



# Sacramento Area Peace Action February 2012 NEWSLETTER

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## Unconstitutional Law?

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012 (NDAA) became law because 75% of the House of Representatives and 93% of the Senate voted for it. Bi-partisanship may be dead in Washington, DC, but if you wrap something up in a package called “Defense,” both Democrats and Republicans will find a way to like it. And despite opposition expressed by the FBI, the CIA and his own Justice Department, and his own threat to veto it, President Obama signed it into law this past New Year’s Eve.



The NDAA, among other things, basically makes legal most of what the Bush Administration was (rightly) vilified for doing. The catch-all and relatively benign-sounding term used is “indefinite detention”.

The NDAA takes away the legal assurance of “innocent until proven guilty” by making it legal to snatch up anyone and imprison them, deny them due process (i.e., no charge, no lawyer, no trial at which to present a defense, etc.), allows them to be sent to places to be tortured. It is from exactly these kinds of abuses that habeas corpus and the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution are supposed to protect us.

Politically conservative legal scholar Bruce Fein says the “ambiguity” drafted into the NDAA makes it a “totally arbitrary weapon that can be used to silence people.” Some of that vagueness and ambiguity is in words like “associated groups” and “substantially supported” and “coalition partners.” In *Holder vs Humanitarian Law Project*, the U.S. Supreme Court said providing legal counsel constitutes “support.” Journalist Chris Hedges thinks interviews could be considered “support.” (He’s suing Obama in regard to NDAA.)

In the so-called Global War on Terror, the enemy is a tactic, not an army. Will a war against a tactic everywhere on the globe ever end? People already detained and those who will be detained under no-charge/no-trial NDAA provisions could be imprisoned forever—even if they are completely innocent. NDAA makes that legal, whether or not they are US citizens.

## End of War, or Global War?

Since the Sacramento Bee published Opinion pieces about the lessons learned in Iraq (1/1/12) and the dangers of saber-rattling toward Iran (1/8/12), it must be obvious that our Middle East policy has been a failure.

Yet, the New York Times, mouthpiece for the Washington-Wall Street consensus, continues to uncritically report whatever the State Dept. or Dept. of Defense puts out. For example, they assert that Iran has the capability of developing a nuclear bomb. (Really? When? Even Israel has down-graded Iran from an “existential threat” to a “strategic threat”.)

All the noise is about the Middle East’s oil, but it is also about positioning the U.S. globally. While posturing and supporting regime change in the Middle East and North Africa, the U.S. announced our new sphere of influence, the Pacific. (A big place.) The agreement for a military base in Australia was done without much fanfare. Our new relationship with Indonesia was also announced. (It’s pretty much like our old relationship, but with Indonesia promising a kinder and gentler police state.)

What really connects Middle East oil to U.S. “influence” in the Pacific? China. It gets 9% of its oil from Iran, 22% of Iran’s production and has promised to buy more, if U.S.-E.U.-U.N. sanctions are applied. The end-game is to determine who gets the oil, or how much. The U.S. cannot risk war with China, since China has a massive army and nuclear weapons. And it holds \$1.6 trillion of U.S. debt.

So Obama continues to line the pockets of weapons manufacturers and private contractors with U.S. tax dollars to build more bases, missiles and listening posts surrounding China and North Korea. Unable to move away from the failed “solution” of militarism, Congress and Obama continue to invest in death: better weapons, fewer rights, more carnage and suffering.

## Event Highlights

See calendar for details.

### Say no to SodaStream

**Made in an illegal Israeli settlement on stolen Palestinian land.**

Join the Saturday Feb. 4 protest against SodaStream - a home carbonation gadget made in an illegal Israeli settlement on stolen Palestinian land. This one targets Costco. Previous protests have been at Bed, Bath & Beyond, Macys, Sears, and Penney’s, all of which carry SodaStream. See: [www.sacbds.org](http://www.sacbds.org)



### Update on Iran



On February 21, long time activist, Iranian-American Mazda Majidi will speak about the U.S. drive for regime change in Iran.

## Sabeel Sacramento

Registration is now open for **A Time for Justice: Supporting Human Rights in Palestine-Israel**

On March 16-17, Sacramento will host its first Sabeel Conference at the First United Methodist Church. International, national and regional presenters will provide a range of plenary and workshop sessions for those new to the issue as well as for the experienced activist.

**A Child’s View**, the exhibit of Gaza Children’s art work, will be on display.

More info at [www.fosna.org](http://www.fosna.org).

### Fourth Tuesday film: TBA



February 28, 7pm at 909 12th St. Check [www.sacpeace.org](http://www.sacpeace.org) for film title.

## Nominations for Board

Board members will be elected at the annual meeting in May, for two-year terms. Any member willing to serve on the Board, or nominating another member, is invited to contact the Nominations Committee through the office. Contact the office.

### Join SacPeace:

\$25/individual. \$45/family, \$15/low income, check to: SAPA, 909 12th St, Suite 118, Sac, CA 95814. Donate \$100 - get a free t-shirt!