

ACTION REPORT



The Quarterly Newsletter of Peace Action and the Peace Action Education Fund – Winter 2011 Vol.50 No.1

WILL PEACE ACTION MAKE IT?

Yes We Will, But We Need Your Help!

— BY KEVIN MARTIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Among the wonderful experiences I had in New York City last May around the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference (NPT RevCon) at the United Nations was a wonderful non-violent civil resistance action during the morning rush hour at Grand Central Station, organized by the War Resisters League. It was a spirited, positive event calling for nuclear disarmament, that caught the attention of thousands of morning commuters.

As I walked in the picket line in the spacious lobby of Grand Central, a veteran, respected colleague I hadn't seen in years called out to me from behind. I was so happy to see him, and we embraced and tried to catch up on current happenings in each other's lives.

He was thrilled to be at the action, and also to hear of all the work we'd done for the phenomenal peace conference, keynoted by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, a few days before at Riverside Church, with over 1000 attendees (and we could have had more if we'd had a bigger meeting hall!) and the wonderful peace march through mid-town Manhattan of over 15,000 folks from around the world the day before.

All of a sudden he turned very serious and asked me, "Will Peace Action make it?" I was somewhat taken aback and thought "What is he talking about? We've been around for 53 years, our viability is not in question." But he pressed his point, expressing concern over the decline of the US peace movement and that many colleague organizations, while still plugging away, have experienced serious declines in funding, staffing and membership, and he said we were about the only thing left in terms of a national peace organization.

I have to admit I was a bit stunned, but also grateful, for his concern for Peace Action, and for his reminding me, yet again, how vital our leadership role is in the US peace movement at this time.

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Peace Action National Board Co-Chairs Helen Weber and Dave Pack recently circulated the following concise list of our 2010 highlights:

- Nuclear weapons abolition. Peace Action supported **Think Outside the Bomb**, a youth-led network for nuclear abolition, and its 10-day encampment outside of Los Alamos, New Mexico in early August 2010;
- A meaningful May 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review conference, including an international conference at Riverside Church and associated marches and rallies;
- Grassroots and national action in support of ratification of the new **START Treaty** reducing US and Russian deployed, strategic nuclear weapons by up to one-third;
- Significant reductions in an excessive military budget that does not produce real security, but does produce significant negative economic consequences;
- New alliances with community and labor groups through **One Nation Working Together** and the **New Priorities Network** to stress community needs and job creation over militarism;
- Electing congressional peace heroes and heroines through the **Peace Action Political Action Committee** and **Peace Voter 2010**;
- Opposition to the immoral war of greed in Iraq, approaching its eighth year;
- Conveying the ultimate futility of the war in Afghanistan through coordinated public education, field organizing, leadership in national coalitions and congressional lobbying.

This newsletter lays out some of our exciting initiatives for 2011, and subsequent newsletters and e-newsletters, our website and e-alerts will keep you informed and ask for your actions in the near future. Organizationally, we have big plans for building our membership, e-list subscribers and adding affiliates and chapters in several new states this year.

We have a terrific story to tell of a 53 year-old organization that is growing and changing all the time, yet remains true to our principles and our mandate. I can't help but think we are hiding our light under a bushel or selling ourselves too short. Just continuing to "make it" isn't good enough, or at least it shouldn't be, for any of us. Please do what you can to help build Peace Action!

LET'S INCREASE PEACE ACTION'S MEMBERSHIP

BY LARRY WITTNER

CHAIR, MEMBERSHIP/AFFILIATION COMMITTEE, PEACE ACTION NATIONAL BOARD

Peace Action does a great job of working for a peaceful world. But it could do an even better job if it had more members. After all, it takes members to talk to their neighbors, circulate petitions, write letters to the editor, pressure their legislators, take part in vigils and demonstrations, vote in elections, and participate in the numerous other activities that are necessary for a people's movement.

So what can you do to help increase Peace Action's membership?

If you're active in a Peace Action affiliate or chapter, make sure that it has a membership director. This person need not be responsible for doing all the work in garnering new members. But she or he is someone who should take responsibility for seeing to it that membership recruitment efforts are being made.

