

The following is a joint statement by Crossroads and The Peoples' Institute for Survival and Beyond. Please share it with others in your networks and send us word about the ideas, actions and plans in which your anti-racist community is engaged. To contact us, send email to: info@crossroadsantiracism.org and tiphonie@pisab.org

Resisting the War at Home and Abroad

"As I have walked among the desperate, rejected and angry young men I have told them that molotov cocktails and rifles would not solve their problems. I have tried to offer them my deepest compassion while maintaining my conviction that social change comes most meaningfully through nonviolent action. But they asked—and rightly so—what about Vietnam? They asked if our nation wasn't using massive doses of violence to solve its problems, to bring about the changes it wanted. Their questions hit home, and I knew that I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today—my own government. For the sake of those boys, for the sake of this government, for the sake of the hundreds of thousands trembling under our violence, I cannot be silent."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke these prophetic words to address a meeting of Clergy and Laity Concerned. The speech, titled *A Time to Break Silence*, was delivered on 4 April 1967, exactly one year before he was assassinated. These words are as pertinent to the current state of domestic and foreign affairs of the United States as they were in 1967.

This January, as we commemorate the birthday of Dr. King, let us remember that inherent in “The Dream” is social transformation through non-violent resistance. This is the call and challenge of Dr. King’s vision for freedom, justice, self-determination and liberation of all peoples. It is not enough for the disempowered and oppressed to commit to a world without violence; it is only when the most powerful embody non-violence that it will become the basis for human interaction and relationship.

Beginning with this year’s King Holiday Celebrations we invite our anti-racist partners to use this commemoration weekend to refocus on the words and life of Martin Luther King, Jr. We must remember Dr. King was assassinated not simply because he had “A Dream,” as the sanitized Civil Rights leader is often characterized, but rather because he had a radical vision of justice, spoke truth to power and located the United States government as the axis of violence and oppression at home and abroad. Let us reclaim Martin Luther King’s legacy and celebrate our own commitment to resisting the war at home and the war abroad, and understanding that they are the same war.

Why is war in the Middle East and North Korea racist war?

Since the beginning of re-ignited conflict in the Middle East, anti-racists have worked to expose racism in our foreign policy—especially with regard to Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel, Palestine, and North Korea—and to connect the racism in our foreign policy to domestic racism here in the United States. As the inevitability of war looms closer, we call on all our anti-racism partners to oppose this war, to work for peace, and to make anti-war movements anti-racist peace movements.

US racial and cultural imperialism abroad are fundamentally based on white supremacy at home, founded on the belief that only White Europeans and White Euro-Americans should set the world’s agenda and control and distribute the world’s resources. Economic imperialism imposed by capitalism knows no boundaries in the world today—all is there for the taking.

The burden for this war is on the backs of people of color and the poor who will both fight it and fund it. Jobs, health care, education, and community infrastructure will all be sacrificed in order to fund this war. This war subverts the agendas of racially and economically oppressed communities in the United States, for example:

- Prisons are the “new projects”
- Education is at greater risk than ever
- Health care—fewer Americans have health insurance than ever before
- Structural inequalities are widening the gap between rich and poor
- Soldiering is often the only option for gainful employment and access to higher education
- Ongoing, unresolved land claims and trust fund disputes of American Indians are disregarded while the US invades Middle East nations and perpetuates neocolonialism abroad
- Mexican workers die while crossing the border in astounding numbers—and the Bush administration ignores President Fox’s overtures toward resolution
- Calling for democratic elections in Iraq, while elections in the US are marred by race-based inequities and are

far from fair

- For all their talk about diversity and racial inclusion during the election, Republican leadership is still dominated by white males, some of whom still advocate segregation
- Bombing has restarted in Vieques, Puerto Rico and the US military documents needed for withdrawal in May 2003 have yet to be submitted
- Thousands of Arab American US citizens are being secretly detained and held without due process of law and in violation of the US constitution
- Non-immigrant men from 20 Middle East, African and Asian countries are now required by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to register and be photographed, fingerprinted and interviewed under oath

The United States now treats legitimate, law abiding visitors to our country as suspected terrorists, requiring INS registration of men over 16 who are nationals or citizens of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, Syria, North Korea, Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Eritrea, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Somalia, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia will be added soon, and others may follow. Already we have seen this registration process used to wrongly initiate deportation proceedings against people with pending applications of legal permanent residency. This new profiling strategy targeting people on the basis of national origin, race, and religion has already discouraged people of color from entering or remaining in the United States and is designed to unfairly restrict immigration from targeted countries.

Anti-racism organizing strives to restore the humanity of Whites and People of Color alike. War with People of Color abroad means citizens of the United States are forced to sell our humanity for the price of oil. As this war turns our young men and women into killing machines that destroy communities in the Middle East and North Korea, it also destroys communities here at home. This war demonizes our “enemies” while simultaneously creating demons of us. We are the enemy abroad; we are no longer human in the eyes of the rest of the world.

People in the Middle East and North Korea do not fear (or hate) our freedom. They fear (or hate) us because our actions are not consistent with our ideals. We are the world’s economic bully, creating poverty at home and abroad. We ourselves are not in the land of the free, yet because of our collective white supremacy we act with aggression and arrogance abroad.

We, people of the United States, pay with our lives and our tax dollars to perpetuate violence while white-dominated and driven US corporations profit from oil imports, military arms sales, opening overseas markets, resource extraction, and exploiting labor in this and other nations.

We oppose this war from an anti-racist standpoint. This is a racist war of imperial economic expansion, fueled by the same mythology that birthed Manifest Destiny. We trust we can unite our anti-racist analysis with anti-war coalitions, building sustainable anti-war movements based on a wide range of standpoints. Building common ground and strong resolve to resist war and work for peace requires activists from a range of standpoints to merge diverse political, economic, and racial ideologies.

A Call to Anti-Racist Partners

This letter is a call to our anti-racist partners and anti-racists everywhere to oppose war in the Middle East and North Korea. This is an appeal to deepen our collective analysis and understanding of the racist motivations and repercussions of the war including: who is most affected by the war itself in terms of the cost of lives and resources, and who benefits most from increased military spending while decreasing spending for housing, education, health and social programs. We are not asking our partners to change direction or do something different, but rather to engage in "applied anti-racism" by applying their analysis, intelligence and resources to opposing the war on the grounds that this is racist military action.

We call for an anti-racist anti-war movement. Anti-war movements are often dominated by liberal white organizations (especially the religiously rooted part of anti-war movements). We must build movements connecting globalization and imperialism with white supremacy, linking what happens abroad with the oppression and repression here in the United States.

Please share with us the ideas, actions and plans in which your anti-racist community is engaged. Together we can resist the war at home and abroad.