

# **STOP THE WAR COALITION**

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## **Stop the War Coalition Annual Conference 2007 27 October 2007**

### **PASSED RESOLUTIONS**

#### **RESOLUTION**

##### **Stop the War Coalition Steering Committee**

Public and political support for the so-called “War on Terror” has collapsed in Britain. In particular, there are now few if any advocates of the continuing occupation of Iraq outside the government. While this is primarily due to the catastrophic situation in Iraq and the resistance of the Iraqi people, it also reflects the continuing campaigning work done by the anti-war movement in this country.

While there are indications that the British government is looking for a way to withdraw troops from Iraq, it is clear that it is also seeking to appease George Bush and provide continuing political cover for the US military occupation. Most British people are deeply opposed to any more soldiers dying in support of Bush’s war policies and join the Iraqi people in demanding their immediate exit from the country. The StWC will continue to make this its political priority, and will work with all parliamentary groups supporting an end to the occupation.

Still more alarmingly, there are indications that the British troops in Iraq are being drawn into US plans for a fresh aggression against Iran. We reaffirm our utter opposition to any such war, which would most likely have global consequences even worse than those generated by the attack on Iraq. We are sure that the British people will not be taken in by any repetition of the lies told to justify the invasion of 2003. We reaffirm our commitment to oppose any such war by the full range of political tactics, including direct and workplace action.

The StWC also reaffirms its opposition to the occupation of Afghanistan and demands the withdrawal of British troops from that country, where they have no more business being than they do in Iraq. It supports the right of the Afghan people to self-determination, and declares that foreign military intervention can bring neither peace nor genuine democracy to their country.

The StWC believes that all these issues indicate the overriding importance of Britain breaking from its position of support – almost alone in the world – for the global war-mongering of the Bush administration. We demand a British foreign policy which reflects the people’s desire for peace and social justice across the world. The StWC will continue to be open to the support and affiliation of all individuals and

organisations who support its campaigning aims, while aligning itself with all those around the world opposing the US drive to global domination.

To this end, the Coalition is proud to host the World Against War conference in London on December 1, which aims to bring together all those fighting for peace, sovereign self-determination and social justice around the world today. Conference emphasises the importance of ensuring the biggest possible attendance at this important event, which should reflect and amplify the support of the world's peoples for these demands.

## **RESOLUTION**

### **Fed-Bir, Kurdish Federation in UK, Daymer Turkish & Kurdish Community Centre and Peace in Kurdistan Campaign**

The Kurdish Question in Turkey

This conference is alarmed at the build up of Turkish armed forces on the border with Iraq following the approval by the Turkish Parliament of cross-border operations in order to eliminate the Kurdish PKK. Such actions could only further destabilise an already volatile region;

The STWC recognises that the urgently needed peaceful resolution of the ongoing conflict between the Turkish military and the Kurdish PKK can only be achieved through talks involving both sides; and by branding the PKK a terrorist group the UK and EU are obstructing any peace process;

The conference recognizes that the PKK had called the latest of series of unilateral ceasefire on 1st October 2006, to which the Turkish side only responded by stepping up military operations. By repudiating an opportunity for opening up a peace process, Turkey's leaders must bear prime responsibility for the unfolding conflict;

This conference applauds the poll success in the recent general election in Turkey of 20 independent candidates representing the country's Kurdish population who continue to struggle for the full civil and political rights denied them by the Turkish government;

The STWC notes Turkey's aim to join the European Union and the renewed momentum that the election result will give to these negotiations; and supports the redoubling of efforts to ensure that the rights of the country's citizens should be the central focus of these talks;

The STWC resolves to invite speakers from Kurdish organisations including recently elected representatives from DTP to address the STWC steering committee and local branch meetings concerning the current situation inside Turkey.

## **RESOLUTION**

### **Britain South Asia Solidarity Forum**

UK Military aid to Nepal monarchy

The sixth Annual Conference of the Stop the War Coalition congratulates the people of Nepal on their continued struggle against the autocratic and feudal monarchy and for a democratic republic of Nepal.

The STWC condemn the military support the British government has given to the Nepal monarchy and demand an enquiry into the use of the so-called "Global Conflict Prevention Pool" fund, which has provided training, equipment and aircraft to the Royal Nepal Army and much publicised allegations that UK-supplied warplanes have been used to bomb civilian targets in Nepal during the 11 year old conflict with the Peoples Liberation Army of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist).

The STWC pledges to support the Nepalese people in their anti-feudal struggle and to oppose any British government support to Nepal's feudal forces.

The Conference instructs the incoming Steering Committee to take appropriate measures to implement this resolution and to report on progress in this regard at the successive meetings of the Committee.

