

US Peace Movement Adopts New Comprehensive Strategy

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Last week 700 leading peace activists from around the United States met and strategized in Albany, N.Y. (<http://nationalpeaceconference.org>). They discussed, debated, and voted for a comprehensive new plan for the coming months. The plan includes a new focus and some promising proposals for building a coalition that includes the labor movement, civil rights groups, students, and other sectors of the activist world that have an interest in ending wars and/or shifting our financial resources from wars to where they're actually needed. The full plan, including a preface, is [available online](#).

The plan includes endorsements and commitments to participate in events planned for Detroit on August 28th, and Washington, D.C., on August 28th and October 2nd, as well as a national day of actions led by students on October 7th, and a week of anti-war actions around the country marking the start of Year 10 in Afghanistan on October 7-16. Dates to put on your calendar now for 2011 include mid-March nationally coordinated teach-ins to mark the eighth year of the Iraq War and to prepare for bi-coastal spring demonstrations the following month, New York City, San Francisco and Los Angeles mobilizations on April 9, 2011, and blocking of ports on May Day.

Here is the full list of actions agreed upon:

1.The Rainbow PUSH Coalition and the United Auto Workers (UAW) have invited peace organizations to endorse and participate in a campaign for Jobs, Justice, and Peace. We endorse this campaign and plan to be a part of it. On August 28, 2010, in Detroit, we will march on the anniversary of that day in 1963 when Walter Reuther, president of UAW, Martin Luther King, Jr., and other civil rights leaders joined with hundreds of thousands of Americans for the March on Washington. In Detroit, prior to the March on Washington, 125,000 marchers participated in the Freedom Walk led by Dr. King. At the march, King delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech for the first time before sharing it with the world in Washington. This year, a massive march has been called for October 2 in Washington. We will begin to build momentum again in Detroit on August 28th. We also endorse the August 28, 2010 Reclaim the Dream Rally and March called by Rev. Al Sharpton and the National Action Network to begin at 11 a.m.. at Dunbar High School, 1301 New Jersey Avenue Northwest.

2.Endorse, promote and mobilize for the Saturday, October 2nd "One Nation" march on Washington, DC initiated by 1199SEIU and the NAACP, now being promoted by a growing coalition, which includes the AFL-CIO and U.S. Labor Against the War, and civil rights, peace and other social justice forces in support of the demand for jobs, redirection of national resources from militarism and war to meeting human needs, fully funding vital social

programs, and addressing the fiscal crisis of state and local governments. Organize and build an antiwar contingent to participate in the march. Launch a full-scale campaign to get endorsements for the October 2 march on Washington commencing with the final plenary session of this conference.

3. Endorse the call issued by a range of student groups for Thursday, October 7, as a national day of action to defend education from the horrendous budget cuts that are laying off teachers, closing schools, raising tuition and limiting access to education, especially for working and low income people. Demand "Money for Education, not U.S. Occupations" and otherwise link the cuts in spending for education to the astronomical costs of U.S. wars and occupations.

4. Devote October 7-16 to organizing local and regional protests to commemorate the ninth anniversary of the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan through demonstrations, marches, rallies, vigils, teach-ins, cultural events and other actions to demand an immediate end to the wars and occupations in both Iraq and Afghanistan and complete withdrawal of all military forces and private security contractors and other mercenaries. The nature and scheduling of these events will reflect the needs of local sponsors and should be designed to attract broad co-sponsorship and diverse participation of antiwar forces with other social justice organizations and progressive constituencies.

5. Support and build Remember Fallujah Week November 15-19.

6. Join the new and existing broad-based campaigns to fund human needs and cut the military budget. Join with organizations representing the fight against cutbacks (especially labor and community groups) to build coalitions at the city/town, state and national level. Draft resolutions for city councils, town and village meetings and voter referendum ballot questions linking astronomical war spending to denial of essential public services at home. (Model resolutions and ballot questions will be circulated for consideration of local groups.) Obtain endorsements of elected officials, town and city councils, state parties and legislatures, and labor bodies. Work the legislative process to make military spending an issue. Oppose specific military funding programs and bills, and couple them with human needs funding issues. Use lobbying and other forms of protest, including civil disobedience campaigns, to focus attention on the issue.

7. Mid-March, 2011 nationally coordinated teach-ins to mark the eighth year of the Iraq War and to prepare for bi-coastal spring demonstrations the following month.

8. Bi-Coastal mass spring mobilizations in New York City, San Francisco and Los Angeles on April 9, 2011. These will be accompanied by distinct and separate non-violent direct actions on the same day. A prime component of these mobilizations will be major efforts to include broad new forces from youth to veterans to trade unionists to civil and human rights groups to the Arab, Muslim and other oppressed communities, to environmental organizations, social justice and faith-based groups. Veterans and military families will be key to these mobilizations with special efforts to organize this community to be the lead contingent. Launch a full-scale campaign to get endorsements for these actions commencing with the final plenary session of this conference.

9. Select a week prior to or after the April actions for local lobbying of elected officials at a time when Congress is not in session. Lobbying to take multiple forms from meeting with

local officials to protests at their offices and homes.

