

GETTING BEYOND WAR AND MILITARISM: the “To-Do” List

Violence begets violence. War profits only the few, the rich, the powerful – the 1%. As moral beings and tax paying citizens we must vigorously oppose war. Especially those wars of aggression perpetrated by the United States and its allies and proxies. These mostly occur in or near the Islamic oil lands (Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen).

We must oppose resource war and wars of weapon demonstration (drones over Gaza). We must oppose war for corporate profit. War industry lobbying (Lockheed Martin) and election buying corrupts our Congress, our Executive Branch and any legitimate defense force. War dehumanizes the “other.” It dehumanizes and disempowers ourselves.

War diverts vast, unimaginable federal tax funds from their most worthy function: meeting human needs – feeding, housing, schooling, healthcare, infrastructure. And disaster relief – these days so criminally paltry (Puerto Rico).

War solves no legitimate problem; war spawns problems. War impoverishes, erodes democracy, undermines law. War targets civilians, creates refugees and triggers ethnic cleansing. War uses rape, maims bodies and minds (PTSD), cheapens life. War spurs ecological devastation (Viet Nam) and climate disaster. Nuclear war risks nuclear winter, i.e. the extinction of the human species.

Not only must we oppose war, we must oppose *militarism*: the incessant search for enemies, the incessant preparation for war, the saturation of our economy and culture with martial values and vested interests in war.

WHAT MUST BE DONE (personally and nationally)

1. *replace toxic with renewable energy.*
2. *avoid dependence on the war economy; divest from the corporate war profiteers.*
3. *expose the mainstream media's unholy alliance with militarism. The corporate-owned MSM reflexively align with military policy. The MSM generate fear, normalize violence, villainize rival powers, gloss over war crime.*
4. *"take a knee" against nationalism/exceptionalism – major enablers of war.*
5. *stamp out racism – also a major enabler of war (end the "new Jim Crow," de-militarize the police, abolish the prison/industrial complex).*
6. *resist the Islamophobia enabling invasions and genocide (Yemen).*
7. *end U.S. military aid and exports to any invading nation or entity (Saudi Arabia/Yemen, Israel/Palestine).*
8. *abolish nuclear weapons.*
9. *abolish weaponized drones.*
10. *stop deploying mercenaries.*
11. *negotiate in good faith with adversaries.*
12. *expose the phony "war on terrorism" – that war of terrorism (a.k.a. state terrorism) – cynically keeping the pot boiling. "Terrorism," though rarely defined, is the use – or threat – of violence against civilians for political or economic reasons.*
13. *withdraw U.S. and NATO forces from Iraq, Afghanistan and Eastern Europe.*
14. *withdraw clandestine U.S. special forces – 70,000 in about 80 countries – from the continents they infest (Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America).*
15. *dismantle U.S. military bases menacing rival economic systems (Venezuela, Russia, China, Iran, North Korea).*
16. *dismantle the myriad, redundant domestic military bases not necessary for defending our borders.*
17. *finance the reconstruction of those nations that U.S.*

- bombs destroyed; compensate the victims (1950s North Korea, Viet Nam north and south, Laos, Iraq, Libya).*
- 18. avoid lifestyle pitfalls (addictions, distractions, consumerism, co-optation, debt). These impede our capacity to speak out and further risk resistance.*
 - 19. build solidarity with kindred – and sometimes not so kindred – spirits. Get beyond our bubbles, our turfs, our siloes.*
 - 20. overcome obliviousness and compartmentalization. The compartmentalized mind is a colonized mind. People of goodwill here often bemoan the lack of federal funding for domestic needs. Yet many refuse to acknowledge – much less oppose – the elephantine impact U.S. military spending has at home. Such needs, if addressed, would provide more employment and security than high tech war industries do.*
 - 21. slash the Pentagon budget. Doing so will boost most of the foregoing initiatives. Doing so will impede the mounting decay and insolvency of this nation.*
 - 22. become a war tax resister.*

Our ultimate mission: “achieving a global just peace by abolishing war and militarism.” Okay, we’re unlikely to achieve that utopian goal. But work on these “can-do” campaigns has a huge payoff: reducing human suffering, plus empowering ourselves and others. We can’t do everything, but we can do something. Each of us needs to do what we can, with what we have, where we are.

Is there a more authentic way to spend our lives than that?