

U.S. Labor Against the War

2009 National Labor Assembly Resolutions and Plan of Work & Action

Adopted December 6, 2009 in Chicago, IL

Resolution 1:

End U.S. The Wars and Occupations In Iraq and Afghanistan and Rebuild America

Whereas our country is now engaged in a great national debate about the war in Afghanistan, whether we should be there at all, and, if so, what our mission is and what resources are needed to carry out that mission, and

Whereas the fateful decision President Obama has made will affect our own country in profound ways for years to come, including whether or not President Obama will be able, economically and politically, to carry out his commitment to rebuild our own country, and

Whereas the labor movement has a responsibility to assure the success of the electoral mandate from the labor movement and the American people given to the Obama administration to rebuild America, and

Whereas the mission, strategy, and tasks of counterinsurgency are not those of counterterrorism, and

Whereas the military pursuit of counterinsurgency can create many more terrorists than it kills, and getting rid of occupiers is a prime motivation of those opposed to the U.S. presence, and

Whereas the use of unmanned drones against alleged terrorists in Pakistan has killed many more innocent civilians and frequently no alleged terrorists at all, which has inflamed anti-American sentiments, destabilized Pakistan, and provided new potential recruits to terrorist causes, and

Whereas counterinsurgency strategy involves nation-building, which would draw the U.S. into a long term engagement with the corrupt and illegitimate government of Hamid Karzai, with no foreseeable exit from a country well known as the "graveyard of empires," and

Whereas U.S. standing in the world will benefit from the exercise of more wisdom rather than more raw power, and

Whereas military spending creates far fewer jobs than the same amount of money spent on infrastructure and other domestic needs (Robert Pollin and Heidi Garrett-Peltier, "The Wages of Peace," *The Nation*, March 31, 2008), and

Whereas we have already spent over \$235 billion in Afghanistan and; even without the decision to send an additional 30,000 troops which will cost at least an additional \$30 billion, our nation is spending \$65 billion a year on the war there. These funds are desperately needed for urgent domestic social purposes, including health care and quality education for all, housing relief in the foreclosure crisis, rebuilding the nation's infrastructure, full veterans' benefits, and the creation of millions of good jobs, including manufacturing jobs, and

Whereas the voice of the labor movement needs to be heard in our national debate, including through mobilization in the street at both the local and national levels that harness the legitimate anger of the American people and ensure positive momentum for the agenda of working people, therefore be it

Resolved, that USLAW calls for an immediate end to the wars and occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan and military attacks in Pakistan, and be it further

Resolved, that USLAW calls for the immediate and complete withdrawal of all U.S. military forces and contractors from Iraq and Afghanistan and the closing of all U.S. military bases in both countries, and be it further

Resolved, that USLAW calls for the use of diplomatic measures to resolve these and other international conflicts, and be it further

Resolved, that USLAW calls for rebuilding America and redirecting the military budget to urgently needed social programs and job creation in this country, and be it further

Resolved, that USLAW calls for the U.S. to fulfill its obligation to rebuild the countries our military has destroyed by providing assistance to the people of Iraq and Afghanistan, and be it further

Resolved, that USLAW calls for the use of appropriate lawful police, intelligence, diplomatic and financial means to prevent, isolate, arrest, and bring to justice those who engage in terrorist actions against the people of the U.S. and other countries, and be it further

Resolved, that USLAW calls for the full support for returning troops, including but not limited to adequate healthcare, including mental health and job training, and placement in jobs paying a living wage, and be it further

Resolved, that USLAW will undertake an educational campaign on these issues within its affiliates and more broadly in the labor movement and will seek to involve the labor movement in the political tasks necessary to carry out this resolution so it has an effect on public policy, and be it further

Resolved, that USLAW commits to developing plans expeditiously for public demonstrations of support for the above agenda in coalition with our allies, and be it finally

Resolved, that USLAW will communicate this resolution to President Obama, members of Congress and the American public, and support any legislation that is consistent with this resolution.