What kind of efforts? Among the best is circulating a sign-in list at Peace Action events and, soon after that, phoning or writing to non-members and asking them to join. Even if they don't join right away, add them to your local mailing list, for they might decide to join at a later date or attend your

future activities. You can also develop an attractive membership brochure with a tear-off section for people who would like to become members. These membership brochures can be distributed at Peace Action events, at the events of other groups (especially when Peace Action is a co-sponsor), and at sites where peace-minded people gather.

And there are lots of other things that can be done by your Peace Action group to attract members. An affiliate or chapter newsletter provides a very effective means to reach out to new people, including those non-members on its mailing list, and can include a membership brochure or a tear-off form. Web sites can also be helpful in both advertising activities and providing a means whereby people can join Peace Action.

In addition, you might decide to do a membership recruitment mailing to a list of potentially interested people—perhaps provided by a local group with similar aims, drawn up by your core activists, or both of these. And to expand the opportunities for membership, how about providing for a limited income/student membership category? Although

most groups have "regular" membership dues, many of them also provide for a dues payment that is set at a very low level, thereby enabling anyone to join who wants to do so. You might also provide a discounted membership fee for people paying to attend one of your major events, or even offer free membership to people paying for admission.

Even if you're not active in a Peace Action chapter or affiliate, you can help build Peace Action's membership. Why not suggest to your spouse, relatives, and closest friends that they join? (They can do so through the national Peace Action website: peace-action.org/joinpa.html.)

Or you might know of an independent peace group that might want to become part of the Peace Action network. (In that case, contact Peace Action's National Field Organizer Judith LeBlanc: judithleblanc1@gmail.com.)

Also, of course, feel free to get in touch with me (wittner@albany.edu).

The Membership/Affiliation Committee of the National Board is always looking for good ideas on how to increase

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our organizational strength. There is plenty of opportunity for growth in Peace Action.

At the moment, we have about 100,000 members in a nation of over 300 million people. So let's seize that opportunity, and build the kind of mass people's movement that can turn around this nation—and the world.

IT'S NOT A DEFICIT CRISIS, IT'S A REVENUE CRISIS: **MOVE THE MONEY!**

BY JUDITH LE BLANC, NATIONAL FIELD ORGANIZER



January 17 marked the 50th anniversary of President Eisenhower's "military industrial complex" speech.

As he left the White House, Ike warned the synthesis of the military and corporations in setting government policies would present a growing danger to democracy.

In 1953, at the beginning of his presidency, Ike gave a speech, not often quoted, in which he said, "Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed."

Ike's predictions were not only true then, they define exactly where we are now. The economic crisis, high unemployment and cuts in human services compel us to organize grassroots support for even deeper cuts in the Pentagon budget.

Secretary of Defense Gates announced "preemptive cuts" to head off more aggressive proposals that are being

debated among a cross section of elected officials and political pundits.

The latest "shot across their bow" is from President Reagan's former Budget Director David Stockman, who called Gates's proposal for a \$78 billion "cut" to the military budget a "pinprick" to a military-industrial complex that must drastically shrink for the good of the country. Stockman said, "It amounts to a failed opportunity to recognize that we are now at a historical inflection point at which the time has arrived for a classic post-war demobilization of the entire military establishment."

To take full advantage of this political moment, Peace Action is helping to organize an array of community and peace groups to form the New Priorities Network. It's going to take long-term movement building to shift Federal funding priorities from weapons to schools, and waging wars to rebuilding infrastructure.

The New Priorities Network is launching a massive Resolutions Campaign as a tool to galvanize grassroots pressure to cut the Pentagon budget in

order to fund human needs.

The aim is to build a community effort by visiting neighborhood groups and promoting educational events and building momentum for city and state bodies and elected officials to take a stand for changing the Federal spending priorities.

Sample resolutions, fact sheets and other materials will be available soon. The Resolutions Campaign will also provide the opportunity to participate in nationally coordinated local actions throughout 2011.

We can build Peace Action's membership, reaching communities of color and working families, if we connect with community groups in motion on the economic crisis. Engaging new people, especially those who have not been part of the peace movement, is vital to winning deeper cuts in military spending.

It is not a deficit crisis. It is a revenue crisis. So let's organize to move the money!

For more information on the New Priorities Network and Resolutions Campaign go to newprioritiesnetwork.org.

JOIN THE ALLIANCE FOR NUCLEAR ACCOUNTABILITY'S 24TH ANNUAL DC DAYS!

