

GI SPECIAL 7H20:

**MAKING IT HAPPEN:
A Military Resistance Organizers'
Conference:**



U.S. Army soldier in Beijia village in Arab Jabour, south of Baghdad. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

**September 6, 2009
10 AM – 6 PM
Savannah, Georgia**

**POLITICIANS CAN'T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT
THE BLOODSHED**

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
WAR**

THIS IS AN ORGANIZERS CONFERENCE LIMITED TO PEOPLE WHO WISH TO ACT TOGETHER TO SUPPORT ARMED FORCES RESISTANCE TO IMPERIAL WARS BY DIRECT FACE-TO-FACE CONTACT WITH THE TROOPS.

FOR INFORMATION ON HOW TO ATTEND, SEE THE END OF THIS PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Objective:

This conference is to provide a time and place to discuss and draft operating plans for going out to active duty bases in an organized way in 2009-2010.

Bridging The Gap, The Military Project April 2008 conference, made the argument about the importance of reaching out to troops.

The objective 9.6.09 is not to turn out the general public or large numbers of people to hear that argument all over again, but to bring together committed activists, especially IVAW activists, who want to meet and develop plans for action: coordinated outreach to active duty bases.

Because people now in the armed forces or working with them will have fresh ideas about approaching a particular base, no detailed format is pre-announced as binding, within the general framework and understanding that outreach is to be led by Iraq/Afghanistan Veterans, with civilians in support.

Conference: Physical Layout

A group of tables put together in a large square, rather than an elevated stage and podium as at last conference, since this is an organizers meeting.

Outline Of The Day:

Welcome & Introduction: Why We Are Here Today

10 AM:

Welcome

5 minutes presentation

By Jason Hurd, Savannah Iraq Veterans Against The War & Thomas Barton, Military Project; GI Special

Report on how discussion will be organized: presentation followed by free discussion

Restatement of theme: Advocacy and organization steps towards a campaign of national outreach to active duty members of the armed forces at military bases (best pick of active duty bases) in 2009-2010, led by veterans/active duty troops, as proposed by both Military Project and members of IVAW for some time.

10 minutes Discussion period:

Situation Reports: Review Of The Military Situation In Iraq And Afghanistan Report On The Mood In The Armed Forces

10:15 AM:

Session 1: Review of the military situation in Iraq and Afghanistan:

15 minutes presentation

By Camilo Mejia, Iraq Veterans Against The War & Thomas Barton, Military Project & GI Special

A review of where the wars are, the political/economic context, what the new regime is doing or not doing, what has changed, what has not.

30 minutes Discussion period:

11 AM

Session 2: Report on the mood in the armed forces

20 minutes presentation

By Soldier A; Active Duty, U.S. Army; Jeff Englehart, Iraq Veterans Against The War; Alan Stolzer, The Military Project

The mood in the armed forces within the framework of events discussed in opening session.

30 minutes discussion period

**Lunch Break: Noon- 1 PM
Regional Groups To Come Together**

Lunch may be a good time for regions to meet in smaller groups, before a large planning meeting is held.

Strategy: A New Approach For A New Situation

1 PM

Session 3:

30 minute presentation

By Jason Hurd, Savannah Iraq Veterans Against The War & Fabian Bouthillette, Los Angeles Iraq Veterans Against The War & Elaine Brower, The Military Project & Military Families Speak Out.

The importance of marching out to troops at several active duty bases on the same day, and how that is key to organizing resistance to the war.

IVAW members committed to outreach will lead, with civilian support.

This will gain media coverage for IVAW, since media has become uninterested in covering the same kind of anti-war actions in Washington again and again. Those no longer gain much attention, but this will be new and fresh.

The media attention will help shift public attention to the idea of direct outreach to active duty troops, and open that door for others to follow.

30 minutes discussion period

Organizing Action: Learning From The Denver DNC Experience

2 PM

Session 4:

30 minutes presentation

By Garrett Reppenhagen and Jeff Englehart, Colorado Iraq Veterans Against The War, on the immensely successful IVAW action at DNC in Denver, Colorado led by IVAW in uniform, then a huge banner that said "We Support GI Resistance," and civilians marched behind that.

This as a case study for organizing future coordinated marches on bases. They will discuss how this was organized, the problems, and the successes.

IVAW members have stressed the importance of marching in uniform, and the immensely powerful impact this made at Denver.

30 minutes discussion period

Making It Happen: Planning Coordinated Outreach To Active Duty Bases:

3 PM

Session 5:

30 minutes presentation

By Jason Hurd, Savannah Iraq Veterans Against The War; Jeff Englehart, Colorado Iraq Veterans Against The War; Fabian Bouthillette, Los Angeles Iraq Veterans Against The War.

