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[www.peaceactioncleveland.org](http://www.peaceactioncleveland.org)

Cleveland Peace Action

## The Peace Movement: Where We Are, Where We Need To Go

Francis Chiappa, PhD, president of Cleveland Peace Action

We're disappointed in President Obama. His military solution in Afghanistan is a bitter pill for peace activists who enthusiastically supported his candidacy. He pays lip service to non-military strategies to stabilize and democratize that long-suffering nation, but money talks. Military expenditures vastly outpace non-military investments, leaving no doubt about America's values and that we are still making war.

We are skeptical that the troop surge will work. But the general public seems disinterested and resigned, for now. Economic concerns have trumped all others. This has left us at a crossroads similar to the Clinton years. A centrist President had taken some steps toward peace. The public was no longer worried about war. The peace movement found its old issues and messages no longer resonating. It became harder to inspire people. Movement organizations shrank. Cleveland Peace Action shrank quickly, laying off all staff and entering semi-hibernation. It took Bush and Cheney and "endless war" to scare enough people, thereby inspiring and reviving us.

We shouldn't be surprised. The military-industrial complex didn't miss a beat, or a contract, during the Clinton era and they are doing just fine now, thank you very much. Military spending is seamlessly integrated into American life, inhabiting every state, almost all Congressional Districts, promising jobs and prosperity to all, from contractors and their employees to our men and women in uniform. With such pervasive influence, it isn't surprising that foreign policy discussions are dominated by military thinking and peace strategies are marginalized.

This is our America. The President can only do so much. As with health care or climate change, Presidential vision and leadership is checked by the status quo. My frustration with Obama is mild compared to my frustration with Congress. This is where money really talks. Military contractors, insurance and energy companies – corporate America owns Congress. In turn, the corporate media do not report this and the public tolerates the pablum that passes for news.

Where does this leave the peace movement? First we must speak to the main concern of most Americans – the economy. Cutting the military budget is essential if we mean to transform health care, fight global warming, develop alternative energy, rebuild infrastructure – the list goes on. We can no longer afford to spend over 40% of the world's total military spending and expect to solve our most urgent problems. I hope we can help Americans to understand this and to appreciate where their tax dollars are going. Tea-Baggers, we invite you to join forces and to protest the squandering of your hard-earned money by the military. Now if only we can get Fox News to sponsor us as we take to the streets.

This leads to the second thing which we, as a movement, must do if we hope to have more influence. We need to figure out how to speak across cultural divides. Preaching to the choir hasn't helped us. It's one thing to confidently voice our opinions, certain that we are right, but this doesn't lead to dialogue and mutual understanding. We have to be able to listen as well. True dialogue is a two-way street.

A good example of this is our work on Middle East peace. On December 14<sup>th</sup>, Cleveland Peace Action Education Fund, with the Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage, presented a panel discussion, "Jewish Perspectives on the Israeli-Palestinian Situation." Panelists represented a broad political spectrum. There were many disagreements but at the end of the evening consensus emerged on some key points. Most important was the sense that Israel must reflect on its own oppressive actions toward Palestinians and that both sides must consider what it will take, what compromises must be made, to move forward in the peace process. This conversation in Beachwood, Ohio was itself part of a process. It didn't produce ultimate solutions. But dialogues like this are necessary steps in a process that we hope will lead to reconciliation and peace in the Middle East.

We might think of our peacemaking in this way – we can promote dialogues that will ultimately change the way America thinks of war and peace and of how we spend our precious and limited tax dollars. Making war can never be a sustainable long-term solution.

## What about our Nuclear Weapons? More, Fewer, None?

*This article from National Peace Action discusses the debate concerning the role of US nuclear weapons. On one side are those in favor of pursuing the elimination of all nukes, starting with a test ban, then effective non-proliferation agreements, then reduction of current stockpiles. On the other side are those in favor of maintaining and modernizing the US nukes. This discussion is of special significance now, because the administration is expected to report on its intentions **this month** in its Nuclear Posture Review.*

NPR (also) stands for Nuclear Posture Review. The Obama administration is required by Congress to draw up a Nuclear Posture Review to outline U.S. nuclear weapons policy for the next five years. For months the Department of Defense has been leading efforts in the administration to finish the NPR by mid-January. The contents of the NPR should reflect President Obama's Nobel Prize-winning vision for a nuclear weapons-free future, and will show whether the Administration is ready to take concrete steps towards disarmament, turning impressive anti-nuke rhetoric into reality.

