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## National Antiwar Groups Issue Call to Action for Protests Before and After Obama Afghan Escalation Decision

November 9, 2009

Groups that have sponsored some of the largest demonstrations against war in Iraq and Afghanistan today issued a "Call to Action," urging their members to protest as soon as possible President Obama's expected announcement of a troop escalation in Afghanistan, and again the day following an announcement.

Participating in the "Call" are Veterans For Peace, Military Families Speak Out, the A.N.S.W.E.R Coalition, National Assembly, National Campaign for Nonviolent Resistance, United for Peace and Justice, and World Can't Wait.

The groups are asking their members to conduct any of a wide range of local activities -- from calling Members of Congress to nonviolent civil resistance and everything in between, within the next few days, prior to the expected announcement. Assuming Obama announces an escalation, to "return to the streets" the following day, as well as contacting a local civic, labor or church group to discuss broadening public opposition.

Michael McPhearson, Executive Director of Veterans For Peace, calls the prospect of an escalation in Afghanistan sickening. "It will mean at a very minimum that the U.S. will occupy Afghanistan for several more years, sending home dead and wounded soldiers while killing and wounding many times more Afghani people." He predicted that the U.S. will be "less secure in direct proportion to the suffering in Afghanistan."

The former Army Captain and veteran of the Persian Gulf War warned that "since the U.S. economy still teeters at the abyss, the stakes are much higher now than when President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society crashed and burned on the rocks of the Vietnam war."

The Call to Action suggested local groups incorporate a "March of the Dead" as part of their protests prior to and the day following an escalation announcement.

Veterans For Peace is a national organization founded in 1985 with members in over 100 chapters and its headquarters in St. Louis, MO. VFP's members are men and women veterans of all eras and duty stations spanning the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), World War II, the Korean, Vietnam, Gulf, Iraq and Afghanistan wars as well as other conflicts cold or hot. Our collective experience tells us wars are easy to start and hard to stop and that those hurt are often the innocent. Veterans For Peace is an official Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) represented at the United Nations.

## CALL TO ACTION

Endorsed by: Veterans For Peace, Military Families Speak Out, the A.N.S.W.E.R Coalition, National Assembly, National Campaign for Nonviolent Resistance, United for Peace and Justice, and World Can't Wait.

Any day will likely come the sickening news that President Obama has decided to escalate the war in Afghanistan.

Here in the U.S. and no doubt around the world people will react in pain, anger and sorrow, knowing what tragedy and suffering will follow.

- It will mean at a very minimum that the U.S. will occupy Afghanistan for several more years, sending home dead and wounded soldiers while killing and wounding many times more Afghani people. The suffering in Afghanistan today will grow by orders of magnitude and the U.S. will be that much less secure in direct proportion.
- As tragic as it was to see Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society" crash and burn on the rocks of the Vietnam war, the stakes are much higher now. The U.S. economy today still teeters at the abyss. Escalating the Afghanistan war will not just be the ruin of desperately needed domestic programs but may very possibly destroy the entire economy.

For those reasons and many more we call upon our members and every U.S. citizen with a love of humanity in their heart to pledge to at least the following actions:

1) Within the next few days, ideally prior to any decision from President Obama, conduct any of a wide range of local activities -- from calling Members of Congress to nonviolent civil resistance and everything in between -- demonstrating our opposition to and disgust with any decision to widen the war in Afghanistan. To show unity of purpose, we suggest local "March of the Dead" to Federal Buildings, local Congressional offices and government buildings of any sort.

2) On the day immediately following an announcement to escalate the war in Afghanistan, respond again in a variety of ways. To show unity of purpose, we suggest:

- a) making an appointment that day with at least one group that you're not already a member of -- a church, union, civic group, etc. -- to go and speak with them about the war
- b) return to the streets and again conduct any of a wide range of local activities -- from

calling Members of Congress to nonviolent civil resistance and everything in between  
-- and be prepared to comment to the news media about the escalation of the war.