

The World Can't Wait, Won't Wait, Isn't Waiting

Presentation to the Kuala Lumpur Peace Conference

By [Cynthia McKinney](#)

Global Research, February 05, 2007

5 February 2007

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

It is among the greatest pleasures of my life to have been invited to participate in this Conference dedicated to peace. I look forward to joining the international community of activists dedicated to change based on the principles of dignity, justice, self-determination, and peace for all the peoples of the world.

Everyone in this room and every participant in this Conference is here because we want peace. Peace and justice.

And these principles of peace and dignity, justice and self-determination were embodied in the policies pursued by our host, The Honorable Tun Mahathir, while he was Prime Minister of Malaysia. In fact, it was Tun Mahathir who put Malaysia on the map for me when he stood up to the world's economic powers and refused to cash their check of dependency. Instead, Tun Mahathir returned their check and said out loud for the entire world to hear that Malaysia would chart its own course. As a result of that singular act of pride, self-determination, confidence, and independence, Malaysia boasts a strong economy and a legacy of uncommon independence.

But, Tun Mahathir has also learned that such independent thinking, and confidence in the people comes at a personal price. For while his message ricocheted around the world and struck me, an African American woman steeped in the Old Confederate South of the United States, the people we fight for are rarely in a position to reward such acts of courage. Yet the powers that be always seem to be able to exact their punishment. So oftentimes, where there is courage, truth, compassion, belief in the people, and a solid sense of right and wrong, there is also aloneness, vulnerability, or deep disappointment.

But instead of abandoning the struggle, we come together at this important Conference to commune with each other, learn from each other, give love and support to each other, recharge our batteries, and continue our work on behalf of what is right in a world currently filled with so much wrong.

Not too long ago, I was asked by Debra Sweet to endorse the activities of the American peace-seeking organization named World Can't Wait. They advocate the impeachment of George Bush and other Members of his Administration because in their view, the World Can't Wait.

I agree with them.

And after having been defeated for the second time by an unsupportive Democratic Party and Republican voters who crossed over and voted in the Democratic Primary for my

opponent, and knowing that George Bush had earned impeachment, I decided that I would do it if no one else would. So, on my last day in Congress, after 12 years of service to my people and my country, I offered Articles of Impeachment against President Bush, Vice President Cheney, and Secretary of State Rice.

Impeachment is America's roadmap back to dignity. Impeachment is the Constitutional way to handle an Administration that has, from the outset, violated so many tenets of the U.S. Constitution. It is also a way of saying "No, we do not condone what has been done in our name, and we are not complicit."

The first time I felt the sting of Republican retribution and Democratic Party indifference was in 2002 when I questioned the Administration's explanation of what happened on September 11th, 2001. I am the Member of Congress who asked the simple question, "What did the Bush Administration know and when did it know it, about the tragic events of September 11th." After I was defeated in 2002, I traveled all over my country supporting the anti-war movement and informing the American people of the lies of the Bush Administration.

The film "American Blackout" tells the whole story of how Republicans stole two Presidential elections and of how Republicans stole two elections from me.

Well, as it turns out, The World Didn't Wait. And activists in the rest of the world are the people now practicing the art of effective resistance.

I guess it started in 1959 with Cuba. However, Cuba is no longer alone in its attempt to chart its own course.

In 1998, Venezuelans elected Hugo Chavez who has used oil profits to set up healthcare for all, arts programs for the children, and subsidized education, including free universities.

In 2001, the people of Cote d'Ivoire rejected dictatorship and up to today, continue to try and chart an independent course despite huge big power interference due to offshore oil reputed to be of the quality of Nigeria's.

In 2002, Brazilians sent shockwaves throughout the Americas by electing the Workers' Party Lula to become their head of state.

In 2003 Argentina elected Kirchner, 2004, Spain elected Zapatero, and India rejected the BJP politics of division. In 2005, Bolivia elected Morales; 2006, Bachelet in Chile, Correa in Ecuador, Ortega in Nicaragua were all elected, with one agenda—to provide prosperity, independence, justice, and peace—to the people that they represent.

And let us not forget the valiant people of Haiti who twice have had their elected President, Aristide, removed from office by means of U.S. intrigue. But the Haitian people took to the streets and demanded that their votes be counted and that the election not be stolen as the U.S. opposed the election of Aristide's friend and ally, Rene Preval.

Today, Preval is the President of Haiti because the Haitian people took every step within their means to ensure that their votes were counted and that their democracy was respected.

Against tremendous odds, people who have far less than most Americans have—in terms at least of material goods—stood up and took their fates in their hands. They did what Mario Savio asked Americans to do in the 1960s. They put their bodies against the levers and the gears and the wheels of the machine and they said to the owners if you don't stop it, we will. And stop it, they did. The people of these countries stopped the machine. And I know that Americans can do it, too.

On the day before he was murdered, in his less-celebrated "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said that he is happy to be living in the second half of the 20th Century because something is happening in our world. He said, "The masses of people are rising up. And wherever they are assembled . . . whether in Johannesburg, Nairobi, Accra, or New York City, the cry is always the same: "We want to be free."