10. Recalling that the West Coast Longshore Workers Union shut down the ports for May Day 2008, and noting the recent successful actions in Oakland to block the unloading of an Israeli ship in solidarity with Palestine, the National Peace Conference will join with immigrant rights and union organizers to plan for May Day actions that include picket lines at the ports in San Francisco and Los Angeles. A large portion of war materiel is shipped from West Coast ports. These areas are home to large number of immigrants, many of whom work as truck drivers. A picket line, with veterans in the forefront, provides an opportunity to unite broader sections of the people in action. It also generates the possibility of impacting the war by blocking shipments of war materiel, and provides further consideration for continuing direct actions of this kind.

11. National tours. Organize over a series of months nationally-coordinated tours of prominent speakers and local activists that link the demands for immediate withdrawal to the demands for funding social programs, as outlined above.

12. Pressure on Iran from the US, Israel and other quarters continues to rise and the threat of a catastrophic military attack on Iran, as well as the ratcheting up of punitive sanctions that primarily impact the people of Iran, are of grave concern. All peace activists and organizations should be organizing for a peaceful and just solution to the concern over Iran's nuclear program, including, but not limited to, supporting a Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone in the Middle East (which would of course deal with Israel's nuclear arsenal) and insisting that diplomacy, not war or threat of war, is the only acceptable option.

13. In the event of an imminent U.S. government attack on Iran or such an attack, or a U.S.-backed Israeli attack against Iran, or any other major international crisis triggered by U.S. military action, a continuations committee approved by the conference will mount rapid, broad and nationally coordinated protests by antiwar and social justice activists.

14. In the event of U.S.-backed military action by Israel against Palestinians, aid activists attempting to end the blockade of Gaza, or attacks on other countries such as Lebanon, Syria, or Iran, a continuations committee approved by the conference will condemn such attacks and support widespread protest actions.

15. Support actions to end the Israeli occupation and repression of Palestinians and the blockade of Gaza.

16. Support actions aimed at dismantling the Cold War nuclear, biological, radiological and chemical weapons and delivery systems. Support actions aimed at stopping the nuclear renaissance of this Administration, which has proposed to spend \$80 billion over the next 10 years to build three new nuclear bomb making factories and "well over" \$100 billion over the same period to modernize nuclear weapons delivery systems. We must support actions aimed at dismantling nuclear, biological, radiological and chemical weapons and delivery systems. We must oppose the re-opening of the Iranian mining industry, new nuclear power plants, and extraction of other fossil fuels that the military consumes.

17. Work in solidarity with GIs, veterans, and military families to support their campaigns and calls for action. Demand support for the troops when they return home and support efforts to counter military recruitment.

18. Take actions against war profiteers, including oil and energy companies, weapons manufacturers, and engineering firms, whose contractors are working to insure U.S. economic control of Iraq's and Afghanistan's resources.

19. Support actions, educational efforts and lobbying campaigns to promote a transition to a sustainable peace economy.

20. Develop and implement a multi-pronged national media campaign which includes the following: the honing of a message which will capture our message: "End the Wars and Occupations, Bring the Dollars Home"; a fundraising campaign which would enable the creation and national placement and broadcast of professionally developed print ads as public service radio and television spots which communicate this imperative to the public as a whole (which would involve coordinated outreach to some major funders); outreach to sympathetic media artists to enable the creation of these pieces; an intentional, aggressive, coordinated campaign to garner interviews on as many targeted national news venues as possible which would feature movement voices speaking to the honed our nationally coordinated message; a plan to place on message op-ed pieces in papers around the country on a nationally coordinated schedule.

21. We call for the equal participation of women in all aspects of the antiwar movement. We propose nonviolent direct actions either in Congressional offices or other appropriate and strategic locations, possibly defense contractors, Federal Buildings, or military bases in the U.S. These actions would be local and coordinated nationally, i.e., the same day for everyone (times may vary). The actions would probably result in arrests for sitting in after offices close. Entering certain facilities could also result in arrests. Participants would be prepared for that possible outcome before joining the action. Nonviolence training would be offered locally, with lists of trainers being made available. The message/demand would be a vote, a congressional action to end the wars: Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan. Close U.S. bases. Costs of war and financial issues related to social needs neglected because of war spending would need to be studied and statements regarding same be prepared before the actions. Press release would encourage coverage because of the actions being local and nationally coordinated.

22. We will convene one or more committees or conferences for the purpose of identifying and arranging boycotts, sit-ins, and other actions that directly interfere with the immoral aspects of the violence and wars that we protest.

23. The United National Antiwar Conference calls for building and expanding the movement for peace by consciously and continually linking it with the urgent necessity to create jobs and fund social needs. We call for support from the antiwar movement to tie the wars and the funding for the wars to the urgent domestic issues through leaflets, signs, banners and active participation in the growing number of mass actions demanding jobs, health care, housing, education and immigrant rights such as:

July 25 – March in Albany in Support of Muslims Targeted by Preemptive Prosecution called by the Muslim Solidarity Committee and Project Salam.

July 29 & 30 Boycott Arizona Actions across the country as racist Arizona law SB 1070 goes into effect, including the mass march July 30 in NYC as the Arizona Diamondbacks play the Mets.

All the other mass actions listed above leading up to the bi-coastal actions on April 9, 2011.

24. The continuations committee elected at this conference shall reach out to other peace and social justice groups holding protests in the fall of 2010 and the spring of 2011, where such groups' demands and tactics are not inconsistent with those adopted at the UNAC conference, on behalf of exploring ways to maximize unity within the peace and social justice movements this fall and next spring.

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