## **RESOLUTION**

### **University of Essex StWC**

On February 15th 2003, 2 million people took to the streets of London to demonstrate against the impending war in Iraq. The Stop the War Coalition has worked tirelessly to ensure that this movement has remained strong.

School and University students made up a huge section of that demonstration. There is still a vibrant anti-war movement across campuses as exemplified by the great response to the 8th October 2007 demonstration from student groups.

We propose a co-ordinated student national day of action on the 15th February 2008, in which stop the war student groups will hold local action. The day of action will be backed by the Stop the War Coalition, which will assist in the preparations.

## **RESOLUTION**

### **London Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament**

Stopping a new nuclear arms race – No to US Missile Defence (MD)

Earlier this month, speculation has mounted that the British government is seeking to play an even greater role in the US Missile Defence System, with the possibility of interceptor rockets being stationed at RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk. This follows the announcement made on the last day before the Commons summer recess that the government had approved a US request to use the Menwith Hill spy base in Yorkshire as part of the system. It also confirmed that the radar at RAF Fylingdales had been upgraded. No public or parliamentary consultation has taken place.

The US is also currently in dialogue with the governments of Poland and the Czech Republic to host MD bases in these countries, despite majority public opposition.

Since 9/11, the US has been accelerating development of its Missile Defence System — often known as 'Star Wars'. US Missile Defence would assure US military supremacy over the rest of the world. The system is designed to use radars to detect incoming missiles, and interceptor missiles to shoot them down. The US has bases for the system around the world. While the US portrays it as a defensive system, in reality US MD would allow the US to launch nuclear attacks against other countries, such as China and Russia, without fear of retaliation.

The US actions are exacerbating international tensions and driving a new nuclear arms race, as countries threatened by the system are redirecting resources for military and nuclear development. Countries that host MD bases will put their

populations at the front line of any attack, but receive no protection from the US system.

Conference resolves to actively support the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament's campaign against US Missile Defence and a new nuclear arms race.

## **RESOLUTION**

### **Oxford Stop the War Coalition**

Conference urges local Stop the War Coalition groups to include raising awareness of the history of British colonialism in their campaigning work

## **RESOLUTION**

### **African Liberation Support Campaign Network (ALISC Network)**

Conference resolves to continue mobilising and campaigning on Proxy Wars in Africa and show what these wars have in common with the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan as well as the possible invasion of Iran.

## **RESOLUTION**

### **Edinburgh StWC**

Conference believes:

- that the Palestinian cause is a central issue for the people in the Middle East as well as for people around the world. In particular 2008 as it is the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 'Nakba' ('Catastrophe') for the Palestinian people.
- that for more than 60 years Israel has colonised Palestine while cleansing the land of its native population, the Palestinians and for 40 years Israel has illegally occupied the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights
- that Israel has imposed a system of apartheid against the Palestinians remaining in the area of Israel/Palestine
- that since the British Mandate years, the UK government has been complicit in the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people
- that Israel will continue to ignore and violate international and human rights law while the Western governments, in particular the USA and the UK governments continue to provide cover for Israel's crimes against the Palestinian people
- that Israel is an essential part of the US project in the Middle East and therefore is a threat not only to the Palestinian people but to the whole Middle East region and so to international peace and security
- that ending the occupation demands concerted and sustained pressure upon Israel including an economic, cultural, academic and sporting boycott

Conference resolves:

- to make the issue of Palestine, including the right of return of the Palestinian people, intrinsic to the next year Stop the War campaigning.
- to support the Call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions made by more than 170 Palestinian civil society organisations and community groups

## **RESOLUTION**

### **Palestine Solidarity Campaign**

This AGM agrees to call on members, branches and affiliates of Stop the War Coalition to support and build for the lobby of Parliament on 28 November to mark the UN day of solidarity with the Palestinian people. The themes of the lobby are: 'End Israeli occupation; End the siege on Gaza; and Respect Palestinian democracy'.

## **RESOLUTION**

### **Swindon StWC**

The conference resolves that an anti-recruitment campaign should be launched to dissuade young men and women from joining the armed services.

This conference notes the contents of the leaflet from Swindon Stop the war that highlights the poor treatment and conditions meted out to British soldiers.

That leaflets should be produced that are targeted specifically at those thinking of joining the army, and that these should be available to StWC groups and others via the national office.

The text of the Swindon leaflet:

#### **A Secure Future**

Being in the army gives you security, because once you sign up you have to serve a minimum term, until you are 22 years old, or have served at least four years. But if you join at 16 years old, then you have to serve six years. In most jobs you can change your mind and leave, but not in the Army.