The NPR will specifically lay out the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. foreign policy, determine the size of our nuclear arsenal, and shape the role and size of the nuclear complex (research, production, and waste sites across the U.S.). The Bush Administration's Nuclear Posture Review was a disturbance internationally as it revealed U.S. plans to advance nuclear technology with the creation of smaller, more "usable" nuclear weapons to be potentially used against seven named foreign countries. The current NPR is expected to break with its predecessor, yet the Pentagon and the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) have been pushing for increased resources to the nuclear weapons complex for "modernization," which would enhance nuclear warhead production capabilities and further entrench the primacy of nuclear weapons in U.S. foreign policy.

Modernization may sound good on the surface, but delve a little deeper and it becomes clear that proposals are rooted in an addiction to capital intensive working projects. The NNSA has proposed the construction of new facilities to improve the "safety and reliability" of our current arsenal. This argument of necessity has been discredited by the most recent JASON Report, an independent scientific study, which finds no evidence for doubting our existing Life Extension Program's ability to ensure the safety and reliability of our nuclear arsenal. The NNSA has proposed the multi-billion dollar construction of facilities at sites in Los Alamos, New Mexico, Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and Kansas City, Missouri, that would, if built, quadruple our production capacity from the current twenty new nuclear warheads per year to eighty.

Obviously this would send the wrong message on disarmament and non-proliferation to the international community, namely that the US is pursuing enhanced capacity to build new nuclear weapons, directly contradicting Obama's rhetorical commitment to pursuing a nuclear weapons-free world. This so-called modernization will only ensure the reliability of nuclear weapons production, when what we really need is warhead dismantlement. The President has asked for options in the NPR, but as the review is being completed, those options are being heavily influenced by actors, such as NNSA and U.S. Strategic Command, who are pushing to expand the nuclear complex under the guise of "modernization." A bad NPR could contradict Obama's pursuit of a nuclear weapons-free world, hurt the US's credibility with the world community at the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference at the United Nations next May, and likely limit the president from taking unilateral actions to reduce nuclear dangers and move toward disarmament.

Now is the time for the U.S. to demonstrate its resolve toward nuclear disarmament with an NPR shaped by diplomatic considerations. There are several practical steps President Obama can take, including taking US nuclear weapons off high-alert status as a safety measure, or adopting a No First Use policy for our nuclear arsenal. Members of Congress, led by U.S. Senator Russ Feingold (D-WI), U.S. Rep. Edward Markey (D-MA) and U.S. Rep. Pete Stark (D-CA) have written to the president to encourage him to adopt such forward-leaning policies in the Nuclear Posture Review.

Adopting progressive new nuclear weapons policies in the NPR makes sense in our post-Cold War world (though this will likely be resisted by the Nuclear Priesthood in our weapons laboratories and relevant bureaucracies in the Defense and Energy Departments), but such moves are also likely necessary to convince the international community that the president is really serious about moving toward his vision of a Nuclear Weapons-Free world with actions, not just speeches. A modest new START agreement cutting the nuclear arsenals of the US and Russia, currently in the final stages of negotiations, would be good, but perhaps not sufficient, to satisfy non-nuclear states who have consistently pressed the nuclear states to make good on their end of the NPT bargain by moving toward global nuclear disarmament.

Without serious US leadership toward disarmament, the international non-proliferation regime teeters and could collapse. An international campaign is emerging calling on Obama and other leaders of nuclear states to begin negotiations on a treaty to abolish nuclear weapons worldwide (hopefully by the year 2020, the 75th anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings) at or before the NPT Review Conference. Such negotiations would likely take years, which is why, if we are serious, they should start as soon as possible, rather than waiting for a series of incremental arms reduction treaties to be completed before beginning discussions of the ultimate goal of eliminating the scourge of nuclear weapons from the face of the Earth.

With only a month left before the NPR is expected to be complete, it is critical for the pro-peace and disarmament majority in the public to make our voices heard and influence the outcome of the NPR process. Admittedly, the NPR is a low-profile, arcane process, but it is very important in setting the parameters of US nuclear weapons policy, and commitment to transparency and public engagement is a guiding principle of the Obama presidency. Contact your Senators and Representatives today and request that they send letters to the President recommending an NPR that reflects Obama's vision of a nuclear weapon-free future by taking concrete steps to dismantle our stockpile and reduce the role of nuclear weapons in national and global security policy.

