



PEACE

A PUBLICATION OF THE PEACE EDUCATION CENTER

NOTES

WINTER 2020

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Why we secretly like big military

By Becky Payne

Who doesn't want peace? It's the prayer on the lips of everyone. But why, in real life, is it so hard to adamantly... forcefully... proudly... work for peace?

In our hearts, some of us really don't want to dismantle our military. We like having that strong arm behind us. Let's take a closer look.



1. **Our military history has made us great.** History books are full of military exploits. Reading about the tedious work of making treaties and imposing sanctions just doesn't give the same thrill as a good war story. And we don't want to say anything that might make our veterans think we don't appreciate the great sacrifice they've made.

But ... we get so much more for the dollar when we put money into building partners, sending aid and assistance and heading off calamities before they spiral out of control. Just because treaties and aid packages don't make exciting news doesn't mean that war is the best way to conduct foreign policy. It would take \$30 billion a year to end world hunger. The U.S. Pentagon budget is \$737 billion for 2020.

2. **We trust our experts.** The minutia of foreign policy and military contracts and spending requires learning about foreign policy and influencing elected officials. We prefer to trust our governmental experts.

But... politicians and experts are so often swayed by donations to political campaigns, perks and stock in military companies that we can't trust them. OpenSecrets.org lists that \$12,820,607 has been donated by 20 military contractors in the 2020 elections so far.

3. **We want to be safe.** Even if we understand on some level that military spending is out of control, and bombing other countries is tragic, we just put that in the "blah, blah, blah" part of our brain and tell ourselves that at least we're safe.

But ... it takes a strong stomach to look at the human damage caused by our wars. We are lucky that war doesn't come to our shores. It is estimated that 10 civilians are killed for every soldier's death in war. That doesn't count homes and communities bombed, limbs lost, children orphaned.

4. **Fear of immigrants.** We secretly like strong borders. The U.S. is a magnet for displaced people and we just don't want to welcome too many. A few are okay, we aren't heartless, but we don't want too many of "them" flooding in.

Secretly like big military (cont.)

But ... immigrants, here both legally and illegally, contribute billions, no trillions, to our economy and take jobs and fill gaps that U.S. citizens won't take. The U.S. is a long way from getting overrun! On the contrary, recent moves to stop immigration and send immigrants out of the U.S. is costing us in the loss of workers, tax money, even loss of purchases of goods and services.

5. If we don't have a strong military – China or Russia will take over.

But ... the U.S. military is larger than the militaries of most of the militaries in the world put together. If you add in the amounts spent by our allies, our military power is like a giant boot over the globe. But we need to look at other damages to our country that fighter planes won't solve. Money wasted on useless military equipment is desperately needed for education, health care, infrastructure. And if we really want to be safe from China and Russia, let's put a few billions into solar and wind and IT security. We aren't looking seriously at what really makes us strong.

6. We need the military for research and jobs. True, there is a huge amount of research and development going on in the military.

But ... is that the best place for it? I for one would feel a lot safer if we did R&D on mitigating climate change rather than tweaks to our nuclear arsenal. And as for jobs, a dollar in the military budget generates fewer jobs than if put into any other program.

As was stated recently regarding U.S. plans to spend \$1.2 trillion to replace our entire nuclear arsenal: "This is madness. You know it. I know it. The whole world knows it."

Schuster to speak on campaign finance laws

By Terry Link

Anyone with a pulse knows we have entered a major electoral season, one that is already awash with money like we have never seen before.

The Peace Education Center, along with co-sponsors including the [Lansing League of Women Voters](#) and the [Michigan State University School of Journalism](#), is offering a program to learn how any of us can look into where the money comes from and goes.

Simon Schuster, the newly named executive director of the Michigan Campaign Finance Network, will present "A Citizen's Guide to Following the Money ... At Least Some of It" at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 18th, at the University United Methodist Church, 1120 S. Harrison in East Lansing.

In his talk, he will demonstrate how we can see who is contributing to campaigns and who is benefitting, using tools we all can access.

