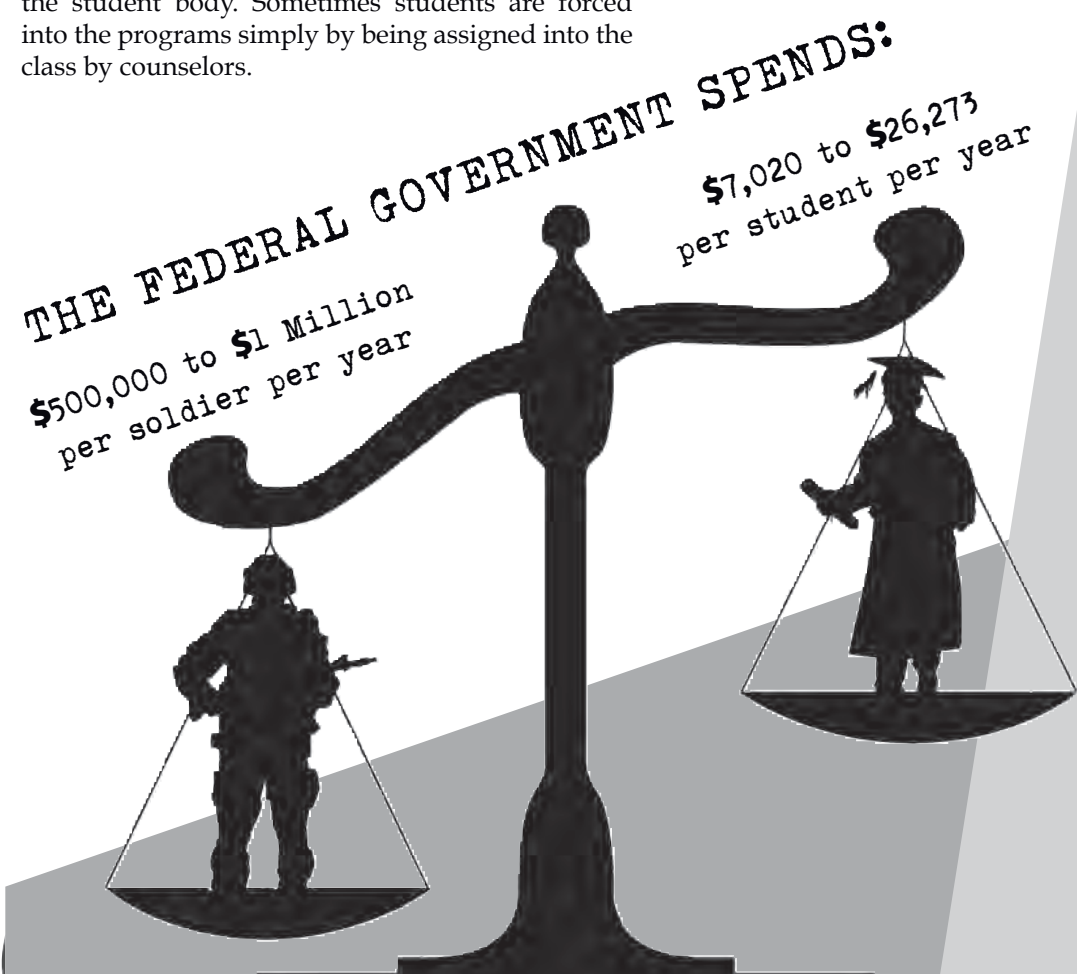
A long-time D.C. counter-recruitment activist John Judge tells the story this way:

A young Salvadoran first-year student told me she was involuntarily enrolled in JROTC. In one of her first classes the instructor passed a sheet of paper asking students if they did not want to take the class to provide a "good reason" why not. She wrote that she was opposed to war. She was told that was not a good enough reason.

When she complained to a Vice-Principal at the school she was told that she would lose all her academic credits for the quarter if she dropped out of JROTC. What has been needed for so long is a stated school policy that no student can be involuntarily enrolled in JROTC and that students who enrolled voluntarily can quit the class without academic penalties.

