

# Escalating the War in Afghanistan: No Good War, No Good Drone

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Eight years of slaughter, and not so much as a hint at what a “victory” would look like. It’s gotten to the point where even polls by Fox News show a majority of Americans against escalating the war in Afghanistan, and polls by more honest organizations show a majority wanting to bring home the troops that are there now.

But our so-called representatives in Congress are reluctant to “interfere” with their own primary Constitutional responsibilities, and the so-called executive whom they’ve given free reign is undecided about whether to listen to us or the military. There’s no time like the present to “go out there and make him do it.”

On Monday, October 5, citizens from across the country will join together at the White House in nonviolent resistance to and demonstration against the ongoing wars. You can safely demonstrate or you can choose to risk arrest as many of us will be doing. Sign up now at <http://nogoodwar.org> The more people who come, the more reluctant the police will be to arrest anyone, and the more reluctant our government will be to defy the will of the majority we represent. If you cannot come to DC, you can call your congress member on Monday, October 5th at (202) 224-3121 and tell them to vote no on any more money for wars. Here’s where your congress member stands: <http://afterdowningstreet.org/node/43479> And here are two lists of events happening all over the country marking 8 years in the Graveyard of Empires: <http://natassembly.org> and <http://unitedforpeace.org>

If, on the other hand, you CAN join us in our empire’s capital, please consider coming for more than one day. On October 2nd and 3rd, Friday and Saturday (and you can come for just Saturday too), there will be a conference at Georgetown Law School in downtown Washington, D.C., that you won’t want to miss called “Who Decides About War?” Here are some of the speakers:

- \* Jean Athey, Peace Action, Montgomery County, MD
- \* Phyllis Bennis, Institute for Policy Studies
- \* Leah Bolger, National Vice-President, Veterans for Peace
- \* John Bonifaz, Attorney at Law
- \* Elaine Brower, Military Families Speak Out
- \* Prof. Marjorie Cohn, President, National Lawyers Guild
- \* Rep. Michael Fisher, State Representative, Lincoln, Vermont
- \* Bonnie Gorman, Military Families Speak Out, Boston
- \* Mort Halperin, Senior Adviser, Open Society Institute, Keynote Speaker
- \* Sen. Richard Madaleno, State Senator, Montgomery County, Maryland
- \* Ben Manski, Esq., Executive Director, Liberty Tree

- \* Geoff Millard, Chair of the Board of Directors, Iraq Veterans Against the War
- \* John Nichols, Esq., The Nation magazine
- \* Caleb Rossiter, Professor, International Service, American University
- \* Jeremy Scahill, author, Blackwater, Keynote Speaker
- \* Benson Scotch, Senior Legal Counsel, Bring the Guard Home! It's the Law.
- \* David Swanson, Founder, After Downing Street
- \* Don Wallace, Professor, Georgetown Law School

Learn more: <http://WhoDecidesAboutWar.org>

Wouldn't it be nice to hold a conference like this in your own town? You easily can, by arranging for one or more of these speakers to be there, and by using the magic of video. Videos of this DC conference will be made available. And there are wonderful videos already out there. For example, take a look at the videos called "This Is Where We Take Our Stand" ( <http://thisiswherewetakeourstand.com> ). The latest one shows a U.S. veteran in tears after having mistakenly called in air strikes against an Afghan village. For more powerful footage along the same lines see the "Winter Soldier" videos: <http://www.ivaw.org/wintersoldier/testimony>

Or consider showing Robert Greenwald's new film "Rethink Afghanistan." There are six parts available now online, covering the civilian casualties, the financial costs of escalation, the futility of the occupation, the impact on Pakistan, the impact on women, and expert views on the impossibility of "victory." Check it out: <http://rethinkafghanistan.com>

But please don't do events without music. I did some events this week with the amazing music of David Rovics <http://www.davidrovics.com> A musician in DC named Brenda Elthon just sent me this wonderful set of songs: <http://www.myspace.com/SongsForOurSoldiers> And of course Emma's Revolution and dozens of great groups that I pre-apologize for not mentioning have been leading the way for years now: <http://www.emmasrevolution.com>

And do not — I repeat — do NOT hold an event meant to educate without making sure that people will attend who do not already agree, or without videotaping the event and immediately posting the video online. We actually have the technology and the reach needed to educate this country. We've already turned a majority against all wars, Republican wars, Democratic wars, bad wars, "good" wars. But our understanding of war, of what creates it, and of how exactly to stop it needs to deepen.

I received an Email today celebrating the "morality" of pulling out troops and sending more drones. Others have begun pushing the idea that Afghanistan may be, like Iraq, the "wrong" war, whereas the REAL "right" war is in Pakistan. All such talk reveals the thinness of our war opposition. Talking about the financial cost of war and the cost to the war-makers themselves can be useful if it brings a specific war to an end. But we must not stop clearly demanding an end to wars because they kill people. Period. Complicating the issue is not strategic or smart. It can be severely damaging. We must end all aggressive wars, or ending any one of them will just launch the next one.

Lobbying a president to end wars can be useful if it communicates the message far and wide, but presidents will never end the use of war, and strengthening the misunderstanding that such decisions should be up to presidents can do great damage. Influencing a president is almost impossible. Influencing a senator is extremely difficult. Influencing a House

member is actually feasible and strategic. And luckily, we don't need the White House or the Senate in order to end wars. All we have to do is convince our representatives that we will give them hell, make their lives miserable, and vote them out of office if they vote for any more funding. That is the message you should call with on Monday, October 5th.

*David Swanson is the author of the new book "Daybreak: Undoing the Imperial Presidency and Forming a More Perfect Union" by Seven Stories Press. You can order it and find out when tour will be in your town: <http://davidswanson.org/book>*

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