The poster features a man in a suit, Simon Schuster, standing next to a large, stylized title. The title reads "THE CITIZEN'S GUIDE to FOLLOWING THE MONEY ... At least some of it." Above the title, it says "Simon Schuster Executive Director of the Michigan Campaign Finance Network". To the right, the date and time are listed: "February 18th Tuesday, 7:00 p.m. at University United Methodist Church 1120 S Harrison Rd, E. Lansing, MI 48823". At the bottom left, there is a section for "Sponsors" which includes the Peace Education Center, the Lansing League of Women Voters, and the School of Journalism College of Communication Arts & Sciences at Michigan State University.

Given the national attention given to our U.S. Senate race, there will be lots of money to track as the arms lobby and others place their bets. Likewise races for the state legislature have extra importance as these will be the last with current political boundaries. Come build your political literacy skills.

Schuster has worked as a journalist for the Michigan Information & Research Service (MIRS News), an online news service covering politics and policy in state government, and as a freelance reporter for the Washington Post and the Detroit News. He has a bachelor's and Master of Public Policy degrees from MSU.

Why Not Feed The People?

By Kathie Kuhn

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MALNUTRITION IS CAUSED BY
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And capitalism is not the
solution... Why not feed the
people? Don't spend it on arms
Nuclear warfare... Genetically
modified farms and corporate
welfare and corporate welfare
and more corporate welfare
And I want elections not
selections and I want a choice
It's my body... No really... It's
my body... I use my voice... I
use my mind... I use my heart
I don't cease 'til I find some
justice... The kind that feeds
the people... Money isn't green
if you know what I mean
But I've seen in my dreams
a world built on peace
Yes I've seen in my dreams
a world built on peace
What kind of a nation
what kind of a foundation

Denies anyone AIDS medications
and cages its people and murders
and maims and discrimination
isn't funny and war is not a game
War is not a game
So many people in the world
today are threatened with
weapons labeled Made in U.S.A.
If it's thought war is justified
Imagine the pain
To our child in Iraq
Try to explain... to our brother
in Afghanistan... our sister in
Columbia... our cousin in Sudan...
our family in Palestine... our
people in Syria... our precious
family of the earth... try
to explain
And if it's thought that
starvation is population control

Just what would we do if
there was nothing in our bowl
and our children were hungry
and our neighborhood was
detonated and some folks
in D.C. were simply elated
But the strife between
nations is really about the
systems in power... Have no
doubt... The people you see
really are good and want
to live in peace and should
But the real people in power
keep getting in the way
Perhaps we should lock them
away... Put them in a room...
Let them work it out... Take
away their nuclear weapons...
Let them scream and shout...
Or maybe we would find... As
it really seems to be
They're on the same team
of fear profiteers

Yes they're on the same team
of fear profiteers
Yes I've seen in my dreams
a world built on peace
where the people are fed
The children are warm
We've put away blood shed
and weathered the storms
And what could be worse
than World War Three
What could possibly be worse
You tell me... what could be
better... I'd like to see
A world built on peace
We are billions strong
and we rise above
We are billions strong
and we rise above
And HOPE BRINGS HOPE
AND TRUTH BRINGS LOVE

Calendar

Regularly Scheduled Events:

Every Friday, noon to 1 p.m.: Peace Vigil in front of the State Capitol Bldg., Lansing

1st Thursdays: Peace Education Center Board Meeting, 7 p.m., at University United Methodist Church, 1120 Harrison Road, East Lansing

1st Sundays: Islam 101, 2:30 p.m. [Islamic Center](#), 920 S. Harrison Rd., East Lansing

3rd Mondays: Greater Lansing Network Against War & Injustice (GLNAWI) planning meeting, 7 p.m., PEC office, University United Methodist Church, 1120 Harrison Road, East Lansing

1st and 3rd Tuesdays: Plant Justice, Grow Peace. 5:30-7 p.m. A faith-based study and action group for peace and justice. Grand Traverse Pie Co., Orchard Room, 1403 E. Grand River, East Lansing

3rd Thursdays: Mid-Michigan Immigration Coalition (MMIC), 5:45-7:15 p.m. Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lansing, 5509 S. Pennsylvania, Lansing. For information contact Judy Olson at olsonj@msu.edu.

