



Peace Talk

Building a Culture of Peace

Vol. 30 No. 1

Where Is The Outrage?

The **Costs of War** Campaign to *Bring the War Dollars Home/ Restore Our Communities* co-sponsored by NC Peace Action and American Friends Service Committee-Carolinas, is advancing like a peace surge. The NC campaign mobilizes public support for our tax money to go toward meeting human and community needs rather than wars and excessive “defense” spending.

Durham was our first Town Hall Meeting, held Sept. 2011, which led to resolutions from three elected bodies. On Feb. 20, **Raleigh** launched its campaign. State Rep. Paul Luebke opened the forum by drawing the connections between unfunded mass transit in the Triangle and the ample funding for wars. Rep. Walter Jones, Rep. David Price, and Rep. Brad Miller all addressed the crowd. They heard speakers describe their work with the homeless, mentally ill, and veterans. Rep. Jones has been a strong ally for ending the war in Afghanistan. He spoke passionately about the human costs and asked “Where is the Outrage?”



Congressman Walter Jones

The same night, **Greensboro** citizens, including five elected officials, assembled to hear how budget cuts are affecting their community. Matthew Hoh, former Marine and State Dept. official in Afghanistan, spoke at both programs about the waste in military spending and how the consequent budget trade offs actually threaten our security

On April 21, **Burlington** held a community forum with speakers addressing everything from homelessness to the environment. Ten elected representatives spoke to the crowd including US Rep. Howard Coble who stated his opposition to the war in Afghanistan. His Democratic challenger, Tony Foriest, reiterated the

need to reorder priorities. Eighteen organizations have endorsed the campaign. Please help us enlist more.

Campaign Statement

North Carolina taxpayers’ share for the wars since 2001 has been \$31 billion. We pay that bill in the form of budget cuts to universities and schools, health care for the poor, and the loss of block grants to our communities as Congress tries to cut the deficit created in large part by war spending.

We call for a reallocation of taxpayer money to create a sustainable economy that meets the needs of all Americans and responds to the aspirations of the poor around the world.

We believe the correct priorities to restore our communities and the health of our society are:

- **End the wars** (and demilitarize foreign policy.)
- **Save services** (including entitlements, education, health, and environmental protection.)
- **Provide sustainable jobs** (e.g. investing in infrastructure and renewable energy)

Local officials have already begun to speak out. Resolutions have been passed by the Durham City Council, County commissioners and Board of Education. Similar resolutions have been passed by the US Council of Mayors, the City Councils of Los Angeles, San Francisco, Eugene OR, Baltimore, MD, Hartford, CT, Cleveland, OH, and Charlottesville, VA among others. Many local offi-

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cials recognize that painful cuts in local budgets are in part a consequence of prioritizing wars and a vast military. “

Invitation

Will your committee or organization sign on to the Costs of War campaign? Join the effort to bring our war dollars home and fund our communities. Send your name, affiliation, address and other contact information to director@ncpeaceaction.org. Visit our Costs of War page on our website ncpeaceaction.org for the list of endorsers.



Feb. 20th Raleigh Town Hall Meeting with Matthew Hoh, while Congressmen Walter Jones, Brad Miller and David Price with NC Senator Ellie Kinnaird and Representative Paul Luebke listen on.

"Communities nationwide feel the financial effects of keeping our troops in Afghanistan. Republicans are demanding drastic domestic spending cuts that are hurting people here at home. At the same time, the proposed budget for the war in Afghanistan for 2013 is \$88 billion. The annual cost to support one U.S. soldier in Afghanistan is more than \$1 million, according to the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments. That figure would employ about 35 Americans here at home through federal infrastructure spending."

- Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN)

To Our Readers



Betsy Crites

Those of us who organize the programs and write the bi-annual newsletter to keep you informed are extremely grateful for your membership. It helps us cover the bills and it strengthens the peace movement in North Carolina.

If you have joined/renewed, THANK YOU! If not, please return the enclosed card and envelope with whatever you can give so you won't miss the next newsletter.

NOTE: Did you send a check only to have it returned? We learned that some pieces are being returned while others arrive safely in our P.O. Box. The Post Office acknowledged a glitch in their system, but just in case (while they fix the glitch) this return envelop is addressed directly to our Treasurer. Please try again with the enclosed envelope. Thank you.



John Heuer

Transitions

In the coming month Betsy Crites, our Director of 2 ½ years, will pass the baton to John Heuer. He will serve for an interim period while the Board plans the next phase. John is a veteran and dedicated peace activist. He served as NCPA director in 2009 and as Chair of the Board from 2010 to the present. Betsy will continue to be active, but will focus on editing a book about the impact of the military on NC.

Is Peace Getting in the Way of Our War Plans? by David Swanson

What a bizarre circumstance this is. The irrational Iranians are behaving too reasonably. The unmovable Iranians seem to be compromising too readily.

