

A Layperson's Guide To

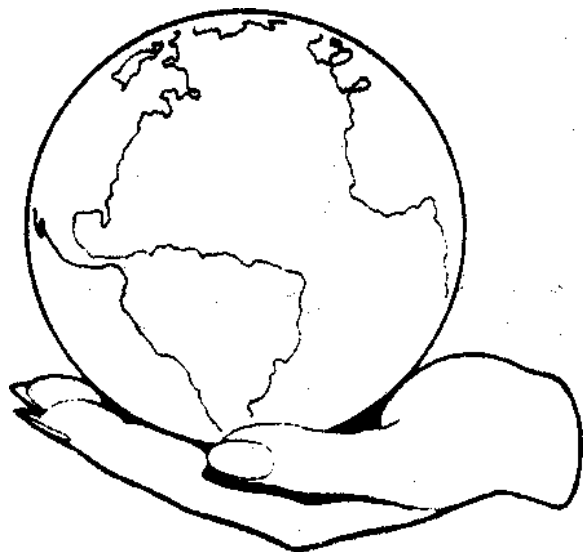
Smothering The "War On Terror"

According to poll results, Mr. George Bush's "War On Terror" (including the impending Iraq slaughter) is – despite numerous setbacks -- still incredibly popular with the American public. We would note, however, that these same poll results indicate that about 80% of the *world's* populations is opposed to the United States' war. Further, it has been our experience – in talking with people on the streets, on the buses, in our workplaces, within our families, over e-mail, and the like – that a very great many Americans are incredibly dismayed over their government's policies, both at home and abroad.

Dismayed and isolated. Alone and unable to change anything, and thus resigned to privately despise the situation.

But we say we're not alone. There are thousands upon thousands of like-minded people, all isolated and privately despising the situation. What can we all do? Plenty! How effective can we be? Nobody knows! Nobody can predict the course of history. Outbreaks of democracy can and do occur in the unlikeliest of times and places, taking so-called "experts" by surprise, and causing massive changes in policies.

The "War On Terror" is doomed to failure because it's not a war *on* terror, but a war *of* terror. A war on the planet, terrorizing the



overwhelming majority of the world's population, and which will unavoidably elicit major backlashes the world over. But the prospects for destruction and suffering both in the interim and if the United States becomes desperate are terribly frightening. So the more we at home can do to counteract the War On The Planet, the better off we'll all be.

With this in mind, we'd like to offer some suggested actions, a great many of which may be undertaken by even those with severe time and financial constraints.

This pamphlet was produced by the Nonviolent Action Community of Cascadia. 4554 12th Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98105; (206) 547-0952; cmtc@igc.org; <http://nacc.info>. Feel free to make copies and distribute widely. The pamphlet can also be downloaded from NACC's website and then printed out and copied off: <http://nacc.info/images/layperson.pdf>, or in Word <http://nacc.info/images/layperson.doc>.

Protest Activities

Stay Informed. The State Department lies, and the mainstream media is more-less an adjunct of the State Department. This can make separating the wheat from the chaff rather a dicey proposition. Luckily, with the advent of the World Wide Web, alternative sources of information are just a few keystrokes away. Even those without Internet access at home can hop onto the web for free at any public library. NACC has set up an extensive links page to what we feel are some of the most vital alternative voices. This site is located at <http://nacc.info/peacelinks.htm>. Perhaps the five best places to begin are <http://cursor.org>, <http://www.dack.com>, <http://warincontext.org>, <http://counterpunch.org>, and <http://zmag.org>.

Plug In. Even though they don't make headlines, there are a myriad of organizations performing thankless-yet-necessary grassroots organizing tasks and protest activities. In Seattle, Jean Buskin's Peace Calendar is an excellent place to find groups and events that suit your interests and time availability. <http://www.scn.org/activism/calendar/>. (**Note:** The solidarity group Citizens Concerned for the People of Iraq performs especially valuable work regarding this issue. See their fine website at <http://endiraqsanctions.org>, or give them a call at (206) 632-2061.) For a good listing of national organizations and events, you can check out <http://www.warresisters.org/demos.htm>.