If you take a training course (anything except basic military training) you sign a form saying that in return for this educational opportunity, you give up your right to give 12 months notice to get out the army. This means that if the Army wants to keep you, you have to stay in until you are 40 years old, or have served 22 years – whichever is later. The only way to guarantee being able to leave when you are 22 or after four years is to refuse training.

Up until 1991 you could buy your way out the army if you changed your mind, but this has now been stopped.

#### **Skills & Training**

The basic military skills as an infantryman may give you the training you need to work as a night-watchman, or other unskilled jobs.

But the army does also provide training opportunities to a high standard, for example to become a mechanic, or electrician. The pay for skilled trades in the army is less than you would earn in civilian life, and by taking training you give up your right to leave the Army after the minimum term.

Many employers also feel that the Army environment does not provide the people skills and business awareness necessary for civilian life.

THINKING OF JOINING THE ARMY?

Anyone who leaves the Army at 22 years old must serve another six years in the Reserves, during which time they are liable for recall at any time.

#### ACCOMMODATION

The barracks shown here is for eight men to one room, it smells and the toilets are disgusting.

Former army head, General Sir Mike Jackson, described armed forces accommodation as "frankly shaming."

The MOD's own survey of initial training found accommodation for new recruits to be "squalid and depressing, with persistently unserviceable facilities and decaying fabric".

#### WILL WE BE LOOKED AFTER ONCE WE LEAVE THE ARMY?

Ex-service personnel make up a quarter of homeless people in Britain according to Shelter and the Government's Social Exclusion Unit.

"Unemployment among ex-service personnel aged between 25-49 years is twice the national average" The Royal British Legion.

#### WHAT IF I'M WOUNDED?

In the Second World War for every person killed there were three wounded. In Iraq today it is eight wounded to every one killed

The government is very cagey about releasing numbers of wounded, but already by January 2005, over 800 had been flown out of Iraq seriously wounded, the number now must be at least 1200. One in five of American wounded have suffered severe brain injuries, while 70% had wounds "with the potential for resulting in brain injury". The head and torso are well protected by Kevlar body armour, so two out of three wounded have injured legs or feet, and often multiple limb loss.

The British Legion says "the system is failing many permanently injured or ill soldiers." And on veterans from the first gulf war: "Many veterans continue to have difficulty in coming to terms with their illnesses and feel let down by the country that they served. Closure for veterans continues to be elusive and meanwhile their health continues to deteriorate."

Field Marshal Lord Bramall, a former chief of the defence staff, who commanded the Army during the Falklands conflict, said the outpatient service for soldiers is now "appalling".

Specialists at Kings College London estimate that one in four soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, suffer mental health problems. "The number of mental health disorders cited by 16-44 year olds is three times the national average."

Col Tim Collins, who commanded an infantry battalion during the Iraq invasion, said "the public did not care about troops who had been wounded in an unpopular war and that they were not vote winners for the Government. The public perception is that these men are volunteers and if you get wounded then bad luck; you should have joined the fire service instead."

More servicemen and women have committed suicide over the past two decades than have died in military action, according to new government figures.

## **RESOLUTION**

### **Permanent Revolution**

Resolution on the St Athan Military Academy

This coalition notes:

The MOD's decision to both centralise and privatise its training at a new complex at RAF St Athan in the Vale of Glamorgan, to open fully in 2013.

The award of a £14bn government contract for this to the Metrix consortium, involving among others Qinetiq, a privatised wing of the MOD led by ex-MOD John Chisholm, and Raytheon, manufacturer of the cluster bombs and depleted uranium weapons that have killed and maimed civilians in Iraq, Lebanon and elsewhere.

The lack of public consultation on the project and lack of criticism or even debate in the mass media, or from supposedly anti-war MPs Welsh AMs, or the Welsh TUC.

This coalition believes:

That the new complex, on a scale hitherto unseen in the UK, will be the site of training of all branches of the armed forces for the "War on Terror"; in other words, for further war on the nations of the Global South and for the suppression of protest and civil liberties in the UK and throughout the world.

That the complex will represent a significant militarisation of the Welsh economy with a major impact on the lives of South Wales residents.

That the Welsh Assembly government has sold this package on the promise of jobs for South Wales, but (a) most jobs at St Athan will involve the redeployment of skilled workers and teachers from elsewhere, leaving low-paid unskilled work for the local labour force, and (b) the closure of training centres throughout the UK will actually lead to greater unemployment overall.

That it is contradictory to oppose imperialist wars, or the assault on civil liberties, if we do not equally oppose the training for these under the pretext of our 'defence'.

This coalition resolves:

To oppose the creation of the St Athan academy.