The Alliance for Nuclear Accountability (ANA) is bringing anti-nuclear activists from around the country to DC April 3rd-6th to deliver some "Nuclear Reality Check\$" to Congress and the Obama Administration. This is the perfect opportunity for new or seasoned disarmament and environmental activists to reject Obama's nuclear give-away, encourage fiscal responsibility, and network with other activists.

Early bird registration: \$125
Registration after Feb. 28th
will be \$150.
Student registration: \$50.

Registration covers the costs of a comprehensive lobby training on Sunday, April 3rd; entry to our awards reception on Tuesday, April 5th; and snacks and expert support during the lobby days. ANA will also host a pizza party for DC Days participants on Monday, April 4th. DC Days 2011 will be during the National Cherry Blossom Festival, the most popular time to visit DC, so book your travel and lodging in advance!

Visit ANAnuclear.org or email Katherine at kfuchs@anuclear.org for more information or to register.

Continued from page 1...

WILL PEACE ACTION MAKE IT?

This was echoed many times over during the week, as countless friends and supporters, from the US and around the world, showered me, and other Peace Action staff and volunteers, with praise and gratitude for the hard work we'd done to make the events surrounding the NPT RevCon so successful and empowering.

His question – “Will Peace Action Make It?” – has stuck with me. No, there is no fear of our going out of business anytime soon, but we are nowhere near to having the capacity we should have for a leader in the national, and increasingly, international, peace movement. I think we did the best overall program, organizing, lobbying, policy, media and political work in 2010 in the nine years I've

been executive director, but it's not clear we will be able to keep that up without new or increased funding. We have tremendous opportunities to help build real, collaborative, national and international campaigns on all our core issues, yet our funding hangs on a pretty thin reed.

Of the 100,000 dues-paying members in Peace Action, about 91,000 only pay dues to their local affiliate or chapter, with less than 9,000 financially supporting the national organization, and affiliates pay very low organizational dues to national. So for decades now, the reality has been that the national organization (mostly the staff), has had to figure out how to fund our modest national office operation, almost entirely separate from

the membership supporting our grassroots network around the country.

Our decentralized, grassroots structure fits our organizational culture and our theory of how political and social change happen, but frankly, it barely supports a very small national office operation and staff (we have only eight full-time staff at this time, supplemented by six part-time or temporary staff). Of course our affiliates and chapters are not rolling in dough, and, as a former affiliate executive director, the last thing I want to do is bleed our chapters and affiliates of resources in order to fund a “national office on steroids.”

All I want is to be able to make or continue modest investments in building our program

and our organization, so we can have even more political power to make change. So my question is how can we, modestly, increase our resources to be more worthy of the change we seek?

We have begun modest steps to increase revenue from the 91,000 affiliate members, asking for small gifts of \$10 to national Peace Action as members renew their membership with their affiliate or chapter.

If you are an affiliate/chapter member, please consider giving to national as well. If you already give to national, thank you very much! Perhaps you can increase your gift this year, or ask your friends and neighbors to join Peace Action (or donate a gift membership in their name!).



*Left - Right:
John Heuer, North Carolina Peace Action outside the White House.*

*New Hampshire Peace Action's Executive Director, Will Hopkins
outside the White House protesting Obama's Afghanistan policy in
December.*

Photos by: Kevin Martin

START VICTORY!

On December 22, the U.S. Senate voted to ratify the New START nuclear arms reduction pact, which will reduce U.S. and Russian deployed, strategic nuclear weapons by up to 30%, to 1,550 warheads each. Peace Action thanks its members, and especially grassroots activists with our affiliates and chapters across the country who worked very hard to educate the

public and pressure senators to support the treaty. Lobby visits with senators and their staff members, email alerts to hundreds of thousands of supporters, letters to the editor and other media work and generating tens of thousands of calls to senate offices were hallmarks of the START ratification campaign over the last few months.

2012 ELECTIONS AND THE AFGHANISTAN WAR

By JUDITH LE BLANC, NATIONAL FIELD ORGANIZER

President Obama was elected with broad support by those who opposed the war in Iraq. For many voters, his pledge to end the war was a key factor.

Bob Woodward's recent book, "Obama's Wars," documents the struggle within the administration over the direction of the Afghanistan war, and also details the president's awareness of declining public support.

