



Sacramento Area Peace Action

Newsletter

January
2021

Working to end U.S. militarism since 1983

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The Human Cost of US Wars

Gary Meyer excerpted this story from a November 2017 article entitled “Nation That Says It Can’t Afford Medicare for All Has Spent Over \$5.6 Trillion on War Since 9/11.” (<https://tinyurl.com/y8tzzgaw>)

As we start the third decade of this century, the U.S. must reflect on the wars fought in the Middle East. We are currently in the 20th year of U.S. war/occupation in Afghanistan. This analysis offers a damning assessment of the U.S.’s so-called “global war on terror,” and includes a “staggering” estimated price tag for wars waged since 9/11/2001 — over \$5.6 trillion!

The Costs of War Project from Brown University says the figure, which covers the conflicts in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, and Pakistan from 2001 through 2018 is the equivalent of more than \$23,386 per taxpayer.

The “new report,” according to Paul Kawika Martin, Peace Action’s senior director for policy and political affairs, “once again shows that the true cost of war represents a colossal burden to taxpayers on top of the tremendous

human loss.”

The Center’s figure is far greater than the \$1.5 trillion the Pentagon estimated in July 2017 for the costs of the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria. It gives a fuller picture

by including “war-related spending by the State Department, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and Homeland Security,” writes Neta C. Crawford, a professor of political science at Boston University.

Her report notes that even the \$5.6 trillion tally underestimates the true figures, as it doesn’t capture “every budgetary expense related to these wars,” such as state and local costs to take care of veterans; nor does it take into account the funds used for military

equipment “gifts” to countries involved in the conflicts.

“In sum,” it states, “although this report’s accounting is comprehensive, there are still billions of dollars not included in its estimate.” Not included: future medical costs of treating Americans injured in the conflicts: estimates span between 1.0 to 3.0 trillion *Cont. on p. 2*



Cost of war *Cont. from p. 1*

dollars.

Crawford's report hammers home that point: a full accounting of any war's burdens cannot be placed in columns on a ledger. From the civilians harmed and displaced by violence, to the soldiers killed and wounded, to the children who play years later on roads and fields sown with improvised explosive devices and cluster bombs, no set of numbers can convey the human toll of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, or how they have spilled into the neighboring states of Syria and Pakistan, and come home to the U.S. and its allies in the form of wounded veterans and contractors.

Wars also entail an opportunity cost — what we might have done differently with the money spent and obligated, and how veterans' and civilians' lives could have been lived differently.

Wars force the question:

*“What could
we have
done
differently
with all
of the
money spent
on wars?”*

Meet Your Board Members!

Barbara Davis - Now, ...and then!

My parents moved me and my 3 siblings to Fair Oaks California from upstate New York in 1962. Glad they did! On the way to the 1980's I earned two B.A.s in Home Economics and Psychology, traveled, and dabbled in art. In 1989 my sister sneaked onto the Nuclear Test Site in Beatty Nevada in protest. **HER** action changed **MY** life! My mom and I participated in the Mothers Day protest at Nevada Test Site 1989. I liked how I felt when I protested; I needed to protest. My life focus was changing.



I marched loudly in the Sacramento Desert Storm actions. I found Peace Action via the BPM and volunteered in 1994/95. Winnie asked me to be on the Board, and I became Treasurer. I had found my “peeps!”

When I stand on the street holding my sign or march in protest, I believe I stand or march for people

I know or don't know, who for whatever reason cannot march or be as visible as I. It takes lots of courage. My wish is to stand for them; they give me strength.

When I am not rehabbing injured birds, traveling, pursuing artistic endeavors, caring for people's dogs or cats, or supporting the homeless, you may find me in the Peace Action office, processing your checks or enjoying reading Winnie's many notes that adorn our office, still guiding us in our work for peace. Her influence lingers.



Peace Action Looks Ahead To 2021

By Mario Galvan (Notes from the webinar)

Jon opened his talk with a compliment to NY State as “one of the strongest” affiliates in the US, “because of all the chapters” it has throughout the state. He then touched a number of main points before responding to questions from the audience.

He spoke first of the influence of military contractors over the Pentagon, and of the appointment of General Lloyd Austin as Secretary of Defense by Biden. This is a violation of the National Security Act of 1947, he pointed out, which prohibits military personnel from serving in the government.

The \$742 billion Pentagon budget had just passed the Senate the day before, and he chided the group about the fact that both New York State Senators had voted for it. He reminded everyone that the US military budget is larger than the next ten largest countries combined, and that US weaponry is being used against civilians in the Middle East. He spoke of fear being used to support the ongoing military buildups against Russia and China. Still, he said, the numbers of Congressmen who support cutting the military budget is growing. There have been bills supporting that in both houses of Congress this year, though none passed.

