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Leading Americans Ask U.S. Military to Refuse Orders to Attack Iran

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Country music legend Willie Nelson, literary icon Gore Vidal, Gold Star Mother Cindy Sheehan, Pentagon Papers whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg, retired U.S. Army Colonel Ann Wright, former Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney, former federal prosecutor Elizabeth de la Vega, author and radio host Thom Hartmann, Rabbi Michael Lerner, Rabbi Steven Jacobs, and dozens of other prominent Americans have signed a letter asking the Joint Chiefs of Staff and all U.S. military personnel to refuse orders to launch an aggressive war on Iran.

TO REACT

The letter has been posted as a petition for others to sign at http://www.dontattackiran.org

The text of the letter follows:

ATTENTION: Joint Chiefs of Staff and all U.S. Military Personnel:

Do not attack Iran.

Any preemptive U.S. attack on Iran would be illegal.

Any preemptive U.S. attack on Iran would be criminal.

We, the citizens of the United States, respectfully urge you, courageous men and women of our military, to refuse any order to preemptively attack Iran, a nation that represents no serious or immediate threat to the United States. To attack Iran, a sovereign nation of 70-million people, would be a crime of the highest magnitude.

Legal basis for our Request - Do not attack Iran:

The Nuremberg Principles, which are part of US law, provide that all military personnel have the obligation not to obey illegal orders. The Army Field Manual 27-10, sec. 609 and UCMJ, art. 92, incorporate this principle. Article 92 says: "A general order or regulation is lawful unless it is contrary to the Constitution, the law of the United States ..."

Any provision of an international treaty ratified by the United States becomes the law of the United States. The United States is a party and signatory to the United Nations Charter, of which Article II, Section 4 states, "All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state..." As Iran has not attacked the United States, and as the U.S. is a party and signatory to the Charter, any attack on Iran by the U.S. would be illegal under not only international law but under the U.S. Constitution which recognizes our treaties as the Supreme Law of the Land. When you joined the military, you took an oath to defend our Constitution.

Following the orders of your government or superior does not relieve you from responsibility under international law. Under the Principles of International Law recognized in the Charter of the Nuremberg Tribunal, complicity in the commission of war crime is a crime under international law.

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Background:

The Bush Administration's charges against Iran have not been proven. Neither the development of nuclear weapons, nor providing assistance to Iraq would, if proven, constitute justification for an illegal war.

An attack on Iran might prompt the formidable Iranian military to attack U.S. troops stationed in Iraq. Thousands of our soldiers might be killed or captured as prisoners of war. A U.S. attack against Iranian nuclear facilities could also mean the deaths, from radiation poisoning, of tens of thousands of innocent Iranian civilians. The people of Iran have little control over their government, yet would suffer tremendously should the U.S. attack. Bombing raids would amount to collective punishment, a violation of the Geneva Convention, and would surely sow the seeds of hatred for generations to come. Children make up a quarter of Iran's population.

Above all, we ask you to look at the record of our actions in Iraq, which U.S. intelligence admits is "a cause celebre for jihadists" - a situation that did not exist before we attacked. We must face the fact that our rash use of military solutions has created more enemies, and made American families less safe. Diplomacy, not war, is the answer.

Know the Risks Involved in Refusing an Illegal Order or Signing This Statement:

We knowingly and willingly make this plea, aware of the risk that, in violation of our First Amendment rights, we could be charged under remaining sections of the unconstitutional Espionage Act or other unconstitutional statute, and that we could be fined, imprisoned, or barred from government employment.

We make this plea, also aware that you have no easy options. If you obey an illegal order to participate in an aggressive attack on Iran, you could potentially be charged with war crimes. If you heed our call and disobey an illegal order you could be falsely charged with crimes including treason. You could be falsely court martialed. You could be imprisoned. (To talk to a lawyer or to learn more about possible consequences, contact The Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, Courage to Resist, Center on Conscience and War , Military Law Task Force of the National Lawyers Guild 415-566-3732, or the GI Rights Hotline at 877-447-4487.) **

Final request:

Our leaders often say that military force should be a last resort. We beg you to make that policy a reality, and refuse illegal orders to attack Iran. We promise to support you for protecting the American public and innocent civilians abroad.

Our future, the future of our children and their children, rests in your hands.

You know the horrors of war. You can stop the next one.