*Lisa Putkey is the Scoville Peace Fellow at the Peace Action Education Fund. Kevin Martin is the Executive Director of [Peace Action](#) and the Peace Action Education Fund, Published on Thursday, December 17, 2009 by [CommonDreams.org](#)*

## US Responsibilities in Iraq: National Peace Action's Letter to the President

*Peace Action has joined thirty other groups in urging President Obama to make sure that the millions of Iraqi citizens, whose lives have been torn apart these past six years, are not abandoned. Here is the introduction to their letter.*

December 22, 2009

Dear President Obama,

At this critical juncture when the United States military is withdrawing from Iraq, we urge you to continue non-military support of Iraqis. Lasting success in Iraq depends upon strengthening Iraqi civil society, addressing the refugee crisis, and providing meaningful development. We must ensure that ending the U.S. military operations does not lead to ending the U.S. humanitarian and development assistance

We commend you on your campaign pledge to support the millions of displaced Iraqis, and we ask you to fulfill these promises by choosing a strategy that creates the right conditions for Iraqis to return home. Formulating and implementing such a strategy requires adequate budget allocations for FY11.

This letter addresses the displaced Iraqis crisis and considers it a priority, but we also urge the U.S. government to also consider the millions of other non-displaced Iraqis who are in dire need of assistance and protection. Humanitarian aid for non-displaced Iraqis may be delivered through enhancing the existing programs and projects run by the Iraqi government, and by expanding international and non-governmental programs inside Iraq.

*The letter goes on to outline a strategic plan and the necessary FY11 budget to "help the Iraqi people and their government transition into 2012." You can read the letter and see the list of supporting organizations on our web site: [www.peaceactioncleveland.org](http://www.peaceactioncleveland.org)*

Cut off sign-up form below and mail in with your donation .

### I want to be a Peace Action Member/Supporter!

Peace Action is a true national grassroots movement. A donation in any amount qualifies you as a Member/Supporter of Cleveland Peace Action and National Peace Action for the calendar year.

Recommended donation levels: Patron \$100+ • Family \$50 • Individual \$40 • Student \$20 • Limited Income \$10 • Other \$ \_\_\_\_ •



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#### DONATION OPTIONS

- Pay by check**—Make checks payable to "Cleveland Peace Action" or to be tax-deductible, to "Cleveland Peace Action Education Fund"
- Donate via credit card at Cleveland Peace Action's secure website:**  
[www.peaceactioncleveland.org](http://www.peaceactioncleveland.org)

Please complete the signup form, enclose with your check, and mail to: **TREASURER**, Cleveland Peace Action, 10916 Magnolia Drive, Cleveland, Ohio 44106

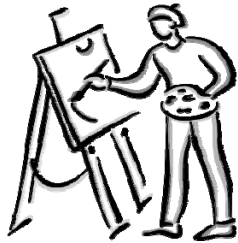
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 Secretary — Bill Fickinger  
 Treasurer — Dena Magoulias

**Cleveland Peace Action Education Fund**  
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 Vice-President — David Berenson  
 Secretary — Craig Gordon  
 Treasurer — Dena Magoulias  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 Volunteer Coordinator — Elizzabeth Schiros  
 Newsletter — Bill Fickinger

**Mark your calendar:**  
**CPA 2010 Annual Membership Meeting**  
 will be at  
 Trinity Cathedral  
 Tuesday February 16th.  
 Pot-luck supper at 6:30  
 (bring a dish to share)  
 Invited Speaker at 7:30  
 (watch website and email for details)

**Reminder: CPA and PAND have joined forces to sponsor an Art Contest for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Students**

Students will compare points of view on nuclear arms issues, choose which they believe would work best for the future, visualize how the world would look under this policy, and depict it through their art. The contest will run through the **2010 Spring semester**. Check for more information about this competition on the CPA website.



**Volunteer Corner**

**Fundraising** The economy has taken a toll on non-profits. Cleveland Peace Action is trying to take a positive, proactive approach to fundraising. We need a few people who could come up with creative ideas for long and short term fundraising, and could help to implement them. We also need someone who could help us set realistic, long-term funding goals and assist us in creating a plan to insure that we meet them.



**Publicity** How are your writing skills? Have you ever written a press release or worked with the media? Would you be willing to use your skills to help us generate media for our events and activities?

**Events** The 2010 Cleveland Peace Action Annual Meeting will be on February 16th. We need help that evening setting tables, making coffee and generally preparing for the meal and the meeting. If you can come 30 to 45 minutes early to help it would be greatly appreciated.



We also regularly need people to be at the sign-in table for our events. You would be needed 45 minutes prior to the beginning of the event to help people sign in and to get information about Peace Action. Call Elizzabeth at 216.231.4245 for more information.

**Shop for Peace**

On the second Tuesday of each month you can benefit **Cleveland Peace Action, Women Speak Out for Peace & Justice, and the InterReligious Task Force**, simply by doing something we all have to do: **Grocery Shopping!**

**The Cleveland Food Coop** will generously donate a portion of your total to the three organizations.

All you need to do is mention one of the organizations to the cashier when you check out.



