

U.S. LABOR AGAINST THE WAR



2009 Strategic Priorities and Objectives

We are at the start of a new and promising era in American political life. The election of Barack Obama marks a moment of possibility that our country will embark on a new course in which working people will realize our best hopes for the future – lives of dignity and economic security in a peaceful world. Moved by the promise of such a future, the labor movement devoted unprecedented resources to Obama’s campaign and helped to ensure his victory.

USLAW is proud to have helped build a powerful anti-war movement over the past almost six years that provided the ground in which the Obama campaign could take root. In 2009, we will continue our participation in the social process that has brought us to this moment. We must seize this opportunity to articulate labor’s aspirations and utilize its organizational capacity to advance our agenda of peace and economic justice in these promising new times.

We cannot move into that hopeful future by continuing the failed national policies and priorities of the past. In 2009, USLAW is committed to pursuing the following objectives, priorities, and organizational goals to help working people play the best possible role in creating the new future we so fervently desire.

POLITICAL OBJECTIVES

- ❖ Continue to challenge all funding appropriations, except for the safe return of all troops, their care upon return, and reparations and reconstruction in Iraq. Redirect spending to serve human needs and to promote peace and justice at home and abroad.
- ❖ Strengthen activity in opposition to the war and occupation at every level of the labor movement, establishing the link between immediately ending the war, militarism, the economic crisis and meeting the needs of working people and society.
- ❖ Challenge the entire premise of the “War on Terror” which supposes that the most appropriate and effective response to terror is a military response and fails to recognize that war in fact breeds more terror when it is waged against civilian populations.
- ❖ Promote a foreign policy that rejects pre-emptive military action, pursues the resolution of disputes through diplomacy and the United Nations, rejects the role of the U.S. as either a global policeman or pre-eminent super-power, and instead promotes international cooperation, respect for national sovereignty and the rule of international law, and mutually supportive economic development that serves the interests of working people.
- ❖ Further develop USLAW solidarity with Iraqi unions and allied organizations; identify and open communications with labor organizations in Afghanistan and Iran.
- ❖ Expand education in the labor movement to expose the consequences for working people of a foreign policy that serves the interests of corporations and the military instead of the people.
- ❖ Oppose military action against and subversion in Iran and other countries.
- ❖ Oppose any escalation of the conflict in Afghanistan and military action in Pakistan and promote non-military solutions that rely primarily on diplomacy, economic development, and pursuit of terrorists as a criminal rather than military matter.
- ❖ Encourage labor movement solidarity with all working people, including Palestinians and Israelis seeking peaceful alternatives to occupation and terror.

FOCUS AND PRIORITIES

- **Labor Movement**
 - Develop model resolutions and encourage local unions, labor councils, state federations and other affiliates of the AFL-CIO to adopt them in preparation for the AFL-CIO Convention in 2009. Circulate similar resolutions within Change to Win affiliates and independent unions. These resolutions should make the connections outlined above, linking the need for a new U.S. foreign policy with the resolution of the economic crisis and with meeting the needs of working people.

- Develop and encourage member education that establishes the inherently contradictory relationship between meeting the needs of working people and their communities, (resolving) the economic crisis and current public policies that keep increasing government spending on the military, operating bases and installations around the world, and investing in military-related production and research of conventional and nuclear weapons systems.
 - Encourage collaborative action among local unions and labor councils with their community allies in opposition to the war, against local war profiteers and in favor of public spending on a sustainable human-needs oriented domestic agenda by holding forums, speak-outs and other public and union-based events geared to educating union members and their local communities about these issues.
 - Mobilize labor to end the “War at Home” – the assault on communities of color, on civil liberties, on labor and immigrant rights, including the right to organize, and the erosion of the economic welfare of working people.
- ***International Solidarity and Labor/Human Rights***
 - Build financial support for and participation in the International Labor Conference sponsored by the Iraqi labor movement. Work to get U.S. unions and federations to send delegates. Develop a post-conference educational campaign in the labor movement to publicize the results of the conference.
 - Connect the fight for labor law reform in the U.S. with the struggle for labor rights in Iraq as part of the global struggle for labor and human rights. Encourage international initiatives that build pressure on the Iraqi regime to respect labor rights and adopt a basic labor law based on the fundamental ILO Conventions.
 - Continue efforts to expose and prevent privatization of Iraqi oil and other public enterprises. Expose the role of the IMF and multinational corporations.
 - Explore the possibility and advisability of travel by U.S. trade unionists to Iraq as soon as conditions permit, and continue working with Iraqi labor organizations to facilitate visits by Iraqi labor leaders to the U.S.
 - Continue work of Mideast Peace Task Force to assemble and develop materials that facilitate a labor movement discussion on the crisis in Palestine/Israel and its resolution. Promote greater solidarity with all workers in the region. Work with other solidarity forces to bring Palestinian workers to the U.S. to meet with labor audiences.
 - Establish contact and communication with the Iranian and Afghan labor movements.
- ***Congressional Pressure and Legislation***
 - Continue to pressure Congress to defund the occupation and “war on terrorism,” compel the immediate withdrawal of all military forces and contractors, and close all foreign U.S. military bases, *including Guantanamo*. Press for the reversal of Bush era erosion of constitutional rights and liberties, and hold those responsible legally accountable.
 - Support shifting budget priorities and other measures that will make resources available to meet human needs, provide fully funded social and veterans services, rebuild the nation’s infrastructure and other essential projects and services, promote a green economy, and provide income and economic support for impacted workers and communities.
 - Lobby for a complete reappraisal and reorientation of U.S. foreign policy to be consistent with the political objectives stated above. With USLAW affiliates, other labor organizations and other movements, organize coordinated lobby days in support of USLAW’s political and legislative agenda.
- ***Build Opposition to Occupation and Militarism***
 - Continue to support and mobilize labor organizations, their members and families for major antiwar protest activities endorsed/supported by USLAW and by UFPJ, with which USLAW is affiliated.
 - Participate in coalitions and actions within the antiwar movement and across progressive and allied movements in furtherance of USLAW’s peace and solidarity objectives.
 - Continue to build USLAW’s working relationship with organizations of veterans and military families and continue building a network of union members who are vets or in military families.

BUILD AND SUPPORT USLAW

- Engage more affiliates in a campaign to recruit new affiliates to USLAW in their national unions and local labor movements.
 - Publicize and promote affiliation through literature tables, workshops and presentations at union conventions and other organized gatherings.
 - Encourage all affiliates to obtain a USLAW banner for marches, rallies and other public events.
- Engage more affiliates in a campaign to sign their members up as associate members of USLAW.
 - Get more affiliates to promote USLAW on their websites and in their publications, and to identify their affiliation with USLAW.
 - Get more affiliates to purchase and distribute USLAW buttons, stickers and DVDs.
 - Expand members' exposure to USLAW through articles in newsletters, display ads in union publications, links on websites, reports to members on USLAW activities, discussion at union meetings and events, and circulation of USLAW literature.
- Increase levels of financial support by affiliates through affiliation fees, fundraising activities, and direct appeals to their members for contributions and monthly sustainers to and membership in USLAW. Put more emphasis on securing recurring monthly or quarterly contributions from members.
- Identify and pursue other funding sources, such as foundation and family fund grants, and solicit labor movement providers and professionals to contribute to USLAW. Establish a sub-committee or task force of the Steering Committee for this purpose.
- Regularize communication to USLAW affiliates, the labor press and other media about USLAW's efforts, activities and objectives, and provide model articles for use within the labor movement.

