The Peacemaker

NJPA at Korea Peace Advocacy Days

New Jersey Peace Action was proud to be part of Korea Peace Advocacy Days in Washington DC on March 13 and 14. The event began on Wednesday, March 13 at historic St. Mark’s Episcopal Church. We heard from a number of speakers including Nobel Peace Prize laureate Jody Williams and Representative Ro Khanna (D-CA). Jody reminded us not to be discouraged by recent events, that there is movement towards peace, and that we need to encourage the changes that the North and South are implementing, in spite of the US.

On Thursday, we split into teams for lobby visits with pertinent Senators and Representatives. Our team met with Representatives John Curtis (R-UT), Ken Calvert (R-CA), Mac Thornberry (R-TX), Drew Ferguson (R-GA), Ilhan Omar (D-MN), and Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA). The Representatives were generally supportive of the diplomatic efforts being made to finally end the Korean War, after almost 70 years!

One meeting of note was our visit to Rep. Ilhan Omar’s office. We met with Ryan Morgan, Omar’s legislative assistant. He briefed us on Rep. Omar’s vision for a new, progressive American foreign policy, one that supports and does not dictate to other countries. They have a plan to develop new tools for the diplomacy toolkit beyond sanctions and military action—tools that allow for self-determination in other nations.

Regime Change Has a Disastrous Track Record

Washington, D.C. — March 19, 2019 — On the eve of the 16-year anniversary of the Iraq War, Paul Kawika Martin, Senior Director for Policy and Political Affairs at Peace Action, released the following statement:

“The U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 remains one of the worst foreign policy blunders of our time. Thousands of US soldiers and hundreds of thousands of Iraqis lost their lives because of a war entered into under false pretenses. Surveying the foreign policy challenges of the present, from Iran, to North Korea, to Venezuela, we must not repeat the mistakes of the past. Regime change has a disastrous track record.”

www.njpeaceaction.org
NJPA Officers Attend Peace Action National Organizers’ Meeting

New Jersey Peace Action was represented at the Peace Action National Organizers’ Meeting in Washington, DC on March 23 to 26. People from 30 Peace Action affiliates from around the country were present. Saturday and Sunday were spent in briefings about urgent peace issues. On Monday and Tuesday, NJPA Executive Director Jeff Hoey and board member Maureen Prince met with staff members in the offices of our Senators and Representatives.

Calendar of Events

No to War, No to NATO, March 30-April 4

The international network No to War – No to NATO calls for broad, creative and peaceful actions against NATO in Washington DC and worldwide. https://www.no-to-nato.org

Dream Keepers Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial March, April 4

On April 4, 2019, meet at the Teaneck Municipal Building (818 Teaneck Rd.) and march to the Teaneck Public Library (840 Teaneck Rd.) for a program in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Steps to a Nuclear Free World, April 14

All-day conference at the New Jersey Institute of Technology. For information, visit https://njit-connect.njit.edu/2019-nuclear-weapons-free-conference.

NJPA 62nd Annual Dinner, April 28, 12 noon - 4 pm

Hilton Hasbrouck Heights, 650 Terrace Ave., Hasbrouck Heights, NJ 07605. $85 per person. For tickets, go to www.njpeaceaction.org or call 973-259-1126.

Recurring Events

Morristown Peace Vigil, every Friday, 6 to 7 pm

The Morristown Peace Vigil has been held by the Fountain on Morristown Green every Friday since the Friday after 9/11. All are welcome.
Kathy Kelly to Speak at NJPA Annual Dinner

The NJPA Annual Dinner Will be held from 12 noon to 4 pm at the Hilton Hasbrouck Heights, 650 Terrace Ave., Hasbrouck Heights, NJ. For tickets, visit our Web site (www.njpeaceaction.org) or call 973-259-1126.

Kathy Kelly is co-coordinator of Voices for Creative Nonviolence (www.vcnv.org), a campaign to end US military and economic warfare. During several trips to Afghanistan since 2010, Kathy Kelly has lived alongside ordinary Afghan people in a working-class neighborhood in Kabul. She and other Voices activists have been guests of the Afghan Peace Volunteers. They share in common a belief that “where you stand determines what you see.” Kelly and her companions insist that the US has not been waging a “humanitarian war” in Afghanistan and that the US should pay reparations for the suffering caused in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

Kelly has also protested drone warfare by holding demonstrations outside of remote operations bases in Nevada, upstate New York, Iowa, Missouri, Michigan, and Wisconsin. From January to April 2015, Kathy was imprisoned for attempting to deliver a loaf of bread and a letter about drone warfare to the commander of Whiteman Air Force Base.

From 1996 – 2003, Voices openly defied economic sanctions by bringing medicines to families in Iraq. Kathy and her companions lived in Baghdad throughout the 2003 “Shock and Awe” bombing. They also lived alongside people during warfare in Gaza, Lebanon, Bosnia and Nicaragua. She was sentenced to one year in federal prison for planting corn on nuclear missile silo sites (1988-89) and spent three months in prison, in 2004, for crossing the line at Fort Benning’s military training school. A war tax refuser, she has refused payment of all forms of federal income tax since 1980. 