Planning the coordinated outreach to active duty bases: How many bases are realistic to focus on, where, when, etc.? Press relations.

What structure to take up for getting the work done?

- 1) A national coordinating and lead structure be elected to form a point of contact, to be in touch and coordinate outreach actions in different parts of the country? Press relations.
- 2) Regional coordinating and point of contact structure by decided on by regions so they can plan their actions? Press relations.

We are using this meeting to actually plan future operations, and should always keep that in the back of our heads.

We need to develop a vision that will bind together our action on a national level, but allow organizers at a local level to be flexible and develop tactics that will work best in their environment.

30 minute discussion period

Regional Groups Meet Together Again

4 PM

Session 6:

Camilo Mejia, Iraq Veterans Against The War chairs, introduces the objective of this session:

Organizers for regions can then take the large vision and design a specific plan for their area.

60 minutes total

Report Backs And Wrap Up

5 PM

Session 7:

Camilo Mejia, Iraq Veterans Against The War chairs, introduces the objective of this session:

60 minutes total

**No later than 6 PM:
Conference Ends**

Party Time



Tactical Painting
From Soldier X, Iraq 4.25.05

**THIS MEETING HAS BEEN ORGANIZED BY MEMBERS OF IRAQ
VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR AND THE MILITARY PROJECT,
WORKING TOGETHER:**

Labor Donated

Copies of this flyer from: thomasfbarton@earthlink.net

If you are an IVAW member, and interested in attending, contact the Savannah IVAW.

**If you are not an IVAW member, and interested in attending, email a request for Conference registration to:
thomasfbarton@earthlink.net**

**AND:
IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND, OR
EVEN IF YOU ARE,
HELP BRING A VETERAN TO THE
CONFERENCE:**

**An Appeal:
You Can Help Active Duty Troops
And Iraq/Afghanistan Veterans Meet
To Organize Armed Forces
Resistance To Wars Of Empire**

Why will active duty troops and Iraq/Afghanistan veterans meet with civilian activists in Savannah, Georgia, Labor Day weekend?

No doubt Barrack Obama's inauguration in January was a great moment for all people concerned about ending racism and promoting the equality that Thomas Jefferson wrote about in the Declaration of Independence.

But in the context of the grand struggle to achieve equality for all humans in all areas of life, the President's inauguration was a mere baby step.

A baby step whose ensuing honeymoon period has ended.

As President Obama continues to prolong a withdrawal from Iraq and actually escalate the occupation of Afghanistan, the need to continue reaching out to and organizing with veterans protesting the occupations has never been greater.

For this reason, The Military Project is working to facilitate a meeting of anti-occupation troops in September.

This meeting is to take place near Fort Stewart in Georgia.

We are aiming to not only to make gains in the Southeast region of the United States, but to boost the profile of outreach to soldiers on a national level.

To achieve this, representatives from Iraq Veterans Against the War from around the country are being invited to lead the discussion and planning to be conducted in Georgia in September.

The Military Project will be present to share opinions and facilitate, but truly The Military Project is interested only in empowering the anti-war veterans movement.

We are asking for a donation to The Military Project that will be used for the sole purpose of transporting veterans to Georgia in September.

Your money will not be used for any sort of overhead cost.

The Military Project is taking care of that.

But we do need \$1200 more right now to bring the veterans' representatives from around the country to this meeting.

No one's voices and no one's actions are more important than those of veterans in the struggle to bring home our armed forces from two occupations they should never have been asked to take part in.

President Obama made a lot of popular statements about ending the current "wars" in his historic campaign, but he has made it clear that we cannot count on him to turn those messages into action.

If we want the occupations to end immediately, we are going to have to work for it ourselves.

Please help The Military Project carry out its primary and sole mission of supporting the anti-war soldier.

We cannot possibly transport all of these veterans needed at the Conference in Georgia by ourselves.

Our goal is to take any donation that you make for this cause, and turn it into action that will be more significant than just a baby step in the fight for equality.

Very respectfully,

Fabian Bouthillette, Lieutenant, USNR
Member, Iraq Veterans Against the War
Member, Military Project Organizing Committee

Jeff Englehart, Former Spc., U.S. Army, Iraq Service
Member, Military Project Organizing Committee
Member, Iraq Veterans Against the War

Camilo Mejia, Former Staff Sergeant, Florida National Guard
Member, Military Project Organizing Committee
Member, Iraq Veterans Against the War

SEND YOUR SUPPORT BY MAIL OR CREDIT CARD:

BY MAIL:
IF YOU SEND A CHECK OR MONEY ORDER,
Make Payable To: The Military Project

Mail to:

**The Military Project
Box 126
2576 Broadway
New York, N.Y.
10025-5657**

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FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.

