

OCTOBER 3 MEETING SUMMARY

Across our communities and our organizations, the cry to end the wars, cut military spending and fund our needs is growing fast. On Sunday October 3, some 32 peace and racial/economic justice organizations met in Washington, DC to see if that work could be coordinated across the country. We will post photos from the meeting and a 13-minute video soon.

The meeting's overarching purpose was to build cross-movement, cross-community alliances and shift national priorities from the Pentagon to our communities. The meeting brought together over 40 individuals from peace organizations, economic and racial justice networks, research and data organizations, lobbying groups, national coalitions and local projects.

We reviewed the context for our work and agreed, broadly, that

- We are facing a double or triple crisis – war, economy, and environment. And the Pentagon and war spending are eating up the money we need to resolve the other two crises.
- Neither the peace movement nor the racial/economic justice movements can resolve these crises alone. Our agendas overlap. We need to work together.
- At the same time, US elites have no solution to the jobs crisis or the local-state-federal budget crisis. That makes this a moment of opportunity – to develop a vision of what a sustainable peace economy might be and to move money from the Pentagon to our communities and communities around the world to meet vital human and social needs.
- This will take time... to establish trust and mutual understanding, to build coalitions and working relationships that cut across movements, and to connect policy organizations with grassroots organizations.
- We will constantly need to build grassroots organization which has staying power, we need to focus on the grassroots, and we'll also need regional and national collaboration.
- We have a lot of the strength we need already, and there are more organizations that want to help make this happen.

The meeting was even more successful than its organizers hoped. We didn't aim to create a single national campaign. We focused on supporting the local and state campaigns that have begun or are being contemplated all across the country. Four working groups will pool the diverse contributions that our organizations can make and use them to support organizing with:

- Messages and themes that carry our long-term vision of real security based on prosperity and peace.
- Common targets, actions, and campaigns.
- Resource materials for organizing.
- Strategies for building lasting organization on the ground.

The objective is to identify and encourage areas for collaboration, coordination and cooperation that combine our individual efforts to create greater impact and influence.

We need to develop a realistic understanding of how to make the transition from an economy anchored in the military-industrial-security complex to one that promotes peace, international development, sustainable production and economic stability and security. This will require that we develop practical proposals that address the concerns and interests of millions of people whose livelihoods now depend on perpetuating the military economy and engage affected communities in constructively participating in that process.

We need all the help you can give. If you can help envision what a peace economy will look like, create effective messages or communications strategies, identify targets and actions that will help build local organization, create basic materials, anchor a website, perform research, develop policy proposals, lobby Congress or put your grassroots organizing experience to work, contact Mike Prokosch at 617-282-3783 or mikeprokosch@verizon.net.

Over the next month we will get the working groups going and invite more organizations to join this long-term initiative. We will hold a conference call in November, possibly continue monthly calls, and organize a face-to-face meeting next spring. The group that planned Sunday's meeting agreed to keep coordinating for now and draw others into that process.

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The following organizations were represented at the October 3 meeting:

1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East/MA
American Friends Services Committee
Boston Coalition to Fund Our Communities-Cut Military Spending 25%
Bring Our War \$ Home
Cities for Peace/Cities for Progress
Coalition for Human Needs
Code Pink
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Grassroots Global Justice
Historians Against the War/UFPJ
Institute for Policy Studies
Iraq Veterans Against the War
Labor/Community Strategy Center, GGJ
NETWORK – A Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Nodutdol for Korean Development (NYC)
Pax Christi
Peace Action
Peace Action Montgomery
POWER
Progressive Democrats of America
Sisters of Mercy
U.S. Labor Against the War
United for Justice with Peace 25% Taskforce
United for Justice with Peace
United for Peace & Justice (UFPJ)
United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America (UE)
USAction
U.S. Peace Council
War Resisters League
War Times
Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club
Western States Legal Foundation/Mayors for Peace
Win without War

These organizations were unable to send a representative but expressed interest in becoming involved:

Communications Workers of America (CWA)
Community Voices Heard, NYS
National Priorities Project
Sustainable Defense Task Force/Project on Defense Alternatives
United Auto Workers (UAW)
United Methodists - General Board on Church & Society
Women's Action for New Directions (WAND)