



Social Distancing?

Peace and social justice demand more coming together.

by Kevin Martin, President of Peace Action

Social distancing” (or maybe more properly “appropriate physical spacing”) is something people everywhere need to practice in the near term to get through the Covid-19 crisis. And it likely won’t be the last time, unfortunately, that a pandemic threatens us.

But in a broader sense, isn’t “social distancing” a serious, endemic problem? We’re too “distant” from most people other than family and close friends, in terms of understanding, respect, solidarity and empathy. (We’re also too distant from other species and our natural world, our Mother Earth.) The dominant culture “others” people of different skin colors, countries, religions, classes, sexual orientations, gender identifications and other characteristics that strengthen, rather than divide, the human family. Let’s get through this crisis, and then let’s decrease the distance between us, let’s overcome the walls we erect between us.

While this certainly applies to domestic tranquility, it also can guide the way to positive, badly needed changes in US foreign and military policy.



On March 13 the US engaged in tit for tat bombing against Iranian-backed militia in Iraq, in retaliation for the killing of two US soldiers and one British soldier by said militia, which was likely retaliation for the US assassination of Iranian military leader Qasem Soleimani, which was likely retaliation for... and ad nauseam. Apparently, while there are conflicting reports, the strikes also killed three Iraqi soldiers, two police officers and a civilian worker, and hit a civilian airport. So, the US is the latest to kill in this fool’s game, setting it up for the Iranian deadly response.

How is this endless cycle of violence promoting US or regional security? How badly does it have to be bungled, after all, to cause Iraqi feelings of nostalgia for Saddam? How inept does it get to make the Taliban popular in parts of Afghanistan and also make the Afghans deeply and angrily distrust and reject the deal between Trump and the Taliban?

The US and South Korea wisely postponed huge military drills out of Covid-19 concerns. Postponement is good, but cancellation would be better, and might help spur a revival of peace talks with North Korea, as even President Trump has acknowledged the war exercises are expensive and provocative. In mid-March, the Pentagon announced a curtailment of the largest military exercises in Europe in a generation in response to the coronavirus outbreak. Again, cancellation would be better. Russia certainly knows how fearsome the US/NATO military alliance is; we don’t need to demonstrate it at huge economic, human and environmental costs.

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US economic sanctions are exacerbating the severe Covid-19 crisis in Iran, which is just cruel and likely a crime against humanity, again serving no legitimate US or regional security objective. We should be helping Iran's medical system address the crisis. Perhaps we could learn from Iran's experience, as pandemics know no borders.

As the world faces the frightening Covid-19 pandemic, we need global cooperation, not military escalation. Resources wasted on continuous, fruitless military conflict are desperately needed for human health, in the US and globally.

Let's get all US troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan, make peace with Iran, and address the real threats to human security like pandemics and the climate crisis. More war is never a good answer, and it makes even less sense at this time.

The View of the Future - A New Arms Race?

Mark Weisbrot, co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research interviewed on The Real News Network by Greg Wilpert, Feb. 21, 2020:

“You're at a point where the leaders of the so-called national security state are planning a shift from, and beginning a shift from, what they call the War on Terror to a **Great Power Rivalry** and that means an arms race with China.

“And China's...economy is 30% larger than ours by the measure that economists use to make these international comparisons and will be twice as big as us now...within 10 years. Now, we had an arms race with the Soviet Union when it was only a quarter of the size of the United States. We've never faced anything like this. This would preclude anything like a Green New Deal, or really almost any conversion towards zero carbon emissions, any Medicare For All. All of these things we'd have to sacrifice if we really want to build this military capacity to continue the US supremacy in the world. That's the dominant view right now in our foreign policy establishment.”

Milwaukee Billboard Links War and Starvation



“3% of U.S. Military Spending Could End Starvation on Earth.” This message was displayed on a large billboard across the street from the Milwaukee Public Museum in February on the corner of Wells and James Lovell Streets. The billboard will be up again for the month of July when the Democratic National Convention is held nearby.

It was sponsored by World Beyond War, and included donations from Milwaukee Veterans for Peace, the School Sisters of Notre Dame in Waukesha and individual Milwaukeeans. Similar billboards are being displayed in cities across the country.



Congresswoman Gwen Moore joined End the Wars Coalition members at a news conference in front of the World Beyond War billboard on 7th and Wells in downtown Milwaukee on Feb. 18.