2nd Tuesdays: Civil Rights for Immigrants (CRI) Task Force, 5:30-7 p.m. Cristo Rey Church, 201 W. Miller, Lansing. For information contact Oscar Castaneda at oscar@actionofgreaterlansing.org

Check the PEC website:

<http://www.peaceedcenter.org/>
for calendar updates

Upcoming Events:

Sat. Feb. 15, 7 p.m., The Gun Show. The Michigan Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence and director Rob Roznowski are producing The Gun Show, written by Playwright E.M. Lewis. The one-actor play explores Ms. Lewis's unique perspective and relationship with guns and American gun culture. The narrative leans neither left or right but instead centers on the question: Can we talk about this? MSU Department of Theatre – Studio 60, 542 Auditorium Road, MSU. Tickets range from \$5- \$10/donation. For more information, <https://michigancoalitiontopreventgunviolence.org/>

Mon. Feb. 17, Noon – 1 p.m. “Who cares for children? 30 years of reforms under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.” Presenter Florence Martin is Director of the Better Care Network. She is a human rights lawyer and clinical social worker with over 20 years of experience in child protection and children's rights in both emergency and development contexts. The event is presented by the Talsky Center for Human Rights of Women and Children. MSU College of Law, Castle Board Room.

Tue. Feb. 18, 7 p.m. “A Citizen's Guide to Following the Money ... At Least Some of It.” A talk by Simon Schuster, the newly named executive director of the [Michigan Campaign Finance Network](http://mcfn.org/), <http://mcfn.org/> in which he demonstrates how we can see who is contributing to campaigns and who is benefitting, using tools we all can access. University United Methodist Church, 1120 S. Harrison in East Lansing.

Thurs. Feb. 20, 5 p.m. April Ryan, White House correspondent, CNN political analyst, and part of the Washington Bureau Radio Networks, speaks as part of the MSU College of Osteopathic Medicine's Slavery to Freedom Lecture Series. She is the author of books “The Presidency in Black and White,” “At Mama's Knee: Mothers And Race In Black And White,” and most recently “Under Fire.” Ryan has a unique vantage point as the only black female reporter covering urban issues from the White House – a position she has held since the Clinton era. MSU Wharton Center, Pasant Theatre.

Thurs. Feb 27, 5 p.m. Bankole Thompson, a leading voice on race, leadership and free speech issues, speaks as part of the MSU College of Osteopathic Medicine's Slavery to Freedom Lecture Series. Thompson is a nationally renowned journalist whose work has been noted for its contributions in the continuing fight for racial equality and economic justice. He is a twice-a-week op-ed columnist at The Detroit News. His column deals with presidential politics and culture, public opinion and leadership, social and economic issues. MSU Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center Auditorium.

Thurs. Feb. 27, 4:30 p.m. Planning meeting for PeaceQuest 2020, a community-wide celebration of peace that will take place during the entire month of September in the greater Lansing area in honor of the United Nations International Day of Peace on Sept. 21. Several local organizations, including the Peace Education Center, have coordinated PeaceQuest Greater Lansing, which is now in its sixth year. The meeting will be at the Peace Education Center, University United Methodist Church, 1120 S. Harrison in East Lansing.

Good Shepherd Collective advocates for Palestinian human rights

By Cody O'Rourke



The Good Shepherd Collective (GSC) recently completed a seven-week speaking tour across the United States, with presentations and strategic meetings on models of nonviolent resistance to Israel's program of settler-colonialism. With stops across Florida, Indiana, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Washington D.C., the GSC held several discussions organized by members of the Peace Education Center of Greater Lansing.

"This is the second year now that the Peace Education Center of Greater Lansing has helped to put together a strong speaking tour across Michigan," said Cody O'Rourke, communications director of the Good Shepherd Collective. "We work with a lot of different organizations working for peace and justice, and what I can say is that the group here in Lansing does the work with a lot of integrity. In the last couple of years, individual members like Paul Brun Del Re and John Masterson worked tirelessly to open up new networks for the Good Shepherd Collective."

The Good Shepherd Collective, a Palestinian organization, based in Um al-Khair, held multiple discussions in the Lansing area, focusing on reconstituting the analysis around Israel-Palestine within a framework of settler-colonialism and implementing strategic advocacy initiatives that result in a structural change in the law.

"When we unpack and reframe the so-called 'Israeli-Palestinian conflict' into a discussion that parallels European colonialism – specifically U.S. settler colonialism and the erasure of the indigenous peoples of Turtle Island – it de-mystifies what is happening to the Palestinians," said O'Rourke. "People quickly see how the European concept of 'Manifest Destiny' and 'Zionsim' make it politically expedient to displace indigenous communities. The folks in Lansing who have spent decades working against imperialism and colonialism understand that what is happening to the indigenous communities of the Holy Land is not unique. They see that the Israeli state merely is enacting a political paradigm that the British, French, Dutch and the United States have been utilizing for economic gain for centuries."