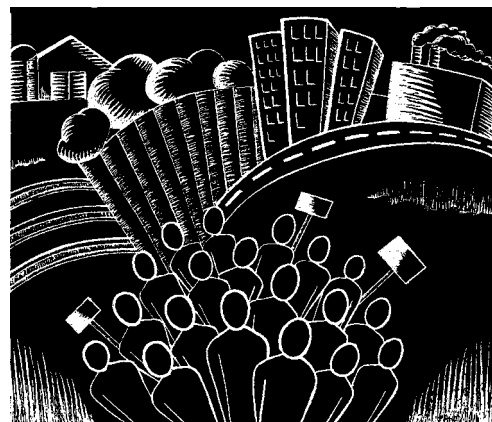
Send Money. In addition to volunteer energy, these same myriad organizations are almost universally in need of funds. Whatever you can give will be put to good use.

War Tax Resistance. Roughly 50% of our income tax dollars are allocated to the military – but only if we pay them. Thousands of people refuse to pay their income taxes (including paycheck deductions) on the grounds that they ought not be spent on bombs and jet fighters. There *are* risks involved, but the chances of serving jail time are almost nil. The IRS wants to collect the money, not lock you up. Locally, NACC maintains the nation's largest fund of

resisted War Taxes. Contact the NACC office for more information or for counseling. Nationally, the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee is a valuable resource. <http://nwttrcc.org/>.

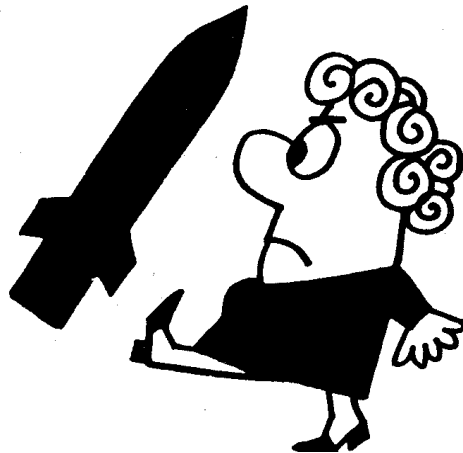
Contact Your Representatives. While it's true that they're beholden to huge (usually nefarious) interests that fund their campaigns, they are, after all, politicians. If they notice that large numbers of constituents are not happy with certain policies, they're much more likely to stand up and be counted. One can quickly obtain contact information through <http://congress.com> and <http://senate.com>. You can also fax representatives for free via the web, from <http://truemajority.com/>. Note that snail-mail, fax, and telephone messages are much more effective than e-mail messages. While you're at it, send a letter to the White House: 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, DC 20500.

Spread The Word. Talk to your family, friends, co-workers, and parishioners. Send e-mails to your entire address book. Put up yard signs, banners, and bumper stickers. Tell your acquaintances what you've been doing and why. Write letters to the editor (the more letters a paper receives advocating a certain viewpoint, the more it'll run), and call radio talk shows. Help distribute alternative print media. It's generally not glamorous or particularly fun, but getting the word out is perhaps the most important activity of all.



Lifestyle Changes

The United States accounts for about 6% of the world's population, yet consumes 30% of its resources. The United States' War On The Planet is, ultimately, in attempt to maintain this status quo. Whether it's oil, water, raw materials, or labor; resources must be extracted from the Third World at the minimum cost to maintain the First World's maximum standard of living. (Yes, there's a reason it's always Third World countries which are on the receiving end of the United States' military bombardments.) If the planet is to survive the United States' war upon it, American citizens must reject this theft of resources. We must begin to share all the world's resources equitably. This means we must reduce our consumption. There are simply no two ways about it. These suggestions won't always be easily undertaken. In some cases they may be impossible. But it's worth the effort to entertain as many of them as possible. And while they may seem boring or beside the point, they're every bit as important as protest and organizing activities.



Get Rid Of Your Car. Or the world's going to choke in its own vomit. Besides, some of the world's largest and nastiest corporations – the automobile and oil industries – profit whenever we purchase and run motor-cars. And who wants to help them out? Oh, and most of the United States' wars are fought with access to oil reserves in mind. And did we mention that sitting in endless gridlock sucks, and that autos are *really* expensive to own and operate? And that driving is “unsafe at any speed”? See: <http://www.uwsp.edu/geo/courses/geog100/USAutoCulture&Env.htm>.