Starvation and Malnutrition

Rise Sharply in US War Zones

by Pam Richard

In a world where 829,000,000 people go to bed hungry every night and one in three suffer from some form of malnutrition, the US continues to spend billions on warfare, greatly increasing daily human suffering with its violent regional conflicts. Climate change is making the crisis worse with prolonged droughts and flooding of populated areas, which adds to instability, lack of food and increasing numbers of refugees. Unequal distribution of global wealth is worsening extreme poverty.

Countries where the US has had sustained warfare are among the world's top emergencies for hunger and famine. Instead of offering to share the abundance of food in the US, 40% of the aid these countries receive is in the form of military hardware and occupation by US troops. In addition, US aid isn't given based on need but rather is based on military interests. The biggest recipients of US aid are Afghanistan, Israel, Egypt and Iraq.



Hunger in Somalia.

Urgent Examples

- **In Yemen** we see the most critical example. The UN calls the US backed Saudi/ UAE war on Yemen the world's worst humanitarian crises and the situation continues to deteriorate. Now there are 16,000,000 people who are severely food insecure. Over 3,200,000 women and children suffer from acute malnutrition and are dying in large numbers. Attacks on civilians and blockades are restricting the delivery of food and medicine. Destruction of water supplies causes thirst and disease from lack of clean water.
- **In Iraq**, after years of US warfare, there are 3 million people displaced by the conflicts. Poverty and food insecurity affects 1,700,000 people. Eleven million Iraqis are in need of humanitarian assistance. During the years of US-UN economic sanctions in the 1990's,

a half million children died of preventable diseases and malnutrition.

- **In Palestine**, occupied by the Israeli military with help of US military aid, over 2,000,000 people are food insecure and living in poverty. In Gaza, the situation is worse with high unemployment, food insecurity, lack of clean water, and ongoing violence by the Israeli government as it blocks access to farmlands and fishing waters, destroys sewage treatment plants and prevents delivery of aid.
- **In Afghanistan** 6,300,000 people require humanitarian assistance, half with severe and major need. Due to long term malnutrition, 41% of children under 5 are growth-stunted.
- **In Somalia** 5,700,000 people are food insecure with over 2 million on the brink of starvation.
- **In Syria**, after seven years of conflict, 6,500,000 people don't have enough food. An estimated 11,000,000 people, including 4,700,000 children, require humanitarian assistance -nutrition, water and healthcare.
- **Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon** are straining to host millions of refugees of war, climate change and natural disasters, but there aren't enough refugee camps to help them.
- **In Central America** millions of people have been displaced as the US uses military aid to prop up brutal regimes.



Starving children in Somalia

In 2008, the United Nations said that \$30 billion per year could end hunger on earth, as reported in the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, and many other outlets. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN tells us that number is still up to date.

As of 2019, the annual Pentagon base budget, plus war budget, plus nuclear weapons in the Department of Energy, plus the Department of Homeland Security, and other military spending totaled well over \$1 trillion, in fact \$1.25 trillion. Three percent of a trillion is 30 billion. Peace Action and other national peace groups are calling for a \$200,000,000 cut to military spending that could solve many more of Earth's problems, besides easing the suffering caused by war and destruction. Peace Action WI has joined in this effort.

Ilhan Omar's Pathway to Peace

A Plan to Revolutionize U.S. Foreign Policy

Taken from a conversation between Greg Wilpert of the Real News Network, and Kate Kizer, director of Win Without War, Feb. 21, 2020 on Truthdig.com. Edited by Julie Byrnes Enslow.

Congresswoman Ilhan Omar of Minnesota introduced a package of seven bills in February, which she calls the Pathway to Peace. This legislation, if it were passed, would mean nothing short of a revolution in the way that U.S. foreign policy is conducted. Last year, Omar had said that she plans to make U.S. foreign policy more ethical.

Greg Wilpert: This package of seven bills would end arm sales to countries that violate human rights, provide foreign aid to youth in developing countries, shift \$5 billion from the Pentagon to the state department for a global peace building fund and grant Congress oversight over U.S. economic sanctions. Also, the bills would have the U.S. sign the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, a global migration agreement, and the Rome Statute on the International Criminal Court.