The Good Shepherd Collective argues that the violence that often erupts between the Israeli state and non-state actors is the logical outworking of a legal system that safeguards the dominant settler group over the indigenous people of the land, and, as such, advocacy initiatives should be focused on creating structural changes in the law.

"It's pretty simple: When you look across the world and see cities of stability and rich diversity - Jews, Muslims, Christians, black and brown folks, LBTQ all living together - it is because the laws which govern the community affairs are distributed and enforced equitably," explained O'Rourke. "So when we look to the Holy Land and see how one group - Jewish Israelis - have a whole system of laws in place that put a higher privilege on their rights and access to resources than the indigenous communities, of course, there is going to be resistance to that. If we accept that premise that the violence derives from inherently oppressive policies and laws, then our advocacy models need to focus explicitly on repealing those policies and laws."

The Good Shepherd Collective is currently working on a campaign to disrupt the flow of financial resources to extremist Israel settler organizations.

"We've been working on building a grassroots movement to challenge the charitable status of some of these groups that are financing the Israeli settler enterprise. We know we have a strong legal case, and we think tactically we have a strong program. So right now, it is just about getting a strong working coalition in the United States to push it forward," said O'Rourke. "We've had over 100 Palestinian activists and nearly 40 Palestinian villages and municipalities endorse this campaign, so it is really up to the organizations who say they are led by the voices of the indigenous Palestinians to pick it up and run with it."

For more information or to financially support the Good Shepherd Collective go to their website at: goodshepherdcollective.org.

PeaceQuest 2020 asks for your help to promote peace, understanding

By Hakam Yildiz

PeaceQuest 2020, a community-wide celebration of peace, will take place during the entire month of September in the greater Lansing area in honor of the United Nations International Day of Peace on Sept. 21.

Several local organizations, including the Peace Education Center have coordinated with PeaceQuest Greater Lansing, now in its sixth year.

At a time when openness to others and valuing all cultures is being terribly challenged, and as we approach the election season with likely very divisive political rhetoric, PeaceQuest 2020 becomes more important.

Representatives of the PEC and those of partner organizations have just started meeting in January to create this special month of recognition of the International Day of Peace and they are inviting anyone who has an interest and passion for promoting peace to join them in the planning effort.

Those organizations include the Greater Lansing United Nations Association, Intercultural Association of Michigan, STVCC Refugee Services, Red Cedar Friends, and others found at <https://peacequestgreaterlansing.org/host-organizations/>

The next planning meeting will be held on Thursday, Feb. 27th, at 4:30 p.m. at the Peace Education Center. If there are individuals or organizations interested in becoming part of PeaceQuest 2020, it's never too early or too late to plan to become a sponsor, offer an event, and more.

The PeaceQuest planning team can be reach at peacequestlansing@gmail.com

Below are some photos from last year's PeaceQuest, courtesy of Hakan Yildiz.



Nominees sought for peacemaker award

The Peace Education Center is seeking nominations for its annual Peacemaker awards.

Each year, the PEC selects one or more area residents for Peacemaker of the Year and Lifetime Peacemaker, honoring those who have stood out for their work to support peace and justice.

“The awards serve to thank those who stood for their beliefs and inspire them and others to know that working toward a better world does not go unnoticed,” said PEC co-chair Terry Link.

Last year's Peacemakers of the Year were Lansing-area activist Anna Fisher and Will Lawrence, co-founder of the Sunrise Movement.

Last year's Lifetime Peacemakers were long-time activist Laura Sager and Terry Link, PEC co-chair.

To nominate someone, please send your suggestions to peacecenter@gmail.com.

The winners will be announced at the PEC's annual meeting in the spring. Also at that time, recipients of the Tom Schneider Peacemaker Award will be announced.

The Schneider Award is for graduating high school seniors from Ingham, Clinton or Eaton counties. They are chosen based on their passion and commitment toward building a more peaceful and just world. An application/nomination form can be found on the PEC website (www.peacecenter.org).

Is ROTC looking to expand in this area?