Sincerely,

[-] Daniel Ellsberg,
[-] Thom Hartmann,
[-] Rabbi Michael Lerner,
[-] Rabbi Steven Jacobs,
[-] Cynthia McKinney,

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[-] Willie Nelson,
[-] Cindy Sheehan,
[-] Norman Solomon,
[-] Elizabeth de la Vega,
[-] Gore Vidal,
[-] Ann Wright,
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[-] James Abourezk, former U.S. Senator, (D) South Dakota
[-] Stacy Bannerman, Author, "When the War Came Home",
[-] Military Families Speak Out Charter Board member
John Bonifaz, constitutional attorney and author of "Warrior-King: The Case for Impeaching George W. Bush."
[-] Amy Branham, Gold Star Mother of
Sgt. Jeremy R. Smith, US Army Reserves, Nov. 1981-Feb. 2004
[-] Blase Bonpane, Ph.d, Director OFFICE OF THE AMERICAS
[-] David Clennon, Actor/activist
[-] Tim Carpenter, Executive Director, Progressive Democrats of America
[-] Daniel Ellsberg, author of "Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers."
[-] David Cobb, 2004 Green Party Presidential Candidate
[-] Jeff Cohen, author/media critic
[-] Elizabeth de la Vega, former federal prosecutor and author of U.S. v. George W. Bush
[-] Karen Dolan, Director, Cities for Progress/Cities for Peace
[-] Anne Feeney, activist/folksinger or Local 1000, AFM
[-] Mike Ferner, Navy corpsman;
[-] Secretary, Veterans for Peace
[-] Bob Fertik, President Democrats.com
[-] Laura Flanders, Radio Host on Air America
[-] Bruce K. Gagnon, Coordinator Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space
[-] Lila Garrett, KPFK Host of "Connect the Dots"
[-] Liberty Godshall, writer, Defenders of Wildlife, Natural Resources Defense Council
[-] Hon. Jackie Goldberg, California Assembly Member (AD 45), retired.
[-] Kevin Alexander Gray, writer, and organizer with the Harriet Tubman Freedom House Project
[-] Representative Betty Hall, Hillsborough District 5, New Hampshire General Court
[-] David L. Harris, MD
[-] Tom Hayden
[-] Thom Hartmann, author and Air America radio host
[-] Valerie Heinonen, o.s.u., Ursulines of Tildonk for Justice and Peace
[-] Jenny Heinz , member of CodePink, member of Granny Peace Brigade Rabbi Steven Jacobs, Los Angeles

[-] Michael Jay, Steering Committee, Progressive Democrats of Los Angeles
[-] Charles Jenks, co-founder and editor of traprockpeace.org
Justice Through Music
[-] Antonia Juhasz, author, The Bush Agenda: Invading the World, One Economy at a Time
[-] Jerry Kass, playwright and professor at Columbia University
[-] Dr, Nazir Khaja ,Chairman, Islamic Information Service, Los Angeles, CA.
[-] Mimi Kennedy, National Chair, Progressive Democrats of America
[-] Rabbi Michael Lerner, Editor, Tikkun and Chair, the Network of Spiritual Progressives
[-] Summer Lipford, Gold Star Mother,NC 28677
[-] David Lindorff, Author, The Case for Impeachment
[-] Alice Lynn, Delegate, California Democratic Party (41st AD)
[-] Ben Manski, Executive Director, Liberty Tree
[-] Ray McGovern, Army infantry/intelligence officer, 1962-64; CIA analyst 1964-90.
[-] Cynthia Mckinney, former Congresswoman

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[-] Barbara Mills-Bria, Be The Change-USA
[-] Bill Moyer, Executive Director, Backbone Campaign
[-] Willie Nelson, Entertainer, Peace Activist
[-] Annie Nelson, Sustainable Biodiesel/Peace Activist
[-] Honorable Eric Oemig - Washington State Senator
[-] Geov Parrish, Executive Director Peace Action of Washington
[-] Jacob Park, Founder, A28.
[-] Brad Parker, Officer of the Progressive Caucus of the California Democratic Party
[-] Bill Perry, Director, Delaware Valley Veterans For America
[-] Gareth Porter, investigative journalist and historian
[-] Marcus Raskin, member of National Security Council Staff under President Kennedy
[-] Dorothy Reik, President, Progressive Democrats of the Santa Monica Mountains
[-] Coleen Rowley, retired FBI Agent and former Chief Division Counsel of Minneapolis Division of the FBI
[-] Bill Scheurer, Editor, PeaceMajority Report
[-] Randi Scheurer, IL-Dist. 8, Congressional Candidate
[-] Cindy Sheehan, Gold Star Families for Peace
[-] Alice Slater, Abolition 2000 New York
[-] Norman Solomon, Author and syndicated columnist
[-] David Swanson, Afterdowningstreet.org
[-] John Stauber, Co-author, "Weapons of Mass Deception: The Uses of Propaganda in Bush's War on Iraq"
[-] Jonathan Tasini, PDA NY
[-] Ethel Tobach, Ph. D., member of Psychologists for Social Responsibility
[-] Tina Richards CEO Grassroots Americaredith, Gold Star Mother, Proud Mom of Lt Ken Ballard- KIA 5.30.04
[-] Gore Vidal, Author
[-] Marcy Winograd, President, Progressive Democrats of Los Angeles
[-] Ann Wright, US Army Colonel (Retired) and US diplomat who resigned in March, 2003 in opposition to the Iraq war.
[-] Kevin Zeese on behalf of Voters for Peace and Democracy Rising
[-] Velvet Revolution

** These resources are publicly available, and our offering them does not indicate that these organizations support this petition.

See the translation in French by ACDN, 5 October 2007

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