Resolution 2:**An Economy That Provides Good Jobs And Promotes Peace**

Whereas, U.S. direct spending on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan will exceed \$1 trillion by February/March 2010 and the total cost of these conflicts, considering future, residual and secondary costs will surpass \$5 trillion; and

Whereas, from FY 2001 to FY 2009, federal military expenditures increased at a rate that was twice the increase in domestic discretionary spending and three times that of federal grants to state and local governments; and

Whereas, even without including current war allocations, U.S. military spending is at its highest level since World War II (and this takes into account the war-time budgets of Vietnam and Korea); and

Whereas, the total “National Defense” budget in FY2010 will exceed \$557 billion and total spending on all National Security activities in FY2010 will exceed \$1 trillion; and the Pentagon budget is projected to grow 25% over the next decade, while current spending on all Homeland Security programs is just \$51.8 billion, and spending on non-proliferation, anti-terrorism, demining and related activities is just \$765 million; and

Whereas, the military portion of the discretionary federal budget consumes 55 cents of every tax dollar, outstripping spending on health and welfare, education and employment, social services, income security, the environment, transportation and all other expenditures combined; and

Whereas, the U.S. ranks #1 in the world in military expenditures, spending 45% of the entire world’s military expenditures, more than the next 14 countries combined, while so-called “rogue states” spend just 1% of the global total; and

Whereas, the U.S. maintains a network of 865 major military installations in other countries at an annual cost (exclusive of personnel) of more than \$100 billion, and has committed to provide security for 30 other countries, and has stationed more than 350,000 military personnel in 149 countries and six U.S. overseas territories (not including 200,000 involved in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq) at an annual cost of \$272 billion; and

Whereas, in 2005, U.S. arms manufacturers sold \$41.2 billion worth of weapons internationally in more than 150 countries and by 2007, the U.S. was providing weapons and military training to 174 countries and territories, including some of the worlds most

notorious human rights abusers; and of the 27 major conflicts under way during 2006-2007, twenty involved one or more parties that had received arms and training from the United States; and

Whereas, during the 20th century the U.S. military was deployed 151 times against 45 different countries (not including World Wars I and II) and in just the first nine years of the 21st Century, 23 times in 20 countries; and

Whereas, this massive global military posture has not made children, women or men safer, provokes deep resentment and anger in many countries in which U.S. troops are stationed, and diverts resources that could otherwise be spent to meet human needs both at home and abroad; and

Whereas, the manufacture of peace time commodities has a multiplying effect on employment and that of implements of war does not,

Therefore, be it resolved that USLAW calls for a major reordering of national priorities that shifts resources from spending on the military to meeting human needs, restoring and expanding essential social programs and government services, providing universal, affordable healthcare for all, supporting education, including rebuilding schools, rebuilding infrastructure, recommitting to direct meaningful resources to inner cities where the impact of unemployment and under-employment has been disproportionately felt among minority communities, rebuilding the still-devastated Gulf Coast and, addressing the urgent challenge of global warming and environmental degradation, and other activities that create stable long term well paid jobs; and providing development aid and assistance to impoverished countries, paying reparations to Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries in which the U.S. military has conducted operations, and insulating workers and their communities in the U.S. from any negative economic impact of this transition to an ecologically sustainable, peace-oriented economy; and be it finally

Resolved that USLAW supports economic conversion of military production to peacetime manufacturing, and the re-industrialization of America, especially green manufacturing.

Resolution 3:**No Military Advertising in Our Schools**

Whereas, enlistment in the military is a serious life-decision with a legal commitment of years, and

Whereas, people considering this commitment, especially underage boys and girls, need accurate and complete information not available in advertisements, and

Whereas, military recruiting in schools and advertising in student and education-related (including education union) publications and media provide a slick, high-cost, seductive message full of military bias and deliberate misstatements that target students, disproportionately youth of color, and

Whereas, USLAW members in the education field can play a special role in helping students research complete information about all aspects of this decision, and

Whereas, it is unjust that funding for public education is so insufficient that schools must seek advertising revenues to meet the needs of its students and other stakeholders, and

Whereas, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender members of the military are granted limited human rights in the military due to the policy of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and our public schools serve all children;

Therefore, be it resolved, that USLAW oppose military recruiting and advertising in school and education union publications and other media, and further

Resolved, that USLAW encourages its affiliates and the labor movement in general to work with allies to promote paid internships, apprentice programs, job training, union jobs, and other alternatives to military service, in schools and in media targeted to our youth, and finally

Resolved, that USLAW encourage its affiliates to advocate for full funding for public education and other human service programs that support students and their families by redirecting funds from US wars and occupations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere.