He encouraged local groups to talk their City Councils! “We need to re-frame security,” he said, “to address local needs.” A resident of Oakland, he recalled how the city was surrounded by fires for most of the summer, with little help from the federal government in containing them. On the contrary, the

government was handing out things most cities didn’t need, like armored vehicles for local police forces!

Regarding Yemen, he said that Biden has talked about ending US support for that war, even though it was begun under the Obama administration, of which he was a part. “Saudi Arabia has got to be forced to stop the bombing,” he said, but instead the US continues to supply arms. Saudi Arabia is the US’s largest customer, accounting for half of our total arms sales.

On nuclear weapons, he said that Biden wanted to cut the two trillion dollars being proposed for them. What the U.S. needs to do is to sign the new START treaty, and to finally adopt a “No First Use” policy.

Speaking of Iran, he was hopeful that Biden would return to the deal that Obama helped set up. However, he thought that the Congress might not go along with him on that.

Concluding his opening remarks, he spoke of the need to grow the political power of Peace Action. He mentioned the still ongoing struggle in Georgia for the last two Senate seats, and said that we need to be active everywhere around the country, even in the “red” and “purple” states.

He acknowledged that his opening remarks had “just scratched the surface,” adding “Don’t get mad if I left something out!”

The Q & A Session

In reply to “What do you expect from the new administration,” he responded that what we need most is “a competent bus driver,” someone who can stay on the *Cont. on p. 5*

Ten Foreign Policy Fiascos Biden Can Fix on Day One

By *Medea Benjamin and Nicolas J.S. Davies*
(Edited by Mario Galvan - [Link to original](#).)

Donald Trump loves executive orders. That makes it easy for President Biden to reverse many of Trump's orders. Here are ten things Biden can do as soon as he takes office.

1) End the U.S. role in the Saudi-led war on Yemen and restore U.S. humanitarian aid to Yemen.

Congress passed a resolution to end the U.S. role in the Yemen war, but Trump vetoed it. Biden should immediately issue an executive order to end every aspect of the U.S. role in the war. The U.S. should also accept its share of responsibility for what many have called the greatest humanitarian crisis in the world today, and help Yemen recover from the damage done.

2) Suspend U.S. arms sales to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Both are fueling the crisis in Yemen, and the UAE is reportedly supplying arms to General Haftar's rebel forces in Libya. Congress passed bills to suspend arms sales to both, which Trump vetoed. There are U.S. laws that require the suspension of arms transfers to countries that use them to violate U.S. and international law, including the Leahy Law and the Arms Control Export Act.

3) Rejoin the Iran Nuclear Agreement and lift sanctions on Iran.

After backing out of the JCPOA, Trump slapped draconian sanctions on Iran, and brought us to the brink of war by killing its top general. Biden must act decisively to

restore mutual trust by immediately rejoining the JCPOA, and lifting the sanctions.

4) End U.S. sanctions against officials of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Nothing so embodies the U.S. government's disdain for international law as its failure to ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). If President Biden is serious about recommitting the U.S. to the rule of law, he should submit the Rome Statute

to the U.S. Senate for ratification. The Biden administration should also accept the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice (ICJ),

5) Back South Korean President Moon's diplomacy for a "permanent peace regime" in Korea.

Biden must start negotiating to formally end the Korean war, and

initiate confidence-building measures such as opening liaison offices, easing sanctions, and halting U.S.-South Korea military exercises. Negotiations must involve concrete commitments to non-aggression from the U.S. side to pave the way for a denuclearized Korean Peninsula.

6) Renew New START with Russia and freeze the U.S.'s trillion-dollar nuclear weapons renewal plan.

Biden can commit to freezing both countries' nuclear arsenals at 1,550 deployed warheads each. He can also freeze the plan to build a new generation of U.S. nuclear weapons. Biden should also adopt a long overdue "no first use" nuclear *Cont. on p. 5*



Looking Ahead to 2021 *Cont. from p. 3*
road that has been laid out. He cited the deal with Iran, set up by one administration, then abandoned by the next. Despite that, Europeans have been trying to keep the deal going, and hoping that Biden will get back on course. “Without this deal,” he said, “war is more likely.” In addition to losing time, we’ve lost the trust of the Iranians.

Someone asked if other countries are also losing trust in the US. He answered “Yes, and it’s making everything harder.” Then he added, “Except maybe Europe.” Probably in reference to the Iran deal, which the Europeans are still hoping we’ll rejoin.

Foreign Policy Fiascos *From p. 4*
weapons policy.

7) Lift illegal unilateral U.S. sanctions against other countries.

