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Broad Based Anti-War Network Forming on 8th Anniversary of Iraq War

Come Home, America: A New Anti-War Network Brings Conservatives a Progressives, Liberals and Libertarians Together to Oppose U.S. Wars and Empire

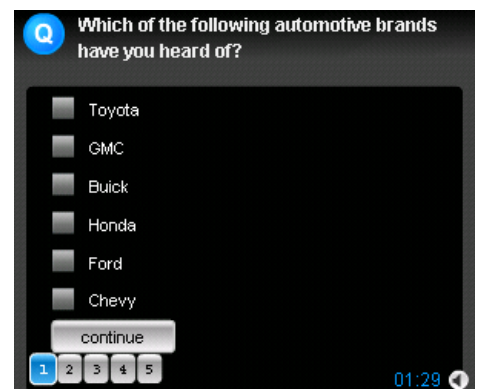
After 7 years of the Iraq war, 8 years of war in Afghanistan and in the midst of a 'Long V' projected to last decades, Americans from across the political spectrum are joining together to form a broad-based effort to oppose war and Empire. The new project, Come Home America: Citizens Opposed to U.S. Wars and Empire. See www.ComeHomeAmerica.US.

Polls show that Americans oppose military intervention around the globe but their views are not represented in Congress. In fact, a December 2009 Pew Poll found that a plurality 49% of Americans think the U.S. should 'mind its own business internationally.' Many Americans voted for President Obama because he promised to end the Iraq War and most Americans opposed the escalation of war in Afghanistan. Those who oppose U.S. militarism need to join together to create effective advocacy against weapons and war spending, especially as deficits mount in a fragile economy.

On February 20th, 2010, along with George D. O'Neill, Jr. formerly the chairman of the Rockford Institute a leading traditional conservative intellectual think tank, I organized a meeting of people for a day long conference in Washington, DC to see whether people with different political philosophies could work together to oppose militarism. Participants included editors from *The Nation*, *Progressive Review*, *American Conservative*, *Reason*, and other publications; leftist anti-war activists reaching back to the Vietnam era and a professor at the Naval Postgraduate School; Ralph Nader; a supporter of Patrick Buchanan's 1992 presidential bid; a former campaign aide to Rep. Ron Paul (R-Tex.) and three members of the Paul-inspired group Young Americans for Liberty as well as a student from the left-leaning Students for a Democratic Society; representatives of several activist organizations, including Veterans for Peace and Peace Action; and writers, think tankers, academics, and organizers from across the political spectrum.

After spending a day together we realized that not only could we work together, but we need to work together. As Bill Kauffman, author of such books as *Ain't My America* and *Look Homeward, America*, said "Peace is neither left nor right. Our endless wars erode our liberties, break up our families, weaken our communities, and bankrupt our treasury. We are against these wars because we love our country."

Doug Bandow, a Senior Fellow at the Cato Institute who served as a Special Assistant to President Ronald Reagan, points out: "This is not the first time that people from across the political spectrum have joined in an attempt to stop imperialist adventures. Various groups opposed the Spanish-American War and especially the brutal occupation of the Philippines. Woodrow Wilson's bloody crusade for democracy was resisted by conservatives and



progressives; socialist Eugene Debs went to prison for criticizing that conflict. Left and Right even opposed Franklin Delano Roosevelt's surreptitious push for war, though the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and German declaration of war ultimately made involvement inevitable."

But Paul Buhle, the founder-editor of the SDS journal *Radical America* in the 1960s, is a historian of the American Left point out this type of coalition has not been developed in decades: "There never was such a boundary-crossing effort in my 50 year political lifetime. The bipartisan military-industrial empire has hit the skids and may be in ruins the day after tomorrow, so to speak. At any rate, their Demo-Republican credibility is gone. Now the rest of us had better speak up and begin organizing alternatives."

"This coalition will confront the bipartisan foundation of U.S. foreign policy," said Jeff Taylor an author and Assistant Professor of Political Science at Jacksonville State University who is a veteran of the Jerry Brown '92 campaign and has supported Ralph Nader and Ron Paul in recent years. "Opposition to empire is clearer than opposition to war because the problem is a systemic tendency toward war for the sake of empire. You could compare it to an alcoholic: the specific bout of drinking-to-excess is less important than the alcoholism itself."

Daniel McCarthy of the *American Conservative* tied war and empire to the crumbling U.S. economy saying "The strategic and economic crises confronting the U.S. are not entirely separate beasts. One theme that emerged at the conference from both Left and Right was the recognition that we cannot afford the foreign policy we have. Libertarians, conservatives, and progressives would all like to have that 'peace dividend' we were promised after the fall of the Berlin Wall, even if we might put it to different uses. Almost any use would be better than perpetuating our self-destabilizing attempts to manage the globe, from Mesopotamia to the Caucasus to Latin America."

Sam Smith of *Progressive Review* looks to the impact the right-left coalition against war might have saying, "Good futures are built on the efforts of those unafraid of failure. At a time when a majority of Americans consider their system broken, we can either consign ourselves to being victims or we can come together in new ways, with new ideas and new allies and start replacing a failed system with communities that work."

For more information visit Come Home, America: Citizens Opposed to U.S. War and Empire, www.ComeHomeAmerica.US. Contact Kevin Zeese at 301-996-6582 or KBZeese@gmail.org to interview members of the network.

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