By Becky Payne

The United States military is having a hard time finding young people to sign up for military service to meet their quotas. For that reason, they are exploring expanding Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs in schools around mid-Michigan.

ROTC, called Junior ROTC in high schools, is a military training program for universities and high schools to sway students toward signing up for military service. The program puts military training as elective classes. Students who join are given training in citizenship, marksmanship and weapons, and the history and purpose of the U.S. military.

Students will train together to increase physical fitness and promote bonding. Students are expected to sign up for military service once they've completed JROTC or continue with the program once in college.

Some schools, especially poorer ones, appreciate the additional help – they hope that the camaraderie and training, not to mention the “free” programming, will provide students with skills, discipline and other benefits.

Other schools resent the intrusion of a military mindset into their teaching establishment. Any social benefits of the programs have not been proven. ROTC has one purpose: to encourage and prepare students to sign up for military service. It is not a jobs training program or college preparation.

Schools with JROTC programs have a higher percentage of all students who join the military after graduation, whether they participated or not. The constant exposure to a military presence leads to higher overall enlistment.

The trainings make military service look fun, easy and rewarding. Details on the costs of war, the danger to soldiers and the chronic health and emotional impacts on veterans of military service, such as PTSD, depression, higher rates of substance abuse and homelessness, are not shared with students. With their focus on fighting and killing an “enemy,” trainings erase the schools’ previous emphasis on teaching our children to honor the rights of all, to treat people with respect, and to work out conflict peacefully.

Joining the military isn't a decision to take lightly. One is signing away eight years of control over their life. The enlistment agreement is one-sided – it obligates the signee to eight years of service, including time in the Reserves – and that's not all: the government reserves the right to call a former enlistee back to service at any point in their future. Any agreements that a recruiter makes with a potential enlistee, even if they are put in writing on the enlistment agreement, can be rescinded at any time.

If a student decides to use the ROTC to pay for college, it limits their choices of majors. Many students who thought they were getting college paid for by the ROTC have found that if they don't meet all the requirements, they will actually need to repay any signing bonuses or tuition monies they have been given. Students have been left financially devastated when health or other reasons prevented them from continuing.

We at the PEC are opposed to JROTC and ROTC programs. If you find JROTC coming to a school near you and want to take action, contact us for more information and possible assistance.

Alternative Holiday Sale big success

The Peace Education Center's annual Alternative Holiday Sale was held Nov. 15-16, 2019, and, as always, was great success.

Held at the Edgewood United Church in East Lansing, the sale brought together local vendors and artisans, who shared their work with holiday shoppers. Below are a few photos from the event, courtesy of Jim Detjen.



Second Amendment Sanctuary resolutions seek to undermine laws

By Nelson Brown

While impeachment and the Senate trial have dominated the news, gun-rights' proponents are pushing resolutions that would make local units of government, or even entire states like Michigan, Second Amendment Sanctuary areas.

These resolutions generally would urge legal authorities, such as police, sheriffs, and prosecutors, not to enforce legally enacted laws regulating firearms, if these authorities believe these laws are unconstitutional. This movement has now reached Michigan.

Some Republican legislators have introduced a resolution that would declare that the entire state of Michigan would become a Second Amendment Sanctuary. Most of the activity up until now has involved local gun-rights' activists focusing on counties. There are now pending at least four such county resolutions: Ionia, Montcalm, Newago and Montcalm. While none of these resolutions have passed, some have been tabled after objections from county sheriffs and prosecutors.

In Ionia County, the resolution was tabled after the county sheriff and prosecutor expressed "shock" that they had not been consulted about this unvetted resolution. While none have passed so far, gun-rights' proponents will most likely be attempting to pass tabled or proposed resolutions and will certainly be introducing more such resolutions in other counties. Local supporters of common-sense firearm regulations should be on the lookout for such resolutions and be ready to oppose them.

While passing these resolutions may at first seem mostly symbolic, they represent a beginning attempt to coerce lawful authorities to not enforce existing or potentially enacted firearm-regulating laws because these proponents themselves have decided they are unconstitutional. Not only does this resolution represent bad public policy; it also actually encourages law breaking and disrespect for the rule of law.

Members of political bodies would be violating their oaths of office to support, uphold and execute state and federal laws by making determinations about what laws are constitutional. It is not the responsibility of county commissioners, sheriffs, prosecutors and gun-rights' proponents to determine whether existing or proposed laws stand as constitutional; that responsibility rests on the shoulders of the state and federal judiciary.