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Quote From Kathy Kelly

Baghdad on March 19, 2003, “I suppose I’m more prepared than most of my companions for the grueling roar of warplanes, the thuds that threaten eardrums, the noise of antiaircraft and exploding ‘massive ordnance.’ Compared to average Iraqis my age, I’ve tasted only a small portion of war, but I’m not a complete stranger ... I feel passionately prepared to insist that war is never an answer. But nothing can prepare me or anyone else for what we could possibly say to the children who will suffer in the days and nights ahead. What can you say to a child who is traumatized, or maimed, or orphaned, or dying? Perhaps only the words we’ve murmured over and over at the bedsides of dying children in Iraqi hospitals. ‘I’m sorry. I’m so very sorry.’ ”

Some Writings by Kathy Kelly


Peace activist Kathy Kelly
**Peace Sites**

A Peace Site is the opposite of a military base. A Peace Site is a place where people come together to socialize, study, and work for peace. It can be a physical location, such as a school, a house of worship, or a library. Or it can be a virtual location, such as a website.

The idea for the Peace Site network was first proposed in the early 1980s by New Jersey Peace Action member Louis Kousin. The NJPA board approved the idea in June 1981.

To find a Peace Site, or establish your own, visit the Peace Sites page on the NJPA website. [https://njpeaceaction.org/peace-sites/](https://njpeaceaction.org/peace-sites/)

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**Federal Budget 101**

The National Priorities Project has published some materials to help people learn about the federal budget. This includes a Federal Budget 101 section that gives the basic information about where the money comes from, and where the money goes, and how budgeting decisions are made.

The National Priorities Project also provides educator toolkits, to help people understand issues such as campaign finance and the debate about Keynesian versus supply-side economics.

The website also features some tradeoffs, so you can see what we could buy instead of buying weapons and building a border wall.

The National Priorities Project also keeps a running counter that shows how much money is being spent on war. This counter has been embedded in a sidebar on the blog page of the New Jersey Peace Action web site. So far, Americans have spent more than $4,700,000,000,000 on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

[www.nationalpriorities.org/cost-of/war/](http://www.nationalpriorities.org/cost-of/war/)

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**Trump Seeks Cuts to Human Needs Funding to Fund Pentagon Hikes No One Needs**

In response to President Trump’s budget request for FY 2020, Paul Kawika Martin, Senior Director for Policy and Political Affairs at Peace Action, released the following statement:

“Fulfilling President Trump’s request for $750 billion in Pentagon spending would be an obscene misallocation of resources that would fail to make Americans safer. For every dollar spent on war, this budget spends less than a dime on preventing war with tools like diplomacy. The US spends more on its military than the next seven countries combined, but finishes 27th in the world in healthcare and education. Rather than seeking to remedy our nation’s lopsided spending priorities, Trump is doubling down, giving the Pentagon more than it asked for and paying for the increase with cuts to vital programs like education and health care.”

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**The People’s Budget: A Progressive Path Forward**

The Progressive Caucus in Congress has put forward a budget proposal called The People’s Budget: A Progressive Path Forward. The plan calls for higher taxes for billionaires and corporations. It would provide major investments in our own country: funding for repairing roads and bridges and railways, and support to education and healthcare. It would support wage growth, to provide opportunity for all.

Senate Votes to End US Support for War in Yemen

On March 13, the Senate passed S.J.Res. 7, which directs the president to withdraw U.S. support for the Saudi/UAE-led war in Yemen. The bill has now gone to the House.

Paul Kawika Martin of Peace Action noted, “This Senate vote moves us one step closer to ending US support for the catastrophic war in Yemen, a war that makes America complicit in the worst humanitarian crisis in the world.” Martin explained that Congressional authority over war was designed to avoid the type of situation that’s been unfolding in Yemen. “Unauthorized US military support began without public debate or scrutiny, and continues despite its deleterious impact on the people of Yemen and on US national security interests. The Senate’s vote to end the US role in Yemen is also a vote to re-democratize our nation’s foreign policy.”

Senator Booker and Senator Menendez voted in favor of this legislation.

“Congressional authority over war was designed to avoid the type of situation that’s been unfolding in Yemen”

Bill to Outlaw First-Strike Use of Nuclear Weapons Introduced in Senate

In January, Sen. Edward J Markey (D-Mass) introduced S. 200, Restricting First Use of Nuclear Weapons Act of 2019. This bill has been referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

The purpose of the bill is to outlaw a “first-use nuclear strike” by the US Armed Forces unless Congress has made a declaration of war that specifically authorizes such a strike. A first-use nuclear strike is defined as an attack using nuclear weapons against an enemy that has not launched a nuclear strike against the United States or an ally of the United States.

The bill notes that the Constitution gives Congress the sole power to declare war. A first-strike nuclear attack by the United States would be a major act of war. Thus, a first-strike nuclear attack without a declaration of war by Congress would violate the Constitution.

The bill has 13 cosponsors: Christopher Murphy (D-CT), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Bernard Sanders (I-VT), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Tina Smith (D-MN), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA).

Ask Senators Booker and Menendez to cosponsor S. 200.

The Government Accountability Office estimates that cleanup of nuclear waste will cost $377,000,000,000.
Check Out Our Website’s New Look!

Our [www.njpeaceaction.org](http://www.njpeaceaction.org) website has just had a makeover! Thanks to Laurie Endicott Thomas for doing the design work! The new website has a responsive design that is intended to look good on devices of any size, from your desktop computer to your smartphone. Best of all, this was done with a page building program that is easy to learn! We are currently looking for volunteers to help us keep the new website up to date. This can be a good opportunity for people who want to learn a useful new skill!

Of course, looks aren’t everything. We also need content, to help people in New Jersey keep up to date with developments in the peace movement. If you want to contribute, or if you want to learn how to build and maintain a website, contact us. You can send us an email through the website’s contact page, or call us at 973-259-1126.

Thanks also to Nat Bender for having provided free hosting of the website for so many years, and to Lev Pinsky for having built and maintained the previous site!