

War Without End?

The US is waging a ill-defined war with no end in site. When President Bush announced the first US strikes against Afghanistan he stated, "Today we focus on Afghanistan, but the battle is broader." On September 20, the President told Congress that, "Americans should not expect one battle but a lengthy campaign, unlike any we have ever seen."

The ill-defined nature of this war makes it impossible to claim either victory or defeat and leaves us with more questions than answers. How long will it last? How much will it cost? What countries will be involved? What do we expect to accomplish? How many more innocent civilians will die?

Lacking a clear framework, the current war threatens to become like the War on Drugs. It could last a decade, cost billions of dollars, and accomplish nothing.

Afghanistan: The First in Line

Thousands of Afghan civilians have been killed and many more are likely to die due to the US bombing campaign.

According to Professor Marc W. Herod, who specializes in Third World economic and social development at the University of New Hampshire, Afghan civilian casualties exceed those of the Pentagon and World Trade Center Attacks - nearly 4,000 had been killed by early December.

Before the current war, Afghanistan was already one of the poorest and most war-ravaged countries in the world. US bombing has halted humanitarian aid efforts, worsening the pre-existing conditions of famine, draught and displacement. Many farmers were unable to plant winter crops due to the bombing campaign - the spring will be grim. James Jennings, President of Conscience International, estimates that **a million Afghans may die** due to the halt in aid. In addition, the number of Afghan refugees inside the country and in Pakistan has increased by hundreds of thousands, making an already terrible situation desperate.

Who's Next?

All indications from President Bush and the senior members of his administration are that the war on terrorism has only just begun. The administration's statements indicate an unprecedented global military action that may not end in our lifetimes and could include as many as 60 countries. According to Vice President Dick Cheney, in *The Washington Post* (10/7/01), this war "may never end. At least, not in our lifetimes."

The War at Home

As a response to September 11, Congress and the President have bestowed new powers upon intelligence and law enforcement agencies, subsequently limiting our civil liberties. The USA PATRIOT Act (signed into law by the President on October 26, 2001) spells out many of these new powers including:

- *Expanded ability of the government to conduct secret searches of citizens' homes*
- *Large scale investigations of American citizens for "intelligence purposes"*
- *FBI access to sensitive business records without having to show evidence of a crime.*

The PATRIOT Act unnecessarily discards many of the checks and balances that previously gave courts the opportunity to ensure that these powers don't violate civil rights. The government has provided no evidence showing that pre-existing civil rights protections impeded investigations that may have prevented the attacks of September 11.

Contact Congress
Urge your member of Congress to support "Real Solutions for a Safer World." Call him or her at: (202) 224-3121

For over 40 years the Peace Action Education Fund has worked for an environment where all are free from violence and war. "Real Solutions for a Safer World" are concrete steps we can take to make the world a more secure place.

1. Strengthen the force of law, not the law of force.

The terrorists who committed the September 11 attacks should be brought to justice in a court of law. In the past, perpetrators of similar crimes have been successfully prosecuted by international tribunals. Legal prosecution holds the criminals accountable, and punishes the responsible parties, without killing more innocent civilians. The US should work to strengthen international laws on terrorism and the means to enforce them through the United Nations and the International Criminal Court.

2. Abolish nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

In order to limit the threat of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, the US must ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, terminate Star Wars, and re-affirm, not withdraw from, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. The US should work with Russia and other nations to ensure the control of nuclear materials. As the nation with the largest nuclear arsenal, it is important for the US to be the leader on nuclear disarmament.

3. End the arms trade and military training programs.

According to Human Rights Watch, small arms have killed three million civilians since 1990. The same small arms trade makes weapons available to terrorists, drug traffickers and other violent factions around the world. Weapons sales should be restricted through an arms transfers Code of Conduct which would prevent states from exporting weapons, or providing military aid, to countries that are undemocratic, that don't respect human rights and that are engaged in armed aggression towards their own citizens or other countries.

The US also maintains a number of military training programs for foreign nationals, and has trained and armed the likes of Saddam Hussein, Manuel Noriega, and Osama bin Laden. This kind of military training must be stopped if we are to prevent situations in which we find ourselves fighting against the very people we helped to create and arm.

4. Build goodwill by increasing foreign aid.

The US, as the single largest national economy, must work to eliminate the conditions that sustain terrorism. It is in our best interest to provide substantial aid to developing nations and to enact policies that promote human rights. Strong humanitarian efforts, including food and medical assistance, will demonstrate America's commitment to peace and prosperity for all nations. This approach undermines terrorists' power by facilitating real stability.

Local Contact: [Empty box for contact information]