Last spring, Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley took a stand against such actions by signing a measure into law that prohibits the automatic release of student information to military recruiters gathered as a result of the administration of a military test in the state's high schools. The law (HB 176/SB778) will ensure that the decision to share test results and accompanying private information such as their social security numbers and demographic information with military recruiters rests solely in the hands of students and their parents. Maryland is the first state to pass such a law.

Pat Elder serves on the steering committee of the National Network Opposing the Militarization of Youth.



VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The World We Want

by David Swanson

Following the nonviolent revolution, we will have a representative government with publicly financed elections, public and community media, diminished power for political parties, smaller ungerrymandered districts, no Senate and paper ballots counted by hand. There will be no war without a public referendum. We will vote out of office any legislators who do not impeach and sanction war criminals and profiteers.

We will use this new system of government to eliminate the three dangers with which the war economy threatens us. First, we will eliminate the risk of nuclear catastrophe by leading the globe in disarmament and in the elimination of nuclear energy facilities. Second, we will eliminate the risk of environmental disaster by ending wars fought of, by, and for oil, and by replacing wars with green energy as our leading public investment. And third, we will eliminate the risk of economic implosion by plugging the drain of military spending and shifting our resources to education, infrastructure, housing, and other human needs, as well as energy. We will join the world in establishing global rights and justice.

In 1906 William James proposed replacing a military draft with a peaceful service draft. In the 1920s, Henry Ford and Thomas Edison proposed we create an economy based on carbohydrates rather than hydrocarbons. In 1952, President Truman's Material's Policy Commission recommended a shift to solar power, predicting that three-quarters of homes would be solar powered by 1975. In 1963, Senator George McGovern introduced a bill that would have created a commission to begin converting our industries from war to peace. We have the ideas. **We need the will, the organizing and the nonviolent action to impose our ideas on the plutopentagonocracy that is steering us off a cliff.**

David Swanson is a nationally known blogger and author. He co-founded Afterdowningstreet.org, now known as WarIsACrime.org and most recently wrote a book titled Daybreak: Undoing the Imperial Presidency and Forming a More Perfect Union. His forthcoming book is War Is A Lie.

Building the New Society

By Marta Benavides

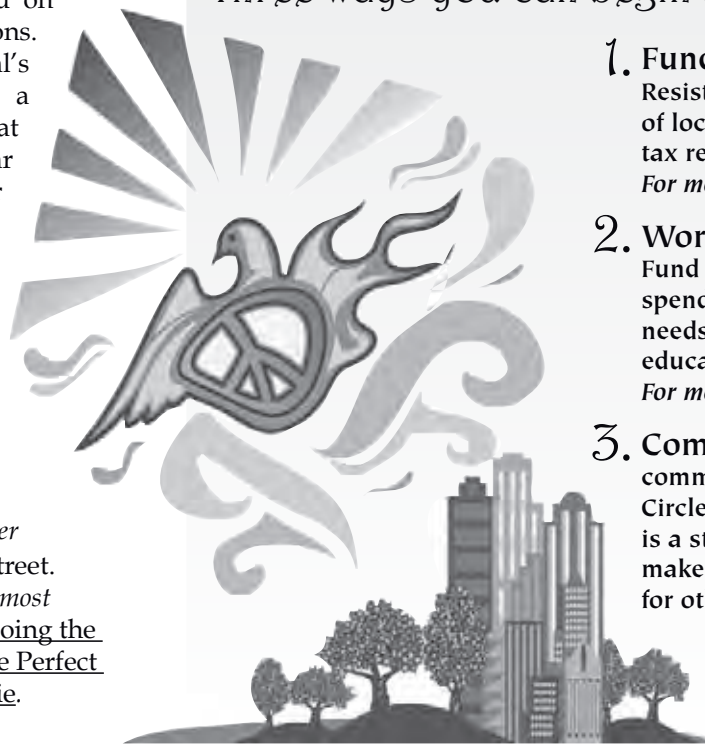
Another world is possible, urgent and necessary and together we can make it happen. To create this better world, we must first make a conscious, intentional decision to do so. Today, our world faces devastating crises in our economies, food systems and environment, and we must recognize that the only way out is understanding. **We have come to a new era, and it is not an era of change, but the change of an era.** Many people will continue to advocate for reform, for mending the system so it can continue to survive. But the extremity of today's crises means that world will never be the same, ever again. We must consciously and purposefully choose to build new societies with practices that care for people and the planet. Many are already doing this work. We must find each other and work in collaborative ways, bridging the movements and people of the South and the North, and find the ways to bring our relatives, friends, organizations, religions and movements on board.