Well, I can stand here nearly 40 years later and say that at the dawn of the 21st Century, "something is happening in our world!" The world's marginalized, exploited, and dispossessed are taking center stage because they have decided to defy imperial domination. They are saying that resource wars that hurt the masses and benefit the few are illegal, immoral, and just plain wrong.

If Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. were with us today, I think he would be proud of the people around the world who are standing up for themselves. But would he be proud of American resistance?

I'm sure Dr. King would wonder why the American people have failed to change their own government when it's so very possible to do, notwithstanding the stolen elections.

What is clear is that the world isn't waiting for the people of the United States to act. But what the world is showing us, is that if we, in the United States, fail to act, we will be the ones left far behind.

Republicans stole the 2000 Presidential election.

Then, on September 11th a grave tragedy befell our country. We, the American people, were promised a white paper by Colin Powell stating what happened, how it happened, and who did it. We have yet to receive such a white paper, Osama bin Laden is on the FBI website, but not for September 11th! And yet, the American people continue to rely on the truthfulness of the Administration for explanations.

Hot on the heels of September 11th, however, the Administration pushed through a series of draconian laws that usurp the United States Constitution and the civil liberties embodied in the Bill of Rights that make us "free," the ostensible cause of the September 11th attacks in the first place, according to the Administration story.

Then, the Administration seized the September 11th tragedy to invade and occupy Iraq while lying to the American people and the global community about why this action was necessary.

A campaign of terror ensued at home with the U.S. government targeting the Muslim community and actually rounding up innocent, law-abiding residents for interrogations. Those of all faiths, races, and ethnicities who dissented from the Administration's policies found themselves targeted for surveillance and worse. Medical records, bank records,

telephone conversations, e-mails, regular mail, and more, all became subject to government seizure. Even church sermons, environmentalists, and peace groups were monitored. The Administration spied on the American people, breaking U.S. law, and lied to them about it.

The Administration stole the 2004 Presidential election, and immediately set the stage for attacks on other countries it didn't like. It told us to expect war for the next generation and targeted 60 countries around the world. It has now initiated gunboat diplomacy against Iran, is saber rattling against Syria, taunting North Korea, and has actually dropped bombs on the poor, defenseless people of Somalia. Ethiopia, a country with a proud heritage of never having succumbed to any colonial power is now firmly a Bush vassal, part of the Administration's war machine against fellow Africans.

Interestingly, none of what I've said is a secret in the U.S.

When Bobby Kennedy was asked about a U.S. military strike on Cuba during the Cuban Missile Crisis, his response was that it was unseemly for a country the size of the United States to use military force against a small country like Cuba.

Bobby Kennedy, would have been President of the United States had he not been murdered by assassin's bullets. And I'm told that Bobby Kennedy was considering Dr. King to be his Vice President, but the assassins got Dr. King, too.

Who could explain today's U.S. behavior to Bobby Kennedy or Dr. King? How do we maintain any dignity or pride or responsibility to our children and to the world's children when we fail to exercise every tool available to us to stop the Bush Administration and for that matter, any future Administration that would do this in our name?

I am pleased to announce that I have signed the online petition pledging not to vote for any candidate who has voted in the past or who will vote this year to fund the war.

The petition can be found at www.petitiononline.com/Abstain/petition.html.

The work being done here in Malaysia is necessary and we must conduct our lives in such a way as to mean it when we say "No War!"

Each one of us, individually, has no choice but to become the leader we are looking for. Otherwise, we will continue to get what we've always been given: handpicked leaders who don't represent us.

One way for the American people to demand accountability from their leaders and a return to respectability is to impeach the Bush Administration. However, the complicity of both major U.S. parties in this intensifying debacle is clear now that the Democrats have taken impeachment "off the table." And if the Democratic Congress, that owes its majority status to antiwar voters, votes to fund the war, then our mission will become very clear.

We will have to change the structure of U.S. politics because changing the people, clearly, isn't enough.

This is quite possible with the right set of circumstances. And the current elected leadership is helping to create those circumstances.

When the Presidential election was stolen in Mexico, defenders of democracy shut Mexico

City down for weeks until the unrightful, new Mexican President was sworn in. After that, they formed a “parallel” government. And if Mexican defenders of democracy can do it, certainly American defenders of democracy can do it, too.

For us, nothing less than the soul of our country is at stake. But for the world, nothing less than the fate of mankind is at stake.

Because of the work of the Perdana Global Peace Organisation, Kuala Lumpur has become the “peace capital” of the world. And because of this Conference that should be taken to every Continent Kuala Lumpur will shine the light of peace on the world by showing us the horrors of war.

Thank you, Tun Mahathir, for hosting this Conference for peace. Thank you Tun Mahathir, for giving us the courage to go forth, especially in the United States, and build an uncompromised movement for dignity and justice, based on peace and love.

Thank you.

You can learn more about Cynthia McKinney at www.cynthiaforcongress.com and coming soon at www.allthingscynthiamckinney.com.

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