Kate Kizer: It's a really important marker of what Progressive's want to see on foreign policy. For a long time there's been little to no debate within the Democratic Party of how we would actually reform U.S. foreign policy to meet the values that the U.S. says it stands for. So it's very exciting to see Representative Omar lay down such bold markers of how we would change U.S. engagement with the world, and not only to socialize these ideas amongst her peers in Congress, even if they won't end up becoming law this year, but also to signal what we would expect to see from a progressive White House

One of these bills in Omar's package, the Stop Arming Human Rights Abusers Act, would dramatically change this practice, and require the president to certify whether or not countries engage in human rights violations before allowing any sales of weapons or foreign aid. [Saudi Arabia is a prime example of a country that would be affected by that criteria.]

Greg Wilpert: Now currently, not only hasn't the U.S. signed these conventions that we mentioned, but it

also flaunts international law when it imposes unilateral economic sanctions on countries such as on Venezuela, Russia, or Iran. According to the UN charter, it is illegal for countries to engage in collective punishment. Now, the Pathway to Peace includes a bill that would require Congress to approve of economic sanctions, but it would still mean that sanctions could actually violate international law. Wouldn't a bill that would outlaw all non-UN-approved sanctions be better?

Kate Kizer: Representative Omar has obviously been an advocate for an end to U.S. blanket sanction regimes that violate international law and cause undue hardship to regular people in sanctioned countries. But I think she's strategic in that she recognizes that many members of Congress are not ready to just do away with all U.S. sanctions power.

So, what she is doing is really staking out what a first step in sanctions reform looks like. First Congress would have to affirmatively vote to approve any sanctions. In doing so it would force Congress with having to reckon with whether or not sanctions actually can achieve the policy goals that they say they want to achieve, (which the academic literature indicates they can't and don't). And they would also have to reckon with the humanitarian impact of sanctions, which Congress largely ignores at this point, and it has led to some of the world's worst humanitarian crises as we're seeing in Venezuela, North Korea, and Iran.



Know the History!

Iran-U.S. Relations

What has led to the current crisis with Iran?

- 1953: Overthrow of Mossadegh - The United States and the United Kingdom orchestrated a coup led by the CIA to overthrow the elected popular government of Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh after he sought to nationalize Iran's oilfields. They restored to power Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the last Shah of Iran. The Shah's brutal, oppressive regime began.
- 1963: The US and Iran, under the Shah, signed a Status of Forces Agreement that gave Americans immunity from punishment in Iran. This applied to all US personnel, including the numerous military personnel training the Iranian military.



- 1964: Ayatollah Khomeini objected to the subjugation of Iranians to American rule, and was exiled by the Shah..
- 1979: The Iranian Revolution overthrew the Shah who fled to the US. Khomeini returned.
- 1979: U.S. Embassy Hostage Crisis. Iranian

students entered the US embassy, initially as a sit-in to present their demands. Iran used the action to defy US violations of their sovereignty and held 52 US diplomats hostage for 444 days.

- 1983: After years of supplying arms to both sides in the Iraq-Iran war, a strategy intended to prevent either side from dominating this important oil-rich region, the US began to increase arms sales to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, including anthrax and chemical weapons to use against Iranians.
- 1988: The US warship USS Vincennes shot down a commercial passenger airline, Iran Air Flight 655, killing all 290 on board, and heightening tensions between the nations.
- 2002: "Axis of Evil." President George W. Bush denounced Iran as part of an "axis of evil" with Iraq and North Korea, outraging Iran.
- 2000's: Nuclear fears and sanctions. The US accused Iran of a secret nuclear weapons program which Iran denied. Years of economic sanctions followed.
- 2013-2015: Closer ties and a nuclear deal. Iran's new moderate president Rouhani held talks with US President Obama and in 2015 a nuclear weapons treaty was signed by Iran, the U.S. and several European nations limiting Iran's nuclear activities in return for lifting economic sanctions.
- May 2018: Trump abandoned the nuclear deal and reinstated economic sanctions against Iran, resulting in a deep recession. US/Iranian relations worsened. Sanctions tightened.
- 2019 -2020: Initiation of military strikes on both sides. US assassinated Iranian General Qasem Soleimani on Jan. 3, escalating the threat of war.

PEACE CALENDAR

February/March 2020

Due to the corona virus pandemic, many planned peace and justice events have been canceled. Some of them may be held online. Please check with our Peace Action email calendar or our website, www.peaceactionwi.org or on facebook.