Resolution 4:**Endorse the Antiwar Demonstrations Scheduled for March 20, 2010 and Demand the Immediate Withdrawal of All U.S. Military Forces From Iraq**

WHEREAS, the Troy Area Labor Council [New York] has called upon the AFL-CIO to organize a national march on Washington for Peace, Jobs, and Healthcare Justice; and

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin AFL-CIO has similarly linked the antiwar struggle to labor's critical domestic needs, adopting a statement declaring "We need to stop the war in Afghanistan and focus the nation's attention on the fight for jobs, education, health care and pensions;" and

WHEREAS, the National Assembly to End the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars and Occupations has made the same link, calling for joining with other coalitions, organizations and networks in urging an all-out March 20 bi-coastal mobilization in Washington D.C., San Francisco and Los Angeles of all opponents of U.S. wars and occupations in support of these critical demands: "Increase Spending by the Hundreds of Billions

for Jobs, Health Care, Education, Housing and the Environment! End U.S. Wars, Occupations and Corporate Bailouts Now and Use the Money to Meet Human Needs;" and

WHEREAS, March 20 marks the beginning of the eighth year of the occupation of Iraq; and

WHEREAS, USLAW should help ensure that the March 20 mobilization is as large as possible and that USLAW's demand for the immediate, unconditional and total withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Iraq is heard throughout the country; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that USLAW endorses the March 20 demonstrations and urges labor contingents to march behind banners containing demands consistent with our antiwar program.

Resolution 5:**Solidarity with the working people of Palestine and Israel**

Whereas, the path to peace in the Middle East requires the development of mutual understanding, empathy and trust that can be promoted through cultural and educational exchanges, but never by military or economic aggression, and that the U.S. labor movement should encourage these exchanges; and

Whereas, fact finding delegations from the U.S. labor movement to Gaza, the West Bank and Israel to meet with Palestinian and Israeli workers will help develop a better understanding of the conflict and its impact on working people in both Palestine and Israel; and

Whereas, bringing workers from the region to the US will help American workers better understand the situation there and how it impacts working people of the region; and

Whereas, American workers need to hear the opinions and perspectives of Israeli and Palestinian trade unionists who are working in solidarity with one another to promote peace and economic security; therefore be it

Resolved, that USLAW encourages and will support efforts by its affiliates and other labor and allied organizations, including our international labor federations, to foster such exchanges in the spirit of international labor solidarity; and be it further

Resolved, that USLAW will promote and seek to send a fact finding labor delegation to the region in 2010 and will upon its return organize and publicize events at which participants can relate their experiences, report on interviews they had, and facilitate a constructive dialog about the crisis in the Middle East and ways in which the American labor movement can contribute to its peaceful resolution; and be it finally

Resolved, that USLAW will make available to its affiliates, members and supporters educational materials that help them to develop a better understanding of the conflict and ways in which it can be peacefully resolved.

Resolution 6:**West Bank Settlements**

Whereas, President Obama and the State Department have called for an end to all new settlement building and current settlement expansion by Israel in the West Bank and East Jerusalem; and

Whereas, settlement expansion continues and Palestinians homes, communities and farms are still being destroyed by the Israeli government and settlers in violation of international law; and

Whereas, these activities provoke conflict, promote instability, and act as a barrier to the pursuit of a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; therefore be it

Resolved, that USLAW urges its affiliates and the labor movement to support President Obama and the U.S. State Department's call for a complete end to settlement building and expansion and dismantling of illegal settlements in accordance with international law and in the interests of preventing conflict and pursuit of peace.

Resolution 7:**End the Siege of Gaza**

Whereas, in January 2009, during the Israeli military assault on Gaza, the leadership of USLAW said: "We believe that such actions do not and will not serve the interest of peace and greater humanity in the region. Neither Israel nor Hamas is justified in attacking the civilian population of the other"; and therefore be it

Resolved, that USLAW calls upon the U.S. government to pressure Israel to lift its siege of Gaza to permit the free flow of humanitarian goods and material and respect the right of its people to rebuild their homes, workplaces, schools, hospitals, infrastructure and economy; and USLAW calls upon both Palestinians and Israelis to end all military attacks on each others civilians and other non-combatants.