This past weekend [mid-April], the United States and other major nations finally spoke with Iran. In 10 hours of talks (or 5 with translations), minus a lunch break, Iran agreed to a framework for ensuring that its nuclear program is only used for civilian purposes.

If this keeps up, the whole basis for war could be lost. And it's all the result of having finally spent a few hours talking with Iran. The obvious solution is to cut off the talks, issue ultimatums, lower the threshold for what justifies war, and impose more deadly sanctions than ever. And that's just what some of our misrepresentatives in Congress are about to try.

Although, the last time Iran tried to agree to ship its uranium out of the country for refinement, talks were conveniently sabotaged by an explosion in Iran. So, there are a variety of methods for sabotaging paths to peace.

But is this really so bizarre? Or does peace often threaten to get in the way of the best laid plans to pretend to be reluctantly forced into war as a "last resort"?

Let's not forget that the inspections in Iraq were working in 2003, the inspectors believed they could give more conclusive findings if allowed a little more time, and President Bush pulled the inspectors out in order to begin the shocking and awing. Bush and his subordinates then frequently falsely claimed that Iraq had kicked out the inspectors.

And let's not forget -- or let's learn now, if we never did -- that the Taliban offered after 9/11 to turn bin Laden over to a third country to be put on trial. Instead, our government chose a decade of war in Afghanistan, followed by an assassination, followed by the continuation of the war for additional years.

Some proponents of waging war on Iran admit that they do not fear Iran acquiring a nuclear weapon and using it; they fear Iran acquiring a nuclear weapon and doing the same thing every other nation does with them: not use it. It would then be harder to overthrow Iran's government. But those who want quick "regime change" clearly fear Iran agreeing to severe restrictions and inspections, which would eliminate all possibility of pretending that Iran has a nuclear weapons program.

This past weekend's talks clearly suggested that an alternative to war is possible. This prospect for peace was immediately denounced by right-wing Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, U.S. Senator Joe Lieberman and other members of Congress. A Senate effort to prevent the talks from even beginning was blocked by Sen. Rand Paul. Now Congress is coming back with more deadly sanctions, ultimatums, and resolutions requiring war.

But Congresswoman Barbara Lee has a bill with 21 cosponsors that would allow and require talks, end the Obama Administration's policy that forbids U.S. diplomats to have direct contact with Iranian government officials without express prior authorization from the Secretary of State, and prevent any war not legally authorized by Congress.

Now, who would be threatened by such a reasonable proposal, as long as war truly is the last resort?

David Swanson's books include "War Is A Lie." He blogs at <http://davidswanson.org> and <http://warisacrime.org> and works for the online activist organization <http://rootsaction.org>. He hosts Talk Nation Radio.

The U.S. Afghanistan (In)Security Pact by David Cortright

The security agreement signed in Kabul this week is being touted as a step toward stability and peace but it will likely bring neither. By allowing the U.S. to maintain military bases and forces in Afghanistan beyond 2014 it will prolong the war.

Under current U.S. military strategy, which will be ratified at the forthcoming NATO summit in Chicago, most NATO forces will disengage by 2014, but thousands of U.S. troops will remain at military bases in Afghanistan. This will be 'counterinsurgency light,' essentially the same policy as before but with fewer troops: military operations to kill and arrest insurgents, and support for the armed forces of the corrupt Kabul regime. This formula has not worked over the past decade and has little chance of succeeding in the next.

The U.S. strategy has no effective plan for ending what General Petraeus has called an 'industrial strength insurgency.' If U.S./NATO forces could not

subdue the Taliban with 140,000 troops, how will they succeed with far fewer soldiers? When I was in Kabul last October security specialists said the insurgency is stronger than ever (with an estimated 20,000 armed fighters) and that the Taliban control vast swaths of the country.

U.S. officials have described the security pact as a sign of the American commitment to support the Afghan people. We certainly should not abandon the Afghan people, but keeping thousands of troops there is not the way to help. We can demonstrate our solidarity with Afghanistan through other, more effective ways: pursuing a comprehensive peace negotiation process in the country and the region, continuing to fund successful social development programs, and supporting the rights of women and other under-represented populations.

David Cortright is the author of many books including *Ending Obama's Wars*. He teaches peace studies at U. of Notre Dame and is Director of Policy Studies at Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies. Cortright is also the former director of SANE, the predecessor of Peace Action.

Peace Scores in 2011

NC Congressional Delegation



G. K. Butterfield	45%
Renee Ellmers	0%
Walter Jones	64%
David Price	73%
Virginia Foxx	9%
Howard Coble	36%
Mike McIntyre	27%
Larry Kissell	18%
Sue Myrick	9%
Patrick McHenry	9%
Heath Shuler	36%
Mel Watt	73%
Brad Miller	55%

Based on 11 votes for FY2012 Defense Authorization/ Appropriation bills and amendments *Find details at our Peace Voter program on-line at ncpeaceaction.org*

We need NEW PRIORITIES

The House budget overwhelmingly targets low-income people for cuts (children, families, seniors, people with disabilities), while protecting the military from reductions and upper-income people from loss of any tax breaks.