By pushing these resolutions, the gun-rights' proponents have symbolically began advancing the equivalent of the pre-Civil War state claims of interposition and nullification of federal laws the Southern states opposed.

The Second Amendment Sanctuary movement started in Virginia after Democrats assumed political control of the governorship and of both houses of the Legislature. It has picked up steam since the big gun-rights' rally in Richmond on Jan. 21st. Since taking control, Democrats introduced several common-sense firearm-regulating measures. While these measures are relatively moderate, they have allowed activists to stir up paranoid and irrational fears that the government was coming after the guns of law-abiding citizens.

These included requiring universal background checks for most private pistol sales, such as those at previously unregulated gun shows, and banning future assault-rifle and high-capacity magazine sales. Also proposed are measures limiting handgun purchases to one a month; a "red-flag" measure that would temporarily remove guns from people deemed dangerous to themselves or others; giving local authorities the power to ban guns from public spaces during permitted events; allowing weapons to be taken from people under protective orders; reporting requirements for lost or stolen guns; and stiffer penalties for allowing children access to loaded or unsecured guns. .

These are moderate firearm-regulating measures that supporters of common-sense firearm-regulating laws should be willing to support and to defend against gun-rights' extremists.

Supporters of common-sense firearm regulations must be ready to support laws like these and to oppose gun-rights' proponents who want to stop all reasonable firearms' regulations.

Earlier this year, the Trump administration took us to the brink of war with its ill-advised decision to assassinate Qassim Soleimani, one of Iran's top military officials. Below is a statement issued by the Peace Education Center that clarified our position on the matter.

Statement of the Peace Education Center in Opposition to President Trump's Escalation of the Conflict with Iran

The Jan. 2 decision by President Trump to assassinate Iran's top general, Qassim Soleimani, has taken a simmering conflict created by Trump's withdrawal from the nuclear agreement with Iran (the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA) and his re-imposition of economic sanctions and boiled it into a possible full-fledged disaster. He has undertaken these dangerous steps not only because he alone believes Iran represents a serious threat to American and regional interests, but also because for many years the entire American foreign-policy establishment has demonized the Islamic Republic as a danger using such epithets as the "leading sponsor of terrorism."

Both Trump's dangerous escalation of American differences with Iran and the long-time demonization of Iran represent costly miscalculations that may result in war. But any war would be disastrous for the region and, moreover, Iran does not represent any serious threat to the United States. Trump must be compelled to back away from his dangerous policy of "maximum pressure" and return to a policy of "limited engagement" before disaster ensues.

The current crisis Trump has created has arisen from what seems like an impetuous decision he made without adequate justification and without full, if any, vetting about the consequences of this rash move. The rationales offered for this escalation seem either phony or contrived. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has claimed that Trump took this action because American lives and interests in the Middle East confronted a serious imminent attack that Soleimani was implementing. But, so far, no evidence of this alleged threat has been produced.

The administration has also claimed that the assassination has made life safer for Americans in the region, but it has also ordered all non-essential Americans to leave Iraq, contradicting his assertion of increased safety. The absence of any serious vetting also seems obvious. Instead of provoking reactions against Iran, the assassination has generated massive shows of support for Iran both in Iran and Iraq. The Iraqi parliament has voted to have all American military forces leave Iraq and although this was not binding, it places the status of our forces there in limbo, endangering operations against ISIS. The Iranians have also announced that they will seek revenge against American interests. In response, Trump has threatened major retaliation to any Iranian retaliation. And so the conflict begins to spin out of control. What is to be done?

Trump Should Back Away from War-Hawking and Return to Negotiations

What are Trump's bottom lines? Right now, this remains unclear to Iran, to the American public and to our representatives. Secretary of State Pompeo has laid out 12 points Iran must agree to before negotiations can start. This includes not only a stronger nuclear agreement but also Iran's withdrawal of aid to Shiite militias in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. But exactly what the Trump administration's real goals are from this assassination remain unclear.

