

For Immediate Release

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Veteran Group Calls for U.S. Withdrawal From Afghanistan and the Prosecution of Dick Cheney and George Bush for Crimes Against Humanity.

Veterans For Peace held its Annual National Convention in St. Paul, Minnesota days before the start of the Republican Convention. Over 400 veterans, military family members and friends ranging from World War II to the current conflict in Iraq gathered for workshops, discussions, inspirational speakers and entertainment. Topics covered included Agent Orange, Depleted Uranium, outreach to military personnel, PTSD and healing from war, military sexual assault and others. Keynote speakers for the four day conference were Father Roy Bourgeois, a Catholic priest and founder of the School of Americas Watch; former Marine and chief United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) Inspector in Iraq 1991-1998, Scott Ritter; Iraq War Gold Star parent and former Minnesota State Senator Becky Lourey; the author of the best seller "Blackwater: The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army," Jeremy Scahill; and West Point graduate James Yee, former Muslim Chaplain for the U.S. prison camp in Guantanamo Bay.

Veterans For Peace also passed sixteen resolutions taking stands on topics ranging from increasing VFP commitment to greening the annual convention, working to authorizing the creation of Veterans For Peace Incarcerated Chapters to assisting disabled military personnel and veterans. Three resolutions in particular stand out.

Veterans For Peace is calling for changes in military law and other appropriate regulations so that military personnel can declare themselves Conscientious Objectors to specific wars based on a religious, moral, or legal basis. Current law calls for the objection to all wars to qualify for CO status.

The group is calling for the government of the United States to immediately withdraw all military and intelligence forces from Afghanistan and Pakistan. This same resolution calls for the U.S. government to provide humanitarian aid to the people of Afghanistan, in non-coercive forms, to help them rebuild their own nation and their lives in cooperation with other nations in the region; and to allow the people of Afghanistan to freely determine their own government without interference by the U.S.

Continuing with their efforts to impeach President Bush Jr. and Vice President Cheney, VFP has pledged to take every appropriate measure to insure that George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, and responsible members of their administration are prosecuted for war crimes, crimes against peace and crimes against humanity before any court claiming jurisdiction in this country or abroad, for as long as they shall live.

Commenting on these resolutions, VFP Executive Director Michael McPhearson said, "These three statements from our membership represent many of the core values of our organization. We believe that service members have the right to re-evaluate their decision to kill and change their mind. We know that after all the killing is done the individual soldiers must live with themselves and make sense of what they have done. We believe that our political leaders must be held accountable for their actions. This is a critical to a healthy and functional democracy. We realize that to survive the challenges we face today, like global warming, we must find ways to work together and war is not viable."

To read full text of the resolutions please visit www.veteransforpeace.org.

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Founded in 1985, Veterans For Peace is a national organization of men and women veterans of all eras and duty stations spanning the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), World War II, the Korean, Vietnam, Gulf and current Iraq wars as well as other conflicts cold or hot. It has chapters in nearly every state in the union and is headquartered in St. Louis, MO. Our collective experience tells us wars are easy to start and hard to stop and that those hurt are often the innocent. Thus, other means of problem solving are necessary. Veterans For Peace is an official Non- Governmental Organization (NGO) represented at the U.N.