During the press conference on the release of the administration's year-end review of the war, Secretary of State Clinton said the administration cannot govern based on opinion polls when a reporter reminded her of recent surveys showing declining support for the war.

No doubt polls are being monitored by the White House and the Obama campaign re-election team now being assembled. With the GOP controlling the House of Representatives, very little legislation is expected to pass (though Peace Action and others will use the legislative process to advance our views on ending the war). So political tactics are the order of the day.

The big question for the peace

movement is the following: how to flex our political muscle on behalf of the over 60% of the public (and over 80% of Democrats) who no longer see the war as worth fighting?

Peace Action is launching a unique petition campaign to mobilize the broad cross-section of self-identified Obama campaign supporters to press the administration to take action now, before the real electioneering begins. The petition is in this newsletter! You can be among the first signers, please sign, circulate to friends and family members, and return it to us.

The petition campaign will be the linchpin of a political strategy to remind Candidate Obama that inaction on this issue would endanger the possibility for as big and excited a grassroots mobilization in 2012 as he enjoyed in 2008.

The administration understands a gap on the war is growing between it and the base it needs for re-election.

U.S. Representative Barbara Lee told representatives of several peace organizations in a recent meeting that President Obama needs to be convinced

to "shift his political calculus" and campaign in 2012 "on a platform of ending the war in Afghanistan."

Mobilizing and focusing the attention of grassroots activists who were at the center of the historic campaign and election of President Obama is the best tactic for the peace movement in "shifting his political calculus."

Our petition campaign will call for the administration to begin to de-escalate the war, seek a path towards a negotiated settlement and begin to withdraw troops leaving no bases behind.

We will utilize both online and paper petitions. The campaign will also have a vibrant and coordinated effort to initiate visibility activities at public appearances of President Obama and the administration. We will seek out leaders and members of the Democratic Party for their support, and utilize public events to collect signatures.

Combining education with nonviolent direct action, vigils and demonstrations, our petition effort will be a Peace Action membership builder, and help expand our e-lists. We

expect other allied organizations to promote the petition as well, helping garner tens of thousands of signatures, and helping re-energize the peace and justice movement.

Additionally, we will continue the push for more Congress-people to join the Out of Afghanistan Caucus. We will support legislative initiatives such as the resolution Representative Lee will introduce on troop withdrawal, and continue to oppose war funding.

Our aim is to build momentum throughout 2011 with key dates for public events in July, the target date set for the beginning of troop withdrawal, and the October anniversary of the launch of the war. Our organizing aims to press the administration to begin the steps for peace now.

As the political parties begin to gear up for the primary season at the end of the year, so will we. We will have amassed a sizable base of people who will be geared up to press Candidate Obama and all presidential and congressional candidates for a rapid withdrawal from Afghanistan, leaving no bases, contractors or troops behind.

AFFILIATES IN ACTION



Left - Right: Courtney Moles, Kristie Kim, John Heuer (NCPA Chair), Maria Rock, Chris Adkins, Lauren Zalla, Lauren Traugott-Campbell, Betsy Crites (NCPA Director)

On November 13, North Carolina Peace Action and Witness for Peace Southeast hosted its First Annual Student/Young Adult Peacemaker Award contest. Young adults, ages 18-24 from five of the states' universities, were invited to research the question "How

could tax money being used for war be redirected to meet human needs?" and write an essay or create an artistic piece in response.

The grand prizes went to: Lauren Zalla (Duke University) for her essay on homelessness and to Lauren Traugott-Campbell (University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill) for her wire sculpture displaying a bird cage made from military images enclosing a white dove. A tattered American flag represented the cage door.

The second place prize went to Courtney Moles (Warren Wilson

College) for her collage in the shape of a mushroom cloud, and the third place prize went to Kristie Kim (North Carolina State University) for a painting about the possibilities of early childhood education.

Chris Adkins, Maria Rock, and Manar Mjed Ali Faraj were Honorable Mentions, all of whom presented excellent essays.

The two Grand Prizes were trips to Latin America with Witness for Peace. The second and third prizes were \$300 and \$200. Other participants received a gift book "Nonviolence Around

the World". Everyone received a certificate and a NC Peace Action t-shirt.

This year's contest was a huge success and a special thanks to everyone who made it possible. The Peacemaker Award Contest is one of several initiatives by North Carolina Peace Action to cut military spending in North Carolina and invest in its communities. They are working with Peace Action's national network of grassroots activists, students, other local and national human needs and peace groups to re-direct government spending.