Sat., April 11 Tax Day Demo - Fund Health Care - Not Warfare! 12 noon. National Guard Armory, 51st and Silver Spring. We will spread out along the roadside at a safe distance from one another. Sponsored by Peace Action & End the Wars Coalition. (Check website for possible cancelation.)

Wed., April 15 End the Wars Coalition Meeting - Telephone Conference Call, 7 pm.

Wed., April 22 50th Anniversary of Earth Day- All planned public events for Earth Week are cancelled. Check our email calendar or website for alternative online events. Or see Facebook for the Peoples Climate Coalition. org or People'sClimateCoalition@ppc.mke.org

Postponed to Sept. 19 - Water Walk 2020. Led by Native American women who will have a blessing of the waters of the Menominee, Milwaukee and Kinnickinnic Rivers and Lake Michigan.

Fri., May 1 May Day March for Immigration and Workers Rights. May be Cancelled.

Wed. May 20 End the Wars Coalition Meeting - Telephone Conference Call, 7 pm.

All Peace Action Wisconsin committee meetings will be held as telephone conference calls.

Stay Safe. Stay Well. Take Care of One Another.

Volunteer Opportunities

- During this critical outbreak of the corona virus we have at-home volunteer opportunities. We need help with mailings which we can deliver and pick-up at your door. This is a good time for phone calls and letter writing campaigns to our congresspersons.
- We invite you to participate in on-line webinars and educational forums that we hope to produce in lieu of in-person events.
- Watch for our email alerts to stay connected with us on-line.
- Contact our office at 414-269-9525 for more information.

Thank You Volunteers

- Newsletter Crew: Julie Enslow, Chris Breihan, Pam Richard, Mary Laan, Babette Grunow, Tom Neibler, Marsha Vila, Laura Kukor, Trish Beausang, Mary Lou Stebbins.
- Technology: Patrick Auld, Tom Rodman, John Neibler, Dan O'Keefe
- Sue Ruggles for photographing our events.
- "Sanctions as Economic War" panelists: Kevin Zeese, Tom Seery, Art Heitzer
- Everyone who gave financial donations.

Thank You Stand for Peace Activists

- In appreciation of the intrepid Stand for Peace activists for your devotion to the cause of peace, justice and equality. You have persevered in sub-zero temperature, chilling winds, snow, rain, busy traffic and other hardships. Thank you.
- Laura Kukor-Shea and Steven Shea for setting up the locations for the Stand for Peace, and often bringing the peace flags and signs.
- Those with autos for transporting the peace signs and flags- Jim Carpenter, Don Timmerman & Roberta Thurston, Jerry Hills, Julie Enslow, Pam Richard, and Greg Bird.
- Brian Verdin for bringing his colorful collection of Peace and Justice flags.
- Everyone who braved the Wisconsin winter to make a stand for world peace: Steve Shea, Laura Kukor-Shea, Pam Richard, Jim Carpenter, Marsha Vila, Don Timmerman, Roberta Thurston, Chris from Casa, Tom Neibler, Joan Bleidorn, Pat Richard, Jill Ferguson, Steve Watrous, Art Heitzer, John Payton, Roger Hansen, Christy Breihan, Babette Grunow, Bob Graf, Trish Beausang, Jim Dill, Jerry Hills, Tom Rodman, Samir Moukaddam, George Martin, Julie Enslow, Debbie Metke, Joe & Joyce Ellwanger, Sue Ruggles, Brian Verdin, Mary Laan, Bruce Andrews, Pat Gowens, Mark Foreman, Joel Palpham, Harvey Taylor, George Wagner, Connie Boyle and all others whose names we might not have recorded.

The Mobilizer

Published by Peace Action of Wisconsin, Inc., 1001 E. Keefe, Milwaukee, WI 53212. \$30 annual membership, \$10 limited income. Contributors to the publication of this newsletter: Julie Enslow, Christy Breihan, Pam Richard, Dan O'Keefe and the ever-faithful mail gang.

End Military Intervention, Transfer Military Spending to Human Needs, Abolish Nuclear Weapons & Power, Oppose Racism & Sexism, Protect the Environment.

No F-35s in Wisconsin!

by Pam Richard



The National Guard Bureau plans to bring 2 squadrons of 18 F-35 joint strike fighter stealth aircraft (+ 2 backup aircraft) to the Madison airport. This will make life unbearable for a large number of Madison residents with excruciating noise levels, four times louder than the current F-16 aircraft. F-35 engine emissions will cause thousands of tons of deadly pollution, and operations will pollute water with PFAS. It will emit almost 50,00 tons of global warming-causing carbon dioxide at a cost of \$44,000 per flight-hour.