To organise a mass protest at the site of the academy and to facilitate events throughout the UK educating people about the reality of the academy.

To win the support of trade unions, student unions and activist groups in building an international campaign; to call on MPs, MEPs and AMs to support this.

To call on the UK government to solve the problem of unemployment in South Wales and areas affected by MOD closures by instead investing in socially useful jobs in health, education, construction etc, and the development of peaceful and environmentally friendly technology.

## **RESOLUTION**

### **Campaign Against Criminalising Communities**

SUPPORT FOR THE MONTH OF ACTION TO CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE PLANNED COUNTER TERRORISM BILL 2007

This meeting resolves to actively promote the Month of Action (15 October to 15 November) against the planned Counter-Terrorism Bill 2007 organised by the National Campaign against 'Anti-Terror' Powers, which involves 21 organisations.

Recognising that: -

- the government seeks to extend pre-charge detention in terrorism cases from 28 days to 56 or even 90 days;
- the Bill will seek to create a new offence of gathering information which could be used for terrorism, even where no intention of such use can be proved;
- the Bill will massively extend powers of surveillance and data exchange between agencies, strengthening existing police state powers;
- the Bill will subject persons under control orders to additional random searches and house invasions, intensifying punishment for them and their families including forfeiture of homes;
- all these powers in the Bill, like the anti-terrorism Acts of 2000, 2001, 2005 and 2006 refer to an excessively broad definition of terrorism which includes even any threat of damage to property, and criminalise ordinary political activities of speech and association.

We oppose any extension of anti-terrorism powers and resolve to campaign against the planned Counter-Terrorism Bill 2007 by: -

- Putting anti terror laws on the agenda of local organisations, such as anti-war groups, religious groups, civil society associations and trade unions.
- Disseminating briefing papers, information leaflets to through emails.
- Publicising the initiative in newsletters and display leaflets in libraries and places of worship
- Organising local public meetings and building local coalitions.
- Holding high street stalls to raise awareness and gather signatures for petition.
- Giving out information outside community centres and places of worship.
- Writing letters to the mass media, local media plus articles in alternative media.
- Collecting signatures for a petition demanding that your MP should vote against any extension of 'anti-terror' powers,
- Lobbying MPs within constituencies by fixing a time for the meeting and inviting others to join the lobby.
- Participating in the lobby at the House of Commons, with a public meeting in Parliament around mid-November.

## **RESOLUTION**

### **Stop the War Coalition Muslim network**

The level of official Islamophobia remains extremely high in British society as a consequence of the War on Terror. Countering Islamophobia and exposing the links between attacks on Muslims and the war should remain a high priority for the StW Coalition.

The Stop the War Muslim Network has been set up to further this work, it is important to develop the network in every area.

Branches should respond to instances of Islamophobic prejudice in their area including physical attacks, wrongful arrests, articles in the press or statements by politicians.



Every Stop the War branch should collect names of Muslim activists and supporters as a first step towards developing such a network, contacts should also be passed on to the network's national co-ordinators. If possible each area should select a network co-ordinator.

Where appropriate branches should help organise meetings about Islamophobia with speakers from the network and beyond.

Noreen Fatimah  
Naheela Ashraf  
Co-ordinators of the Muslim Network

## **RESOLUTION**

### **South Tyneside Stop the War Coalition**

Defending the Rights of All is Integral to the success of the Anti-War Movement

Recognising that the aim of the government and media in striving to create and incite divisions in Britain is an attempt to shatter the coherence and resistance to the wars of occupation and attacks on rights and freedoms as well as to the attacks on public services, the environment and the all-round well being. It is an attempt to render the people as spectators, or victims.

It is the case that the state is singling out those of the Muslim faith and outlook for attack under the guise of waging war against "Islamic extremism" and then criminally carrying out arbitrary arrest and detention with "anti-terror" laws. To call such measures "laws" is also travesty of justice itself when they are based on racial profiling which require little or no evidence, reducing legal process to one of the denunciation by secret police just as in the Middle Ages.

The antidote to both roles that the ruling circles are trying to assign to the people as spectator and victim is that the whole polity in Britain has to put forward solutions and strive to become the decision-making force and realise its aim in achieving an anti-war government.

Conference calls on the Stop the war Coalition and anti-war movement to continue take bold steps together in defence of the rights of all.