In all your contacts to representatives, national, state and local convey the message: "We must prioritize meeting human needs over weapons and wars and tax breaks for the wealthy."

A Time for PEACE ACTION

May 16-18 will be the most important days of the year on Capital Hill for our issues.

The National Defense Authorization bill will be on the House floor. Allies will offer amendments to end the war in Afghanistan sooner, cut the Pentagon budget, and reduce nuclear weapons spending. They need our support.

Call your Congressional office. Go on-line to contactingthecongress.org or call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (877) 429-0678 and ask for your representative. Ask to speak to the assistant on

foreign policy. Tell them you want 1) the war in Afghanistan to end as soon as possible, 2) cuts to the bloated Pentagon budget, and 3) reduced spending on nuclear weapons.

NOW and AFTER May 16-18, ask them to vote for **HR 4173 and HR 780**.

H.R. 4173 "Prevent Iran from Acquiring Nuclear Weapons and Stop War Through Diplomacy Act," would reverse the "no contact" policy. Rep. Walter Jones of NC has co-sponsored this bill.

H.R. 780 the "Responsible End to the War in Afghanistan Act," would end combat operations in Afghanistan and limit funding to the safe and orderly withdrawal of all U.S. troops and military contractors. Reps. Mel Watt and Walter Jones have co-sponsored this bill.

The Student / Young Adult Peacemaker Program

NC Peace Action seeks to discover, honor, and reward young leaders who are working on solving the problems that face our world. We offer an annual Student Peacemaker Scholarship as well as workshops, internships and staff positions for students and young adults.

The Peace Legacy Fund is our earmarked account for contributions to this program. The enclosed card has a special check box. Please support the next generation of peacemakers. Visit the Student Peacemakers page at: ncpeaceaction.org



Lauren Zalla and Lauren Traugott-Campbell with Emily from Witness for Peace and our own John Heuer

2012 Celebration of Student Peacemakers



Student Peacemakers with the NC Peace Action Board of Directors and Hip Hop for Justice.

On April 27 friends, family, donors and well-wishers came to celebrate our Student and Young Adult Peacemakers Scholars. Now in its second year, the program featured **2010-11 Grand Prize winners Lauren Zalla and Lauren Traugott-Campbell** who reported on their travel to Cuba with Witness for Peace (WFP) in November 2011.

We announced our **2012 Peace Prize Awardees for travel abroad:**

- **Monserrat Alvarez** a sophomore at Meredith College in Raleigh and an activist in educational equality and immigrant justice, won a trip to Cuba.
- **Owen Clapp** an 8th grader at Centennial Campus Middle School a mentor with Avent West Children's Mentoring and activist with Brown Bag Ministry won a trip to Nicaragua.

And the **2012 Peace Prize Awardees for travel to Washington, DC:**

- **Ana Maria Reichenbach**, a senior at UNC-Chapel Hill and peace activist with SDS.
- **Courtney Newsome** a junior at Warren Wilson College active with racial justice.

Both attended the Spring Lobby Weekend of Friends Committee on National Legislation. Ana Maria spoke about the experience of lobbying Congress, which she said insightfully, "has one kind of power."

Special invitees, Yuwsuf Bell and Angaza Samora Laughinghouse delighted the audience with their introduction to Hip Hop for Justice.

The talent, exuberance and love of the Student Peacemakers, ranging in age from 13-23, was clearly a thrill to the older generation there to honor them. These students, already committed to peace and working for justice so early in their lives, reassured everyone that our future is in good hands. See full report on our Student Peacemakers page, ncpeaceaction.org



NCPA Director, Betsy Crites with Emily Zuccino, Assc Dir. of Witness for Peace SE and the 2012 Grand Prize Awardees, Monserrat Alvarez and Owen Clapp

Chapters and Collaborators



Above: Elders and Students march with Occupy to deliver letter to Bank of America in Chapel Hill



Above: Tax Day with Raleigh Peace Action

Upper Right: WWII Veteran Sam Winstead led "Pedaling for Peace" from Raleigh to DC, April 28- May 5

Right: Julie Budd of Alamance Peace Action, with AFSC graph of federal budget. Red represents the military, wars, VA and nuclear weapons



We thank all the organizations that have signed on to the Campaign to Bring Our War Dollars Home and Fund Our Communities as well as recent event collaborations with AFSC-Carolinas, HKonJ, Coalition for Peace w/ Justice, Witness for Peace, Jobs for Justice, NC Stop Torture Now, Americans for Peace, Orange Country Peace Coalition, Students for a Democratic Society, Elders for Peace, NC Coalition Against Corporate Power, Black Workers for Justice, and Global Grassroots Justice.

North Carolina Peace Action Education Fund

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