The F-35 is expected to become capable of carrying nuclear weapons in 2024. It has 4 weapons stations that can carry up to 2,500 pounds of bombs each. There could be multiple nuclear weapons stored in Wisconsin ready for use.

This is the most expensive weapons program in history. In the next 25 years, the program is projected to be \$428.4 billion, with an additional \$1,196.4 billion for operating costs. Add in \$55.5 billion for F-35 research and development. The costs keep rising because the aircraft have failed to complete operational testing. Wisconsin taxpayers will pay over \$200 million a year for the F-35 program.

Production is beginning this year (2020) on 478 aircraft for US Armed Services and international weapons sales, including to Saudi Arabia. Lockheed Martin will make most of the F-35 money in annual non-competitive contracts, reaping billions in profit for shareholders and paying CEO's tens of millions in salaries.

The defense industry has placed a tactical aviation base or contractor or subcontractor in just about every district in the US, including Wisconsin, which affects the manufacturing and job base of those districts. This leads to our congressional representatives pushing for more funding to please lobbyists and to be re-elected. In Wisconsin, our

Senator Tammy Baldwin has received substantial campaign contributions from Lockheed Martin and has led efforts to bring the F-35 to Wisconsin.

Madison peace activists, environmental groups and community members have been fighting for years against bringing the F-35 here. The Final Environmental Impact Statement was issued on Feb, 28, 2020. Next will be the Record of Decision when the fate of stationing F-35's will be announced, sometime after March 30. Let's stand in solidarity

No F-35's in Wisconsin!

Get on Our E-Mail Alert List!

Make sure we have your email address, so you can receive our action alerts and calendar updates. Our newsletter is published every two months and a lot can happen in that time. Keep up to date with calls to our elected officials, visiting speakers, special demonstrations and other events. During this corona virus pandemic, watch for notices of canceled events and online opportunities.

Don't be out of the loop!

Send us your email at:

info@peaceactionwi.org

Stand for Peace

Saturdays Noon-1 PM

- April 4 King & North
- April 11 51st & Silver Spring
- (Tax Day Protest Opposing Military Spending)**
- April 18 Wells & 16th St
- April 25 27th & National Ave.
- May 2 Howell & Layton
- May 9 M.L. King Dr. & Locust
- May 16 St. Paul & Water St.
- (In Memory of Fr. Bill Brennan)**
- May 23 Lafayette and Lincoln Memorial Dr.
- May 30 92nd and North Ave.

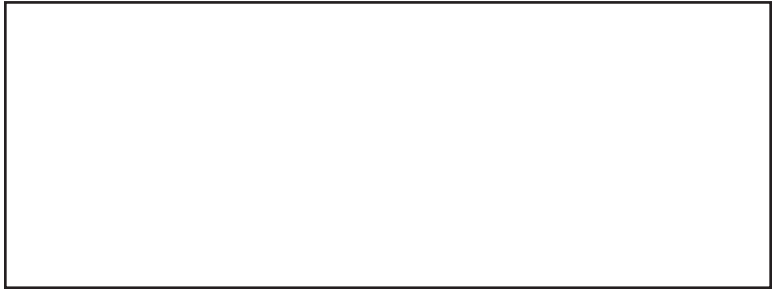


As the world faces the frightening Covid-19 pandemic, we need global cooperation, not military escalation. Resources wasted on continuous, fruitless military conflict are desperately needed for human health, in the US and globally.

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DATED MATERIAL



The U.S. military is the single largest consumer of fossil fuels and the single biggest emitter of greenhouse gases. The U.S. military fights wars for control of oil so we have oil to fight our wars.
A terrible vicious circle.

Keep the oil in the soil!
Keep the gas under the grass!
Keep the coal in the hole!
System Change - NOT Climate Change!

Earth Day Message - Live Gently, Walk Softly



Words of awareness of the Arhuaco people of northern Colombia:

“When you go to dig your fields, or make a pot from clay, you are disturbing the balance of things. When you walk, you are moving the air, breathing it in and out. Therefore, you must make payments.”

As you walk, you disturb the balance of things, so walk softly — live your life softly — with awareness and gratitude.

What if this is what we were taught as we grew up? Perhaps as humanity grows up, this is what it must teach itself.