## **RESOLUTION**

### **Socialist Workers Party**

- 1) Local Stop the War groups have been vital to the success of the Coalition.
- 2) The 8 October demonstration to parliament and the size of the sign up to Stop the War in the colleges shows the potential for building new Stop the War groups and revitalising existing ones.
- 3) The possibility of an attack on Iran underlines the necessity of that.
- 4) We therefore urge Stop the War Coalition supporters and affiliates in every town, city, village and borough to establish Stop the War groups which meet on a regular monthly basis with a calendar of discussion meetings, film shows and cultural events plus local activity ranging from street stalls to protests in event of an attack on Iran.

5) Further, these local groups can, through such activity, help recruit and build the Coalition.

## **RESOLUTION**

### **Campaign Against Sanctions and Military Intervention in Iran (CASMI)**

#### Resolution on Iran

Given the high probability of an illegal pre-emptive US/Israeli military attack against Iran, on false pretexts similar to those used to justify the invasion of Iraq, and the prospect of political and logistical support from the British government for such an attack, Stop the War Coalition conscious of catastrophic consequences for the people of Iran and the region, and the unforeseeable global ramifications of such an attack, will allocate resources to lobby MPs, challenge media distortions on Iran and mobilise support for the following resolution in the trade unions and students unions.

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#### Model Resolution on Sanctions and War on Iran

This Branch/Conference notes that:

- 1) There are indications that a military attack on Iran has been planned and could be executed before George Bush leaves office in 2008 and that this military attack would target Iranian military, economic and civilian infrastructure and might include the use of tactical nuclear strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities.
- 2) The IAEA has found no evidence of a weaponisation programme in Iran and the US intelligence agency, The National Intelligence Estimate, has estimated that Iran would be at least 10 years away from obtaining a nuclear weapon should it decide to follow this path. However the US, supported by the UK and France, are persisting that Iran cease uranium enrichment or face more sanctions, with the military option kept ominously open.
- 3) Over a million people died as a result of sanctions on Iraq.
- 4) All the completely discredited accusations of supporting terrorism, links to Al Qaida and clandestine WMD programme, used to make the case for war on Iraq, are now being used against Iran.
- 5) As the nuclear accusations are losing credibility, in a shift of focus, the US has been systematically attempting to implicate Iran in Iraq, to justify an extension of the war across the border into Iran.

This Branch/Conference believes:

- 1) As tragically evidenced in Iraq, sanctions against Iran hurt ordinary people, damage their economic and civil institutions and are prelude to war.
- 2) Iran's nuclear issue should be returned from the Security Council to the IAEA and resolved through continued negotiations and not sanctions or war.
- 3) Sanctions, foreign state interference, destabilization programme and any military intervention or its threat are greatly harmful to the cause of human rights, democratic rights and the civil society organisations in Iran and have therefore

been opposed by the leaders of the vibrant democracy movement inside the country.

This Branch/Conference resolves:

- 1) to demand from the Brown government to:
  - i) support the IAEA-Iran work plan and allow it time to work
  - ii) to withdraw British troops from the Iranian border and publicly oppose the military option against Iran.
  - iii) to end its support for any new security council sanctions and EU sanctions against Iran.

This Branch/Conference also calls on the TUC to publicly oppose sanctions and war on Iran

Notes to the proposer (Oct 2007)

George Bush's speech on 28th August, authorizing the American military to "confront Tehran's murderous activities", and the deployment of British troops to the Iranian border to guard against Iran's "proxy war" in Iraq, signify a qualitative shift towards war by the US and a systematic building towards a casus belli for another illegal pre-emptive war.

Currently, IAEA and Iran are engaged on a work plan with strict time limit until November 07 to clarify all the ambiguities over Iran's nuclear programme which the West purports as the basis of its suspicions of a weaponisation programme in Iran. The first findings of the work plan announced the clearance of Iran's plutonium experiments – labeled by the US as evidence of weaponisation - and verified non-diversion to weaponisation and peaceful use of all declared nuclear activities in Iran. However the US, supported by the UK and France, is persisting with its demand that Iran must cease uranium enrichment or face another round of sanctions whilst the threat of military strike remains ominously present.

## **RESOLUTION**

### **Iraq Occupation Focus**

Resisting the corporate theft of Iraqi Oil and Economic Occupation

We support the struggle of the Iraqi people in resisting oil privatisation which is being demanded by the occupying powers, IMF and multinational oil companies. We recognise that any law governing Iraq's natural resources passed under occupation has no legitimacy. We affirm the right of Iraqi trade unions to take industrial action in defence of their industry and national resources. We will support Naftana - the support group for the Iraqi Federation of Oil Unions - and the Hands Off Iraqi Oil Campaign in their solidarity actions with the IFOU and against oil privatisation. We will support, publicise and take part in a national day of action against the corporate theft/privatisation of Iraqi oil called by the Hands Off Iraqi Oil campaign for Saturday 23 February 2008.