LEGACY OF PEACE

Peace Action and Peace Action Education Fund's Legacy of Peace program assists members and supporters by regularly providing information on planned giving options. Your Legacies have sustained our work to secure an enduring legacy of peace for future generations through these very difficult years of recession and economic hardship. **Our Legacy of Peace program offers a number of useful pamphlets free of charge:**

37 Things People 'Know' About Wills That Aren't Really So. If you think the laws on wills are pretty much alike throughout the U.S.,

think again. This pamphlet will help debunk myths about wills and give you food for thought as you consider your estate plans.

How to Make a Will That Works digs deeper into the subject of wills, outlining the basics you need to consider when setting your wishes down in this important legal document.

Better Estate Planning covers other aspects of income and asset management for your consideration, weighing tax benefits and other aspects of your planning offering concrete examples that can help you meet your objectives.

Reflecting on Tomorrow is a short and easy to read primer of the most important issues to consider when planning.

Giving Through Life Insurance outlines how your life insurance policy when no longer needed for its original purpose, can be used to its full advantage.

To receive your copy of one or all these pamphlets send your request to Peter Deccy, Development Director at Peace Action, 8630 Fenton Street, Suite 524, Silver Spring, MD 20910 or via email at pdeccy@peace-action.org.

STAY UP-TO-DATE ONLINE

PEACE-ACTION.ORG

PEACEVOTER.ORG

STUDENTPEACEACTION.ORG

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OBAMA SUPPORTERS FOR PEACE IN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN

DEAR PRESIDENT OBAMA:



I supported you in 2008, and would like to do so again in 2012, but I'm deeply troubled by the seemingly endless war in Afghanistan (which has spread to Pakistan) that you escalated. Recently you were quoted as saying you didn't want to lose your base over the war in Afghanistan. Yet, that is exactly what is happening. Without a shift in your policy, it is hard to imagine the same kind of movement will develop to support your re-election campaign. And personally it is hard to see myself participating, at least not at the same level and with the same enthusiasm.

Like most Americans, and an overwhelming number of your supporters, I urge you to:

- Initiate negotiations, which must include Afghan women, to end the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan;
- Immediately end your escalation of the war, including drone strikes;
- Start drawing down U.S. troops and commit to a timetable with an end date before 2014 after which there will be no U.S. or NATO troops, contractors or military bases in Afghanistan.
- Support Afghan-led humanitarian and economic development efforts to help rebuild that war-ravaged country.

Mr. President, listen to the majority of the American people, and your supporters, who want to end this pointless war, so we can reinvest in domestic priorities here at home. The \$1 million annual cost for each soldier in Afghanistan is a striking example of our misguided priorities. Just as the Iraq war became a dividing line between you and your opponents, so will Afghanistan.

SIGNATURE	PRINTED NAME	EMAIL ADDRESS	PHONE
MAILING ADDRESS	CITY/TOWN	STATE	ZIPCODE
<input type="checkbox"/> I voted for Obama in 2008	<input type="checkbox"/> I donated and/or raised money for the campaign	<input type="checkbox"/> I volunteered for the campaign	
SIGNATURE	PRINTED NAME	EMAIL ADDRESS	PHONE
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IT IS UP TO US, THE PEACE MOVEMENT IN THE U.S. AND AROUND THE WORLD, TO SEE THAT NO NEW WARS START IN THE MIDDLE EAST, THAT THE U.S. OCCUPATIONS OF IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN ARE ENDED, AND THAT OUR NATION IS SET ON A PATH WHICH PROMOTES PEACE, HUMAN RIGHTS, INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, AND SECURITY.

There has never been a more important time for us to raise our voices for peace. Enclosed is my investment in Peace Action's effective grassroots organizing, public mobilizing, and congressional education.

Here is my donation for:

\$40 \$100 \$250 \$500 Other \$ _____

I SIGNED THE AFGHANISTAN PETITION.



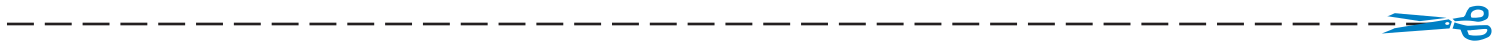
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