Trump's dramatic escalation has created a volatile situation where it may be difficult to stop the cycle of increasingly serious tit-for-tat retaliations, but the United States must attempt to undo the dangerous situation he has created. But it is only pressure from the public and from our elected representatives that can pressure Trump to step back from the precipice. Here are some immediate approaches that might keep the situation from falling into a complete disaster:

First, we may have to hope that the Iranian government does not lose its head and retaliate in some overly dramatic action. We know that the Iranians will have to retaliate in some manner in order to save face, but hopefully the manner and time of this retaliation will be carefully measured to prevent Trump from using it as a clear justification for even greater escalation, such as bombing in Iran itself, especially on structures reflecting Iran's cultural heritage. It is unfortunate that peace forces have to depend on the level-headedness of Iran, but that is part of the hand dealt to us;

Second, Congress must immediately pass legislation to prevent from Trump any further military actions against Iran without the Constitutionally mandated approval from Congress. While such legislation can pass in the Democratic-controlled House, it is questionable whether a Republican-controlled Senate would approve such legislation, but it is important for the long run to have Congress re-assert its authority in matters of war and peace;

Third, when Iran retaliates, the public and our representatives should call for an end to tit-for-tat retaliations. While this may impose political risks, ending an ever-escalating scenario requires the courage to stop retaliations leading to war so that Iran and the United States can enter into productive negotiations to de-escalate tensions;

Fourth, even before Iran retaliates, the public and our representatives should call for Trump to back away from a policy of “maximum pressure” and return to a policy of “limited engagement.” Either before or after any Iranian retaliation, the Trump administration should be encouraged to reach out to Iran or through a neutral third party, like the United Nations, to begin negotiations consistent with a policy of “limited engagement;”

Fifth, the public and our representatives should pressure the Trump administration to signal to Iran that the United States is prepared to negotiate without pre-conditions and will suspend economic sanctions as a sign of good faith to get negotiations started. In these negotiations, the United States should be prepared to tweak the JCPOA to strengthen some parts of it, but not to abandon it completely;

Sixth, the question of Iranian support for President Assad in Syria, for Shiite militias in Iraq and Syria, for the Houthis in Yemen, and for Hezbollah in Lebanon will present a more difficult negotiation. Iran considers this support as defensive measures, but some limitations on Iran’s support might be possible. For example, Iran could cease providing offensive weapons to Hezbollah, it could urge the Houthis to negotiate a power-sharing arrangement in Yemen, and it could provide guarantees that any Iranian involvement in Syria and Iraq focuses on preventing the revival of ISIS or of Al-Qaeda but does not represent any offensive threat against Israel. Both Iran and the United States have an overriding interest in preventing a return of ISIS and in ensuring the defeat of Al-Qaeda in the region. These issues could be hashed out with give-and-take in negotiations.

The Danger of War Is Imminent. The Need to Act is Immediate.

Trump’s rash decision to assassinate Iran’s top general has created an imminent danger of a full-blown and unnecessary war with Iran. It is urgent that the public and our representatives use every peaceful and persuasive means at our disposal to prevent the current escalation of actions and tensions with Iran from bursting into a full-fledged disaster.

Adopted by the Board of the Peace Education Center on Jan. 7, 2020.

Taking PEC on the road

As an all-volunteer organization, the Peace Education Center keeps a relatively low profile. Besides our monthly meetings and some public programs we offer throughout the year, much of the work you might notice is via email blasts to contact our legislators on key pending legislation, or our quarterly newsletter (like this one), or postings we share through our social media.

But we should remind you all that PEC does make house calls! For example, we’ve been invited to speak with groups like Rotary, Greater Lansing United Nations Association, and LATTICE (Lansing Area Teachers Teaching Intercultural Education). Occasionally we get invited to speak to classes at Michigan State University or area high schools.

We are glad to engage with groups of interested citizens of all ages on subjects that we feel we have some useful perspective and information to share.

So if you’re involved with an organization, school or church that might be interested in talking about issues we deal with, please have them reach out to us. We will see if we can match the request and schedule with one of our board members or other knowledgeable sources in our community.

For example, PEC co-chair Terry Link will be discussing war and peace issues later this month with the Meridian Democratic Club.

Contact the PEC at (517) 515-5634 or peaceedcenter@gmail.com.

THE PEACE EDUCATION CENTER'S STATEMENT OPPOSING PRESIDENT TRUMP'S DECISION TO USE LANDMINES IN CONFLICTS AROUND THE WORLD

The Board of the Peace Education Center of the Greater Lansing Area opposes President Donald Trump's decision to reverse President Obama's policy of limiting the use of landmines in military conflicts. The Peace Education Center calls on concerned citizens and our elected representatives to oppose this change of policy.

