



Synanim

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Peace Not Poverty Declaration

Prepared by 13,600 people using Synanim
and presented by their selected leader, Kelley Ogden,
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Thirty-eight years ago today, Dr. King reminded us of those moments in life where silence is betrayal. Our lives begin to end the day we remain silent when our conscience tells us to speak. Today, we walk in the footsteps of Dr. King, Fred Korematsu, Mahatma Gandhi, and countless others who have walked this road before. Their examples guide us along the path.

War poisons the moral fiber of every individual and destroys the intricate fabric of life. As a nation, we value peace and have prided ourselves in non-aggression towards other sovereign states. The war in Iraq, however, violates this principle of non-aggression. The Iraq war is a war of choice. We did not engage in diplomacy, but rather, bullying. Saddam Hussein did not possess weapons of mass destruction. Iraq did not invade our country or attack it. It is painful to admit that we invaded another sovereign nation without cause and without provocation. Our conscience tells us that we must end this war.

The war in Iraq violates law and perverts our sense of justice. We are no longer viewed as an impartial arbitrator of disputes, but as a biased proponent of our own self interest. We have lost the moral high ground for condemning the aggression of others. Our compassion and care for fellow man has been replaced by intolerance, hatred, and bigotry. The war in Iraq has curtailed the freedoms and liberties that our founding fathers, and those like Dr. King, worked so hard to secure. The war in Iraq promotes fiscal insanity for us and future generations and it narrows and degrades our soul. It is a cancer, that if left unchecked, will only spread.

Our conscience tells us that now is the time for action, before the war destroys all that we hold dear. We must speak so that our families, our children, our loved ones, and our nation, are not poisoned by hate, bigotry, and intolerance. We must end this war.

We must cease all combat operations. Troops should be withdrawn in an orderly fashion, with only a small portion remaining to assist in the rebuilding efforts. To the extent that troops are necessary to maintain order, peacekeeping activities should be turned over to the UN or the Arab League.

We must dismantle our military bases, which only serve to remind the Iraqi

people of our presence. We have done enough damage and must remove the vestiges of this transgression.

We must fund the rebuilding of Iraq's roads, buildings, and infrastructure destroyed by this war, as this is our moral and legal obligation. Iraqi engineers, labor, and business, not US corporations that profit from war, should be employed to rebuild. Our actions must be pure in deed and in heart. We must give international relief agencies full access to help the people of Iraq and alleviate their suffering. We must help rebuild the lives of the Iraqi people and restore the fabric of life.

We must accept the form of government freely chosen by the Iraqi people, without US influence. Our insistence upon a particular form of government only poisons the political process. Democracy cannot be imposed upon others by the barrel of a gun.

We must take steps at home to change the mindset of the American people. Describing the war in Iraq as a 'front' provides us with a false sense of justification for our actions. We were wrong, and we need to recognize that we were wrong.

Americans must be reminded that truth and honesty, freedom, and liberty for all are our core values. The freedoms and liberties that have been taken from us must be restored. We must also take steps to safeguard our freedoms and liberties, to ensure that they are not taken from us so easily again.

We must also address the root causes of this conflict, not only in our hearts, but in our daily lives. We must reduce our dependence on oil, which fuels our aggression.

As a result of this war, countless lives have been ruined, and our integrity among nations has been compromised. We must repair our relations among nations, and strengthen the ties that bind us all. We must hold those responsible for this war accountable.

We must also demonstrate the power of forgiveness. We must release those we have imprisoned, even those who may wish us harm. The men, women, and children of Iraq should be free to begin rebuilding their lives, regardless of their actions or our suspicions. We must remove the log in our own eye before attempting to remove the splinter in another's.

We must right our wrongs. We must demonstrate our strength at home and abroad by apologizing to the Iraqi people and to the world. By redressing the wrongs that we have inflicted upon the Iraqi people, and the damage that we have done to relations among nations, we demonstrate respect for freedom and democracy. By redressing the wrongs, we strengthen the bonds of humanity, we make peace possible, and we restore our soul.

Let us all lift our voices for as our conscience tells us, now is the time to speak.