“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.

“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”

Frederick Douglass, 1852

“Hope for change doesn’t cut it when you’re still losing buddies.”
-- J.D. Englehart, Iraq Veterans Against The War

The Chicken Factory; [What Successful Military Resistance Is All About]

From: *Traveling Soldier*, March-April, 2005 - Issue 10

Once upon a time there was a chicken factory, where, let us suppose, 1000 men and women work.

Live chickens come in one end of the factory complex, and cut up chicken parts and whole chickens come out the other end.

The people who cut up the chickens make about \$3 an hour, work in cold, wet rooms, get sick a lot, and frequently lose body parts during the chicken cutting process. The managers are cold assholes interested in profits, and don't give a shit how dangerous the equipment is. The supervisors are petty tyrants and frequently sexual predators.

If you get too sick or hurt to work, too fucking bad, you get put out the door.

This is not a desirable state of affairs.

You think maybe there should be some kind of organization of the work force to resist this shit. Maybe you can get more money, or insist that you have decent protection from being maimed or killed.

At that point you are alone, and powerless. So you have to very carefully find somebody else that agrees, and then somebody else, and all unnoticed by the assholes in command of the chicken factory, you slowly but surely build an organization.

You need meetings to talk over plans. Off company territory. You need security. You need some kind of way of communicating, maybe a newsletter, but you're careful about that too.

You can take it from there.

But it is obvious that you do not want anybody to stand up in the middle of the third shift and loudly tell management, "I refuse to participate any further in your immoral enterprise and will defy all your orders."

He or she is immediately gotten rid of, and is lost to organizing inside your chicken factory because he or she is gone. And the management is delighted, because they've just ID'd and fired somebody who could give them trouble in the future.

So, if you're alone, organize. People who act together can have an effect.

And if somebody snaps and does an individual refusal, and gets arrested, in trouble, or whatever, your organization does not leave them behind; they've been hurt, and let no one judge them, because anybody can snap, anytime.

A soldier from the 1st ID summed up his job situation like this:

"Before any soldier risks going to prison he should realize that his ability to communicate with other troops will be limited.

“We choose our battles and continue to speak out in our underground action.

“There has to be a point when we reach a high enough number of troops in our peace effort that a unified boycott of all military action will have a desired effect.”

MORE:

Another Reminder

[This is from the Robert Sharlet, brother of Jeff Sharlet, Vietnam Veteran, who created and edited Vietnam GI]

Brother Jeff shared the view that ideally it would best further the antiwar cause if disaffected GI's stayed in the Army and 'resisted' within the ranks, although he well understood that for each soldier the question of desertion was an individual decision.

When Jeff and Fred Halstead (then SWP [Socialist Workers Party] candidate for President) met with Beheiren in Kyoto in summer '68, they tried to persuade the organization not to actively encourage GI's to desert, but instead stay in, influence others and resist within the ranks.

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?

Forward GI Special along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the wars, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657. Phone: 917.677.8057

Troops Invited:

Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send email to thomasfbarton@earthlink.net: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 917.677.8057

Vietnam GI: Reprints Available



Vietnam: They Stopped An Imperial War

Not available from anybody else, anywhere

Edited by Vietnam Veteran Jeff Sharlet from 1968 until his death, this newspaper rocked the world, attracting attention even from Time Magazine, and extremely hostile attention from the chain of command. The pages and pages of letters in the paper from troops in Vietnam condemning the war are lost to history, but you can find them here.

The Military Project has copied complete sets of Vietnam GI. The originals were a bit rough, but every page is there. Over 100 pages, full 11x17 size.

Free on request to active duty members of the armed forces.

Cost for others: \$15 if picked up in New York City. For mailing inside USA add \$5 for bubble bag and postage. For outside USA, include extra for mailing 2.5 pounds to wherever you are.

Checks, money orders payable to: The Military Project

Orders to:
The Military Project
Box 126
2576 Broadway
New York, N.Y.
10025-5657

All proceeds are used for projects giving aid and comfort to members of the armed forces opposed to today's Imperial wars.

“The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops.” Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War

**OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION
ALL TROOPS HOME NOW!**

**IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE
END THE OCCUPATIONS**



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ACTIVE DUTY TROOPS**

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Please say how many you wish sent.

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