Although the United States has not signed the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty (164 nations have ratified), President Obama in 2014 ordered the Pentagon to no longer "produce or otherwise acquire any anti-personnel landmines," known as APLs. These are small explosive devices placed on, near or under the ground and explode, usually on contact, causing death or injuries. If the person survives, the injuries usually require amputations or multiple surgeries. Between 1999 and 2018, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), which won the Nobel Peace Prize along with Jody Williams, estimates that landmines have caused about 130,000 casualties mostly civilian with many occurring long after any conflict has ceased. The military value of landmines, as compared to the civilian costs, does not appear strong.

It is unclear whether the American military even wanted this change in policy. The new policy contrasts starkly with the U.S.'s role as the single largest contributor to mine clearance efforts globally. Some have suggested that this change in policy represents President Trump's general desire to reverse President Obama's policies at all levels of government. This is a dramatic policy change that has arms control experts and humanitarian groups deeply concerned. "This announcement flies in the face of 20 plus years of progress towards eliminating the human suffering caused by landmines and comes just weeks after most of the countries in the world recommitted to achieving a mine-free world by 2025, at the Fourth Review Conference of the Mine Ban Treaty" said ICBL-CMC Director Hector Guerra.

The Peace Education center urges all concerned citizens to contact Michigan's senators and representatives to speak out in opposition to President Trump's policy to allow the military use of landmines.

Adopted by the Board of the Peace Education Center on February 6, 2020.



You're never too young to promote peace. Three-year-old Samuel Hargrove, grandson of PeaceNotes editor Tom Oswald, flashes the peace sign while riding his tricycle. Photo by Curtis Hargrove.

Contact your Representatives

Senator Debbie Stabenow

202-224 4822

Hart Senate Office Building, Suite 731,
Washington, DC 20510-2204

www.stabenow.senate.gov/?p=contact

Rep. Elissa Slotkin

202-225-4872

1531 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

www.slotkin.house.gov

Representative Tim Walberg

202-225-6276

2266 Rayburn House Office Bldg, Washington,
DC 20515

<http://walberg.house.gov/contact/>

Senator Gary Peters

202-224-6221

Hart Senate Office Building, Suite 724,
Washington, DC 20510

www.peters.senate.gov/content/contact-gary

Rep. John Moolenaar

202-225-3561

117 Cannon House Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20515

<https://moolenaar.house.gov/contact/email>

Thanks to those who help us in our mission

Every year at its annual meeting, the Peace Education Center announces the recipients of the Tom Schneider Peacemaker Award.

The Schneider Award is given to graduating high school seniors from Ingham, Clinton or Eaton counties. They are chosen based on their passion and commitment toward building a more peaceful and just world.

Last year's recipients were Eleanor Carr of East Lansing High School, Reilly Farr of Waverly High School, and Graham Diedrich of Haslett High School.

While every donation, regardless of amount, is important to the PEC, we were especially pleased to accept a gift of \$5,000 from long-time benefactor Colleen Hyslop, which was specifically earmarked for the Schneider Award.

It turns out that Colleen and her late husband, Larry, had a very special relationship with Tom. After Larry suffered two strokes between 2000 and 2010 and was bed-bound, it was Tom who stepped in to help the family.

"He spent several days a week with Larry and willingly did absolutely anything around the house and yard that needed attention," Colleen said. "He amused us with his stories of traveling the world and his family and projects underway."

At first, Colleen was not aware of Tom's activism. In fact, she didn't know about it at all until one day she saw his picture in the newspaper, standing front and center at a protest.

"When I learned of the award that Becky established in his honor, I was taken with what a perfect memorial it is," Colleen said. "When I looked at the many good local causes that I could support, none surpassed the Peace Education Center Tom Schneider Award."

"Please join me in bringing it up to the endowment level, so that we can assure the continuation of the award to recognize and bring the next generation along in support of peace and social justice."

Colleen said Tom "was the most caring person I have known. I am fortunate to have experienced just a sliver of his attention, which still influences me today."

For more information on how you can donate, or to procure an application/nomination form, visit the PEC website at www.peaceedcenter.org.

We are, of course, grateful to all who donate to our cause. We'd like to thank some more of our recent donors.

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