Maintain A Vegan Diet. Second only to the automobile in yucky environmental impacts is the meat-based diet. Two-thirds of the world's agricultural area is reserved for pasture land and the growing of crops to feed animals. Yet well over a billion people are starving. It takes 2,500 gallons of water to raise one pound of beef, even while fresh water has grown so scarce that experts predict that most of the 21st century's wars will be fought over water sources. For more information, see for example <http://vegan.com/>.

Community Supported Agriculture. The concept: patrons pay farmers in advance to help offset the operating costs of the farm. In return, patrons receive regular portions of locally grown, generally organic, vegetables and fruits throughout the harvest season. Truly a concept whose time has come. See <http://www.csacenter.org/>.

Conserve Energy or Live Off The Grid. All that energy comes from somewhere, and it should be a national scandal that we're still deriving it from oil, gas, hydro, coal, and nuclear sources rather than from renewable sources. See <http://www.altenergy.org/> for more info.

Use The Public Library. Rather than buying and adding to the stack the latest CD, book, or movie; simply place a hold at the library, and check it out for free when your number comes up. We should also in general quit buying so much disposable crap.

Sweatshop-Free Clothing. While most people are aware that garments are by and large made in overseas factories with abhorrent working conditions, it's not apparent what can be done about it. <http://www.sweatshopwatch.org/> poses some good ideas.

Talking Points

The United States Is A Major Perpetrator and Supporter Of Terrorism. “Terrorism”, as defined in the dictionary is: the use or threat of violence against civilians, in order to attain a political goal. The list of instances in which the United States has engaged in Terrorism would fill up scores upon scores of pages (indeed, entire books have been written on the subject). The late Eqbal Ahmad conducted a study of the topic, estimating that state-sponsored Terrorism (of the U.S. variety) has been responsible for 100,000 times as many deaths as has private Terrorism (of the bin Laden variety). See our website for many, many examples.

The United States Harbors Known Terrorists. Perhaps the most notorious, Emanuel Constant, was responsible for the brutal repression in Haiti in the early '90s. Currently living in the U.S., he has been tried in absentia, with mountains of evidence having been adduced, and found guilty. Haiti has repeatedly asked the United States to turn him over, including since September 11th, but here he remains. Additionally, zealous Cubans living in Florida have repeatedly carried out Terrorist attacks upon Cuba, with the full knowledge (and frequently assistance) of the State Department. Also, much of the IRA's funding is derived from Irish Americans living in Boston and New York. And dare we mention that planners of past Terrorist activities committed by the United States itself – Henry Kissinger, Madeleine Albright, Ronald Reagan, Robert McNamara, Bill Clinton, George Schultz, et al. – are essentially being “harbored” in the United States.

The United States Operates “Terrorist Training Camps”. Most notably the School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia, from which most of Latin America's most heinous military butchers have graduated. Every year thousands of people descend upon the School to publicize and protest its bloody and shameful legacy.

Note. None of the foregoing is intended to somehow apologize for, or attempt to justify, the horrific events of September 11th. Rather, to make the point that while a “War On Terrorism” is an admirable undertaking in the abstract (though we could do without the martial verbiage), it's virtually meaningless if only carried out upon those terrorists we don't happen to like at a particular moment in time. It's *especially* meaningless if not applied to the United States itself, which is, after all, the Terrorist nation whose atrocities we can most readily eliminate.

Weapons Of Mass Destruction. The United States, of course, maintains the world's largest stockpile of such weapons. It has used Depleted Uranium munitions (with devastating effect) upon Iraq, Yugoslavia, and Afghanistan. It also, in intentionally destroying civilian infrastructure (including, critically, water treatment facilities) has conducted a type of biological warfare upon those people as well. As for Iraq, at the time Saddam Hussein stopped cooperating with weapons inspectors (in December of 1998, because the U.S. was using the inspections as a cover for spying operations) Iraq had been almost completely disarmed. It was, in other words, in compliance with UN Resolution 687. The United States, on the other hand, which to this day continues to flood the region with armaments, is in clear violation of UN 687 (which mandates Iraqi disarmament *in the context of region-wide* disarmament).

Link-citations for, and elaborations of, these talking points, as well as many more talking points, can be found on NACC's website, at <http://nacc.info/talkingpoints.htm>.

