

Citizens' Peace Platform

Introduction

US citizens are preparing for the national elections, quickly approaching on November 4, 2008. The Huntington Woods Peace, Citizenship & Education Project believes these elections require us to develop clear positions regarding the critically important issues confronting our nation. Our positions on these key issues will help us to compare the candidates and select the candidate who best represents the policies we believe must be a part of the next administration. Accordingly, we present our policies below, not as politicians representing any constituency, but as one group of Americans committed to finding common ground with all Americans, in an attempt to effectively address the health and progress of our nation.

Underlying Issues

The fundamental question we ask is this: Are we more secure now than we were seven years ago? Since 9/11/2001, there have been no further attacks on American soil, perhaps due in part to the heightened security measures. However, there have been major terrorist attacks elsewhere, including in Bali, Madrid, London, and Pakistan. Acts of terrorism continue in Iraq and Afghanistan, even as we are mired in unending wars in both countries, with a third threatened against Iran.

The Bush Administration remains obsessed with "winning" these impossible wars, an obsession apparently shared by the mainstream media. This has led to

national policies of torture, prison camps, abrogation of our own civil liberties and the pillaging of our treasury. Thousands of American lives have been lost since 9/11 in this spiraling war against terrorism. Yet there remains a glaring refusal by this Administration to search for the underlying root causes of terrorism. Instead, the fears of Americans are manipulated for political purposes, to encourage support for Administration policies. We are not deemed threatened enough to reinstate the draft, nor to pursue an alternative energy policy that would reduce America's dependence on oil from the Middle East, yet we are supposedly threatened enough to justify sacrificing thousands of American lives, and our nation's financial stability, in wars. This is the tragic legacy we are leaving generations to come.

The war in Iraq was built on lies and distortions from the beginning. It has had the ironic consequence of actually bringing Al Qaeda into Iraq, where it had not been before. America's relations with the rest of the world have been harmed grievously. Our international reputation as a democratic country based on the rule of law, justice and equal rights has been fractured. In the meantime, the inequality between nations remains enormous, with free market globalization creating even greater economic inequality between the wealthy and poor nations of our world. Added to this are the distressing effects of global warming, which impacts the poorest countries

most severely. The long term conditions for global, as well as American insecurity worsen daily.

How do we rise above the political manipulation of fear to confront the real threats to America's security, which have been recklessly exacerbated over the last seven years? A new orientation is required, just as it was after 9/11. The United States Government and the mainstream media continue to systematically refuse to address the root causes of terrorism directed against us. To do so would amount to a transformation of America's role in the world. We must become global citizens, with an appreciation of how our policies and actions affect the rest of our world. The next administration must approach the world with a "Declaration of Interdependence," knowing that our collective fates are inexorably intertwined. As we turn away from military responses, we should adhere to established institutions and treaties in support of international law. We must genuinely seek to look honestly at the real threats to national and international security, and work to address and resolve the issues of economic inequality, unequal consumption of our earth's resources, disruptive globalization and global warming.

We reject the United States' current role as the world's greatest military superpower, dominating other nations and peoples for primarily corporate interests. Instead we seek its transformation into the world's greatest humanitarian superpower.

The cornerstone of US foreign policy should be support for human rights and the pursuit of social and economic justice across the globe. Our foreign policy should recognize the sovereignty of nation states and their right of self-determination.

We reject unilateral and preemptive military actions and believe that our

PLEASE JOIN US

The Huntington Woods Peace, Citizenship & Education Project invites you to a discussion of the Citizens' Peace Platform and the platform of the incoming Presidential Administration, at an open meeting on Wednesday, November 19th at 6:45 PM at the Huntington Woods Library (lower level). Come to express your views or just to listen—we expect to have an informative and lively event.

Citizens' Peace Platform

military actions abroad should be guided by the United Nations and international laws, treaties and conventions. All of these were designed with our protection in mind.

We support policies which would abolish nuclear weapons, phase out our 700-plus military bases abroad, and greatly reduce our military budget, with funds redirected to our essential social and economic needs.

