

GREATER LANSING NETWORK AGAINST WAR & INJUSTICE

A MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATION SEEKING TO END WAR AND PROMOTE SOCIAL JUSTICE THROUGH ADVOCACY, EDUCATION AND ACTION
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Negotiate for Peace or Wage Endless War Position on Afghanistan and Pakistan

Hamad Karzai: December 2009: "Americans should stay in Afghanistan till 2024"

U.S. military engagement in Afghanistan was precipitated by the attacks on the World Trade Center buildings on 9/11. When there is an incident of this sort, an attack on the United States or its citizens, our proper response should be to seek judicial redress utilizing the instruments of the international community, and in particular the United Nations and its International Courts, rather than to resort to military responses as has been the case in Iraq or Afghanistan. By turning to international bodies and courts, we obtain broad international support while avoiding catastrophic escalations of conflict.

The U. S. actions in Iraq and now Afghanistan have generated enormous conflict, war without an end in sight, expanded hatred on both sides, and considerably more antagonism against the United States. Our government's fundamental error has been the belief that we can resolve the conflict by force, a counter-productive belief sustained by the rhetoric of those intent on imposing U.S. domination over the region. The same short-sighted approach used in Iraq is currently being followed in Afghanistan and Pakistan. President Obama's decision to deploy additional troops will not resolve the Afghani opposition to our presence, nor will the solution lie in propping up Hamad Karzai's corrupt regime. As Matthew Hoh, Senior Civilian Representative in the Afghani War has said, "Our presence in Afghanistan has only increased destabilization and insurgency in Pakistan where we rightly fear a toppled or weakened Pakistani government may lose control of its nuclear weapons." Even if we begin to reduce our troop levels in 2011, we will not have reduced the opposition to the U.S. presence now viewed as anti-Islamic across the Muslim world.

We believe that there are no absolute or irreconcilable differences between people, and that all differences are better resolved through negotiation than through force. We believe that the current U.S. position toward Muslim states or populations who resist or oppose the U.S. is to compel them to submit to our authority by force of arms, rather than to seek negotiation. That is a fundamentally flawed and failed strategy. Tolerance, compassion, and deep listening are powerful tools of diplomacy. Our goal is to seek peace, not U.S. domination. Our country has a choice: Negotiate for peace or wage endless war. The record on the latter is poor indeed. It is time to try the former in a serious way.

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