2010 PLAN OF WORK & ACTION

USLAW has passed resolutions at the 2009 National Assembly that call for the end to the occupations and wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, including that USLAW will undertake an educational campaign on these resolutions. USLAW will involve the labor movement in the political tasks necessary to ensure that we have an effect on public policy. USLAW will develop, with other organizations, timely plans for public demonstrations of support for our resolutions. In accordance with these resolutions, the Assembly approved a PLAN OF ACTION. The objectives include:

- Develop a message and educational material for use with union members and leaders, specifically about Afghanistan;
- Develop and implement steps and actions that will mobilize the labor movement to oppose the wars;
- Develop and broaden relationships with the broader anti-war movement as well as within the labor movement;
- Increase USLAW affiliations and revenue to USLAW in order for USLAW to implement our plan.

The work plan will be implemented in phases.

Phase I – January-March 2010

1. Educate unions members through the following actions:
 - Using the Afghanistan video(s) at union meetings
 - Inviting IVAW and MFSO to meetings
 - Email communications/expanding email lists at every opportunity
 - Union meetings at all levels
 - Web sites
 - Literature
 - Guest speakers
 - Etc
2. Pass anti-war resolutions with the core messages adopted at the Assembly in all local unions, CLCs, State AFL-CIOs and all other labor bodies; make use of resolutions already passed as catalogued on USLAW web site; make sure that all resolutions are publicized in union publications and forwarded to appropriate regional and national unions, CLCs, state feds, etc.
3. Write letters to editors and op eds; get on local radio talk shows;
4. Recruit additional USLAW affiliates and individual associate members;
5. Develop and broaden relationships with anti-war organizations, including IVAW and MFSO;
6. Schedule meetings with members of Congress and educate MOCs on why they should oppose the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan;
7. Develop and use materials (such as the new video “Why Are We in Afghanistan?”) that explain the cost of the wars and how these resources should be used in re-building America/the US economy;
8. Use every opportunity to mobilize union members to oppose the wars including
 - Anti-war events;
 - Meetings with members of congress;
 - Legislative bodies at every level, including city, county, state and federal;
 - CLCs and other labor organizations;
 - Events and hearings at which testimony can be provided;

- By circulating petitions and organizing letter writing to members of Congress and the President by union members and their families.
8. Integrate a media strategy into activities at every level, including sending press releases, calling media about events, appearing on radio shows, doing street theater, on-site letter writing, etc.
 9. On a local, regional and national union level, begin conversations with key leaders in various levels and sectors about ideas and prospects for larger and/or more numerous coordinated actions for jobs, peace and justice to be held at a future date.
 10. Raise the issue of the escalation and the wars/occupations at every possible labor forum and other venues, such as the U.S. Social Forum, and encourage teachers and educators to integrate discussion of U.S. military occupations and foreign policy into their curricula.
 11. Encourage affiliates and union members to participate in antiwar demonstrations, such as those called for the anniversary of the Iraq invasion on March 20th, and other actions designed to carry our message, support our demands and register protest by the labor movement to the wars and occupations.

Phase II – If we are successful in Phase I, we will then be in a position to build toward larger and stronger actions including:

- Mass mobilizations participated in and led by labor;
- Paid ads in major newspapers denouncing the wars signed by hundreds of labor leaders and members;
- Petitions to MOCs and President Obama;
- Resolutions by national unions, AFL-CIO and CTW;
- On-site letter writing campaigns by members to Congress and the President.

The USLAW Steering committee shall develop specific steps for Phase II and beyond in 2010.

International Solidarity Work of USLAW

- Continue solidarity support to the labor movement of Iraq, with special focus on support for labor rights and against privatization of Iraqi resources and assets
- Do outreach to and establish communications with Afghan unions and other worker organizations
- Participate in a cross-border labor conference in Pakistan
- Support organization of and participation in a listening tour/fact-finding labor delegation to Palestine and Israel
- Develop support actions for Pakistani, Afghan and Iraqi women
- Organize financial support for the newspaper of the Iraq Federation of Oil Unions

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