Domestic Policy Issues

A healthy democracy needs an active and well-informed citizenry, adherence to the rule of law, protection of individual liberties and a government that acts in the public interest. On all counts, we do not have a healthy democracy.

We stand solidly for legal and social justice. We must restore habeas corpus (the Constitutional right to contest one's detention), repeal the U.S. Patriot Act (which allows police to break into homes without notification or justification), repeal the FISA bill (which allows for nameless pro forma warrants), pursue war crimes hearings, and eliminate torture.

We must reassert the importance of the middle class in a healthy democratic economy. We must reexamine our government at all levels and insist that it promote and protect the public interest. We must stop privatizing public functions that have served our communities for generations, including education, water supplies, support of our armed forces, and managing our prisons. These and other such "public goods" serve broad community purposes, and should not be corrupted by profit motives.

We must reestablish balance in our media (if necessary by reintroducing the Fairness Doctrine) so that citizens are exposed to diverse ideas and can form better-educated opinions. We must establish a health care system that serves the community by promoting public health and lifelong wellness, and does not

lead people to the brink of bankruptcy, or beyond, when they need medical treatment. We must end voter intimidation, and we must end election tampering, in part by ensuring universal access to accurate, independently-verifiable voting machines.

Although elections are important, economic, social and legal justice will not arise spontaneously if we elect the right president or even the right Congress. More significant is the growth of an aware and active citizenry, resistant to manipulation and working in unity to support shared public interests.

Foreign Policy Issues

Iraq

The United States government's unilateral, preemptive war against Iraq was immoral, unjust and illegal from the outset. We support an expeditious, yet responsible, withdrawal of all of our military forces, and support further war funding only for this limited purpose.

We reject the contention that we must stay in Iraq indefinitely "because to leave prematurely would be disastrous for the Iraqi people." This assumes that our invasion and occupation of Iraq was and is for benign purposes. As recent disclosures confirm, this is not the case. Recent efforts to pursue no-bid contracts for Western oil companies while Iraq is occupied and not able to freely negotiate underscore the United States' malignant intentions in invading Iraq.

Furthermore, it appears that a secret deal is being negotiated in Baghdad which would keep Iraq under effective and permanent U.S. control by maintaining multiple U.S. military bases in Iraq, controlling Iraqi airspace, and assuring legal immunity for the actions of American soldiers and contractors there.

While the continued US occupation of Iraq has benefited defense contractors and oil companies greatly, it has not benefited the Iraqi or American people, and must

therefore be ended.

Afghanistan

The war against Afghanistan was the wrong response to the 9/11 terrorist acts. We believed in 2001 and continue to believe that 9/11 was a criminal enterprise which requires that those responsible should be brought to justice. Instead, the US harmed Afghanistan's people by bringing war to the entire country. This war has not made U.S. citizens more safe and secure; to the contrary, it has led to increased Islamic anger against us while failing to stabilize Afghanistan.

We do not support a withdrawal of US forces from Iraq merely so that these forces can be redeployed to Afghanistan. Rather than an escalation of the war in Afghanistan, and a likely expansion into neighboring Pakistan, we call for a withdrawal of US troops and an internationally negotiated solution.

Iran

We reject the United States' and Israel's threats to go to war over Iran's nuclear weapons program—which our own intelligence agencies have confirmed is dismantled.

We deplore the fact that the real issue—worldwide nuclear weapon production and proliferation—is being lost in the clamor about Iran's possible nuclear weapons program. The US, Britain, France, Russia, China, Israel, India, and Pakistan all possess nuclear weapons and little, if anything, is being done to eliminate them. It is totally irresponsible to avoid this issue, seeking to maintain the current nuclear monopoly by a handful of the world's countries.

We call for an in-depth discussion about the current nuclear threat, the urgent need for reduction and abolition of these weapons, and the question of whether the very existence of nuclear technology stimulates their production. This issue must be raised at all levels of American society.