Only sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council are generally considered legal under international law. *Unilateral* economic sanctions that deprive ordinary people of necessities like food and medicine are illegal. U.S. sanctions on Iran, Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua, North Korea and Syria are a form of economic warfare. Since most of these sanctions were imposed by executive order, Biden can lift them the same way, on Day One!

8) Roll back Trump policies on Cuba and move to normalize relations

Trump overturned the progress towards normal relations made by President Obama. Biden should start working with the Cuban government to allow the return of diplomats to their respective embassies, lift all restrictions on travel and remittances, and collaborate with Cuban health professionals in the fight against COVID-19.

9) Restore pre-2015 rules of engagement

Even Russia and China are in favor of it, he reminded the group.

“Will Biden be better at getting us out of “endless wars?” he was asked. “Biden is more “dovish” than Clinton, Jon said, “but he’s no dove!” He thought Biden would be willing to withdraw US troops, but would keep using US air power overseas.

Other questions touched on North Korea, the Paris climate agreement, weapons modernization, electoral work (local *and* national!), working with other movements, involving youth, the Middle East, Latin America, and even war in space! Sadly, we don’t have enough space here for it all!

to spare civilian lives.

In 2015, as U.S. forces escalated their bombing in Iraq and Syria to over 100 strikes per day, Obama loosened the rules to let U.S. commanders in the Middle East order airstrikes that were expected to kill up to 10 civilians without prior approval from Washington. Trump reportedly loosened the rules even further, but Biden can start saving civilian lives on Day One.

10) Freeze U.S. military spending, and launch a major initiative to reduce it.

Biden must de-escalate the conflicts with China and Russia, and begin moving money from the Pentagon to urgent domestic needs.

At the end of the Cold War, senior Pentagon officials told the Senate Budget Committee that U.S. military spending could safely be cut by half over the next ten years. That goal was never achieved, and crimes of September 11th were used to justify a one-sided arms build-up far outstripping Cold War military spending.

Biden should start with the 10 percent cut supported this year by 93 representatives and 23 senators, and invest in more healthcare, education, clean energy and infrastructure.

The Search for Peace in Korea

Excerpted and edited by Mario Galvan from an article in Truthout by Hyun Lee. Read the original at <https://tinyurl.com/y9zzusbz>

For decades, U.S. policy makers have been asking, “How do we get North Korea to give up nuclear weapons?” As Biden prepares to take office, perhaps it’s time to ask a different question: “How do we get to peace with North Korea?”

The U.S. has tried to get North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons through pressure and sanctions, but that approach has failed. North Korea says the only way it will give up its nuclear weapons is if the U.S. “abandons its

hostile policy,” and takes reciprocal steps toward arms reduction. But Washington has made no moves toward that goal. Instead, Trump has continued war games with South Korea and tightened sanctions against North Korea.

Enter Joe Biden. Can his team resolve this dilemma? Biden’s advisers recommend an “arms control approach,” first freezing North Korea’s plutonium and uranium nuclear operations, then taking small steps toward the ultimate goal of complete denuclearization.

Secretary of State nominee Anthony Blinken says we should get allies and China on board to pressure North Korea. “We need to cut off its various avenues and access to resources,” he says. If China won’t cooperate, Blinken suggests that the U.S. threaten it with more forward-deployed missile defense and

military exercises.

It’s still a policy of pressure and isolation to get to the ultimate goal of unilaterally disarming North Korea. In this case, North Korea will likely continue to press forward on its nuclear weapons and missile capability. Unless the U.S. drastically shifts its position, renewed tension between the U.S. and North Korea is inevitable.

Instead of trying to get North Korea to give up its nukes, asking how to reach permanent peace in Korea may lead to a different and more fundamental set of answers. All parties, not just North Korea, have a responsibility to take steps toward mutual arms reduction.

The U.S. still has 28,000 troops in South Korea, and until recently, regularly conducted massive war games that included plans for preemptive strikes on North Korea.

If Biden moves ahead with the war drills next March, it would renew military tension and harm any chance for diplomatic reconciliation.

To preserve the option of resuming talks in the future, the Biden administration can do two things in its first 100 days: continue the suspension of the large-scale U.S.-South Korean war games, and start a review of its North Korea policy that begins with the question, “How do we get to permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula?”

An essential first step is ending the Korean War, and replacing the armistice (a temporary ceasefire) with a permanent *Cont. on p. 7*



Assange Verdict Due on January 4th

“In just 16 days, a judge will rule on the U.S. request to extradite Julian Assange. But he needs our help NOW!