We must be about social transformation through a culture of peace, including it in everything we do. We must create conditions, time and space for the expansion of our understanding and the growth of our movements. Let us work with the collective imagination, with ethics and aesthetics, to promote the conscious choice to be planetary and global citizens, within the framework of the rights of humans and the planet. Let us move together to build a new society.

Rev. Marta Benavides from El Salvador is an ordained minister, permaculturist, educator, and artist. She founded Siglo XXIII, the 23rd Century Movement for Sustainable Peace and is one of the co-chairs of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP). For more information on her work visit www.museoaja.org

Three ways you can begin building the New Society...

- 1. Fund peace not war** and join the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee (NWTRCC) a coalition of local, regional, and national groups supportive of war tax resistance.
For more information visit: www.nwtrcc.org
- 2. Work towards changing policy** by joining the Fund our Community campaign to reduce 25% in military spending, with the savings put toward meeting urgent needs, including the funding of jobs, housing, health care, education, and clean energy.
For more information visit: www.25percentsolution.com
- 3. Commit to restorative justice**, nonviolent communication and peacemaking by partnering with the Circle of Restorative Initiatives for Maryland. CRI Maryland is a statewide network that promotes restorative principles, makes sure everyone is at the table, and provides a model for other states to implement restorative justice initiatives.
For more information visit: www.crimaryland.org



COMPLEX REALITIES cont'd from page 1

interests. Earlier this year the media was set ablaze as U.S. casualties in Afghanistan reached 1000, while **the actual figures of Afghan and Iraqi casualties remain obscure and peripheral.** But to measure the cost of any war by these figures does not do justice to what is truly lost. Each figure in a death toll is the loss of a life and is the grief of those who survive; each one is as unjust and irreplaceable as the next. A cost of war is also the loss of ethical guidance, as found in the atrocious military abuses of women, the displacement of people from their homes, and the accumulation of resentments, all of which give birth to the wars of tomorrow.

Despite its diverse forms, the cost of war and all militarization is often paid by societies most vulnerable: those with impoverished and marginalized populations. Globally, it is the non-Western nations that suffer military operations and are subject to the whims of Western political interests, thereby staying dependent upon Western economies. It is these nations whose impoverished citizens are jeopardized with the threat of the collapse of instable infrastructure. Domestically, these populations are frequently the ones who enroll in military service due to economic constraints, depend on underfunded public services and are oftentimes the target of military tactics employed locally.

Our war practices expose the barbarism at the heart of our "civilized" American society, but there are many who are beginning to work towards alternatives. Globally, nationally and locally, organizations, communities and individuals are working to oppose war and to construct practices and relationships which promote sustainable, peaceful societies. In these movements, hope can be noted—hope that new forms of politics and of coexisting are possible without relying on the violence of war. ✌

Julian Forth is currently a job counselor at Jubilee Jobs and is a volunteer with the WASHINGTON PEACE CENTER.

**SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR
PEACE LETTER VOLUNTEERS:**

Alex Faler, Jay Forth, Katie Neal,
Devereaux Sterrette, and
Monica Wooters

WPC Update: What's the Washington Peace Center up to?