Citizens' Peace Platform

Israel/Palestine

We support peace between Palestinians and Israelis, and the fundamental right of both to live safe and secure lives. We condemn violence on both sides, and advocate a negotiated solution to the conflict.

We deplore the fact that extremists on the Israeli side have continued to build and expand settlements, and that their government has supported them in this by building a vast infrastructure to make these settlements part of Israel and separate the Israelis from the Palestinians.

We condemn extremists on the Palestinian side, who, supported or tolerated by their authorities, continue to attack Israelis.

We call for a resolution of the Palestinian refugee problem which is consistent with international law and equity.

Given the U.S. government's historical, diplomatic, financial, and military support

for the Israeli government, it cannot and should not be expected to broker a peace agreement between the antagonists.

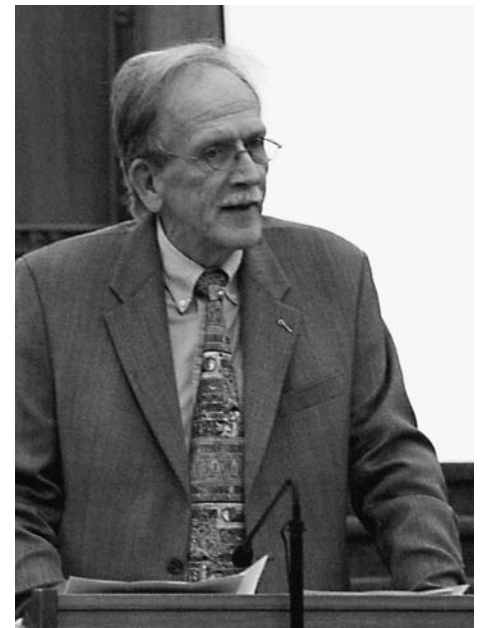
Although we support international diplomacy to achieve peace in the Middle East, a final resolution must be decided by the Israeli and Palestinian people themselves. ☺



Imam Mohammed Musa on 9/11/08

9/11 Event Was Both Inspirational and Educational

On September 11 the Huntington Woods Peace, Citizenship & Education Project and Temple Emanu-El held an interfaith and secular remembrance event, "Since 9/11: Remembering The Victims, Challenging Our Leaders," demonstrating HWPCEP's commitment to creating the active and well informed citizenry necessary for a healthy democracy. Emanu-El's Rabbi Joseph Klein welcomed the 150 attendees, and Reverend George Covintree from Berkley First United Methodist Church spoke on "Remembering the Dead." The religious leaders were followed by several musical selections, first "El Malei Rachamim/God Full of Compassion," sung beautifully by Cantor Darcie Sharlein, and then "Sim Shalom/Grant Us Peace," movingly delivered by the Berkley Interfaith Choir. Completing the triad of Western religions, Iman Mohammed Musa of the Muslim Unity Center offered a Muslim prayer and spoke eloquently on Islam's views of peace and community. The imam was followed by WSU Distinguished Professor Ron Aronson, who delivered a well-received discourse, "Challenging Our Leaders." A lively general discussion/Q&A followed, and Cantor Sharlein ended the evening by leading those present in a traditional folk song. ☺



Reverend George Covintree on 9/11/08

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Yes, I would like to become a member. Included is my membership payment of \$25.00.

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Please make checks payable to: Huntington Woods Peace, Citizenship and Education Project.

Mail to: P.O. Box 7011 Huntington Woods, MI 48070

Monthly Meeting

Huntington Woods Library (in basement),
third Wednesday of every month, 6:45 PM

Monthly Vigils

Last Saturday of every month, 12:00 – 1:00 PM,
11 Mile Road and Woodward, in front of St. John's Church

www.hwpeace.org • email: info@hwpeace.org • Call: 248-546-4870

9/11 Event Was Both Inspirational and Educational



Cantor Darcie Sharlein on 9/11/08



Professor Aronson considers an active citizen's views on 9/11



Berkely Interfaith Choir

Huntington Woods, MI 48070
P.O. Box 7011

Huntington Woods Peace, Citizenship and Education Project.