No matter how the judge rules, it is likely that Julian will remain under threat for months or years to come as the case is appealed. At HMS Prison Belmarsh, surrounded by some of the world’s worst criminals, Julian is in near-total lockdown in conditions former U.N. official Nils Melzer calls torture. His prison wing is enduring a COVID outbreak and he is being kept in cold conditions without access to winter clothing sent by his family.

Persecuting journalists and whistleblowers is simply wrong. Assange is not a US citizen. He is being literally charged with “Espionage” for

activities undertaken while he was in Europe.

Even if you object to him being characterized as a journalist, the activities he is being charged with are textbook journalistic activities; news gathering, working with sources and publishing.

Countless journalists, scholars and human rights organizations have all condemned the persecution of Assange because it strikes at the heart of the free press and would make reporters all over the world subject to governmental persecution simply for doing their job; trying to tell the public the truth about things they

have a right to know.”

Visit www.assangedefense.org for more info and to see what you can do to help.

**FREE JULIAN ASSANGE
DEFEND FREE SPEECH
NO EXTRADITION FROM
UK ON JANUARY 4, 2021**



**Rally and Press
Conference
Sun., Jan. 3, 2021
11am – 12 noon
UK Consulate**

885 Second Avenue
(btw 47th & 48th Streets)

On January 4, 2021, the UK will make a decision as to whether or not to extradite Julian Assange to stand trial in the US on espionage charges. We are

Peace in Korea *Cont. from p. 6*

peace agreement. The two Korean leaders agreed to this in their historic Panmunjom Summit in 2018. A peace agreement that commits all parties to a gradual process of laying down their arms would create peaceful conditions for the two Koreas to resume cooperation and reunite separated families.

North Korea’s desire for a peace agreement that “opens the way to peaceful unification,” has been consistent for the past 70 years. That’s what they proposed to the U.S. back in 1974. That same message was delivered by Mikhail Gorbachev to Ronald Reagan in their summit in Washington in 1987, and is what North Korea repeatedly brought up in their

negotiations with the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations.

The Biden administration should look back at the agreements the U.S. has already signed with North Korea. The U.S.-DPRK Joint Communique (signed by the Clinton administration in 2000), the Six-Party Joint Statement (signed by the Bush administration in 2005) and the Singapore Joint Statement (signed by President Trump in 2018) all have three goals in common: establish normal relations, build a permanent peace regime on the Korean Peninsula and denuclearize the Korean Peninsula. The Biden team needs a road map that clearly outlines the relationship between these three important goals.

January Peace Events

Wednesday, Jan 6, 4pm, SacPeace Board meets virtually. Contact SacPeace@dcn.org for registration info.

Thursday, Jan 7, 10:30am, Virtual tour to Palestine. FMI: malami@thepipd.com

Thursday, Jan 7, 4:30 - 6pm, Stop U.S. militarism and wars weekly vigil. Those participating are asked to stay at least 6 feet apart and wear a mask. 16th & J Sts. Sacramento. FMI: 916-448-7157, sacpeace@dcn.org.

Monday, Jan 11, Take Action for Arab American Studies. See 1/21

Tuesday, Jan 12, 10:30am, Virtual tour to Palestine. FMI: malami@thepipd.com

Thursday, Jan 14, 4:30 - 6pm, Stop U.S. militarism and wars weekly vigil. Those participating are asked to stay at least 6 feet apart and wear a mask. 16th & J Sts. Sacramento. FMI: 916-448-7157, sacpeace@dcn.org.

Monday, Jan 18, 10:30am, Virtual tour to Palestine. FMI: malami@thepipd.com

Thursday, Jan 21, Tell CA Dept. of Education to make Arab American Studies an integral part of the state's Model Ethnic Studies Curriculum. Sign petition. Comments due by Jan 21. FMI: info@araborganizing.org

Thursday, Jan 21, 4:30 - 6pm, Stop U.S. militarism and wars weekly vigil. Those participating are asked to stay at least 6 feet apart and wear a mask. 16th & J Sts. Sacramento. FMI: 916-448-7157, sacpeace@dcn.org.

Monday, Jan 25, Tell Congress: Stop the War on Yemen. International Day of Action. Stop foreign aggression on Yemen. Stop weapons and war support for Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Lift the blockade on Yemen and open all land and sea ports. Restore and expand humanitarian aid for the people of Yemen. Call 202-224-3121 or email Sen. Feinstein, Sen. Harris, Matsui, Bera, Garamendi or your representative. Attend vigil on 1/28.

Thursday, Jan 28, 4:30 - 6pm, We demand No more war on Yemen at Stop U.S. militarism and wars weekly vigil. Those participating are asked to stay at least 6 feet apart and wear a mask. 16th & J Sts. Sacramento. FMI: 916-448-7157, sacpeace@dcn.org.