Hierald and Emily (intern)
enjoying the Golden Dragon at
the RALLY TO RESTORE SANITY.

This spring, we worked as part of the core group organizing the **Greater D.C. People's Assembly** in May, bringing together local organizers and activists on a wide range of issues to discuss the state of our local movement, provide a vision for the future of progressive D.C. and create a "People's Agenda" as a guide for our future work. As part of the **D.C. Metro Social Forum**, we fundraised to send 20 activists who are youth, low-income and people of color from D.C. to the **U.S. Social Forum**.

At the **Social Forum** we held a workshop on how national organizing in D.C. can better support local work and passed out over 500 copies of our last *Peace Letter, the Activist Guide to D.C.*, which contains all the tools we need to change the world. IT WAS A HIT!

We began a training series for local activists on important organizing skills, including using social media for organizing and designing campaign posters.

We expanded our online *Resource Guide* by adding and updating topics. We also completely revamped our *Organization Directory*, which is now a comprehensive and searchable guide to over 300 local progressive groups.

This fall, we supported and participated in many important mobilizations, including **Appalachia Rising, protesting mountain-top removal, One Nation Working Together and the Peace Table, and the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear** by Jon Stewart and Stephan Colbert.

Throughout it all, we continue to keep our online calendar updated and comprehensive with about 40 events per week, searchable by date, location and topic, and provide lots of other resources, including stages and sound systems for dozens of progressive events, and thousands of discounted photocopies.

**We're excited to begin another year of building our movement for peace and justice.
Here's to Peace in 2011!**

We Thank You For Your Support!



Sign me up for Activist Alert Emails!

Name: _____

Street: _____

City, State, & Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

I WORK FOR PEACE!

Enclosed is my check for:

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$250

other amount: \$ _____

We rely heavily on individual contributions to do our important work, so please join today!

The Washington Peace Center is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Your contributions are tax-deductable. Call (202) 234-2000, donate online at www.washingtonpeacecenter.org, or send your contributions to:

**The Washington Peace Center
1525 Newton St NW
Washington, D.C. 20010**

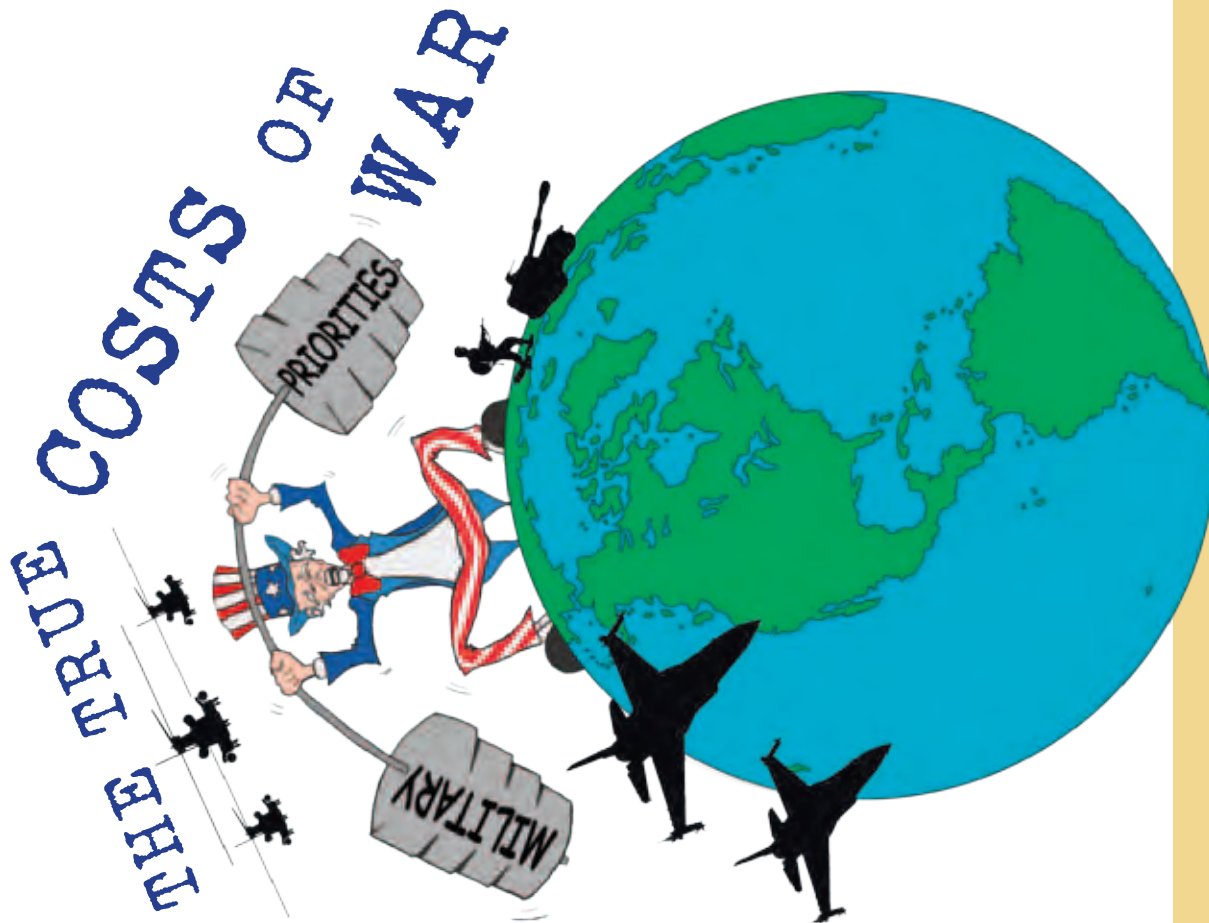
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Inside!



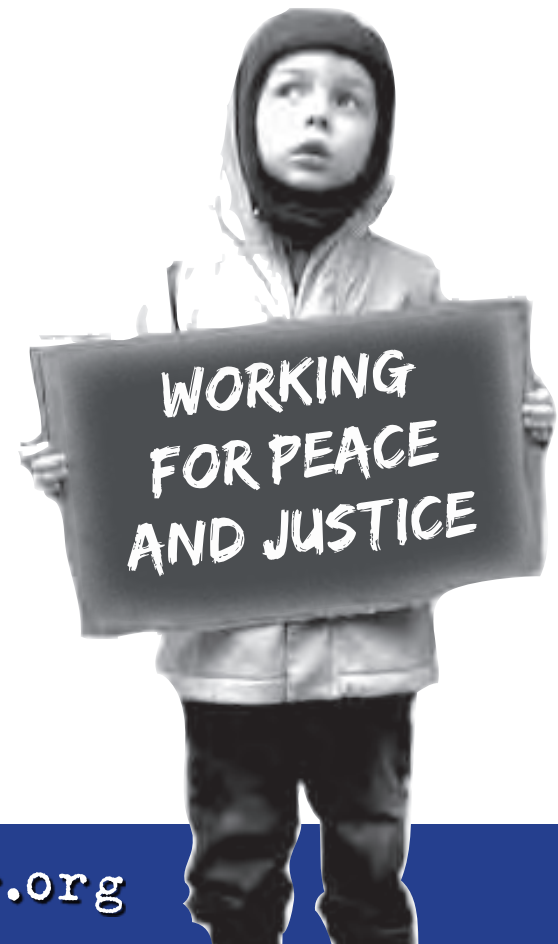
- Militarism and the Environment
 - The Long War: America's 39 Year War on Drugs
 - Stories of Hope: Salvadorans Living in D.C.
 - U.S. Social Forum Follow-Up
 - Building the New Society
- AND MORE!**

Have a look at www.washingtonpeacecenter.org
for our online calendar of DC progressive events!

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