The Food Co-op is located at 11702 Euclid Avenue in Cleveland, a block from the Rapid

Station. Their hours are Monday - Saturday 9am-8pm & Sunday 10am-6pm. Call the Co-op at (216) 791-3890 or [www.clevelandfoodcoop.org](http://www.clevelandfoodcoop.org) for more information on the wonderful things the Food Co-op has to offer.

## Cleveland Peace Action on the Israel Palestine Debacle: Trying to Remain Objective

David Berenson - co-chair Middle East Peace Committee

As 2009 ended, our Middle East Peace program concluded with a “bang”. The three-part series held at Beachwood Library in October, November and December was the latest result of efforts made by our Middle East Peace committee since its formation in 2006. October’s program featured the showing of a fairly short (35 minutes) film, “Searching for Peace in the Middle East”, followed by a facilitated dialogue by Alan Federman and Ramez Islambouli. November’s program was an illustrated presentation by the committee co-chair Doug Kerr and his wife, Mary Ann. It was entitled: “Grassroots for Peace in a Land of Conflict”. This included a concise but thorough history of the region, followed by reports on Doug’s experiences as he grew up in Lebanon, and on the couple’s two recent visits to the Middle East with groups such as Churches for Middle East Peace and Interfaith Peace Builders.

The latest program in our series took place in December, featuring a panel of differing Jewish perspectives on the current situation. The presenters explored the U.S. role in seeking an eventual peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian situation. After several months of planning, our committee succeeded in assembling a very impressive group of presenters, with recently-retired *Cleveland Jewish News* editor, Cynthia Dettelbach, as moderator. The four panelists, representing fairly wide-ranging viewpoints, included Michael Greenberg (Israeli-American), Marty Plax (faculty, Cleveland State University), Brian Amkraut (Provost of Siegal College), and Debra Hirshberg (Tikkun, Cleveland Chapter). Speaking to a packed house of over 110 people, some of whom had to stand, this impressive group of knowledgeable presenters answered questions prepared by the committee as well as posed by members of the audience. Discussing issues with one another, and occasionally disagreeing, they tried to clarify some of the more sticky issues of this war-torn region.



The program had the co-sponsorship of the Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage, in a partnership we hope to continue in future programming. We have been told that the idea of assembling an all-Jewish panel of diverse viewpoints is a rare accomplishment. The event was reported in the *Sun Press* (front page!) and the *Cleveland Jewish News*. Suggestions for future programs include having one with an all-Palestinian or all-Arab panel, in addition to our more usual configuration of diverse ethnicities, viewpoints and religious backgrounds.

Anyone interested in obtaining a copy of the December program, on either DVD or VHS, or in further information on the work of this very active committee, please contact David Berenson, at 216 321-9201. In our attempt to play a fair and even hand in presenting our programs on this very difficult and controversial topic, we regularly post provocative and informative articles on the CPA website. Look for this at [www.peaceactioncleveland.org](http://www.peaceactioncleveland.org).

### Another Perspective: What Do Palestinians Think?

Doug Kerr - co-chair Middle East Peace Committee

Presenting an extensive analysis of the Israel/Palestine situation, Brit Tzedek v'Shalom (Now called J-Street) has recently posted a very interesting interview with Amjad Atallah, co-director of the Middle East Task Force of the New America Foundation. The discussion addresses many Israeli or Jewish concerns on what Palestinians think about a future resolution of the conflict. This interview is posted on the Cleveland Peace Action web-site, [www.peaceactioncleveland.org](http://www.peaceactioncleveland.org).

## KUCINICH CALLS FOR US ARMED FORCES TO LEAVE AFGHANISTAN BY THIS APRIL

Representative Dennis Kucinich has initiated two resolutions to trigger debate and votes on a timely withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan and Pakistan. To be introduced in January, these are "privileged" resolutions which require debate within 15 days of introduction. At least a dozen House Congress-members, including two Republicans, are co-sponsors of the first resolution (H.Con.Res.1) directing the President to remove the U.S. armed forces from Afghanistan no later than April 2010.

In a press release, Rep. Kucinich is quoted as saying: "At a time when 15 million people are unemployed we cannot continue spending hundreds of billions of dollars on disastrous war. My resolution will force a debate and vote on the war in Afghanistan. Congress must reassert its constitutional authority to start and end wars... Yesterday, with the US Secretary of Defense at his side, the President of Afghanistan declared that his country's security forces will need financial and training assistance from the United States for the next 15-20 years. We cannot afford these wars. We cannot afford the loss of lives. We cannot afford the cost to taxpayers. We cannot afford to fail to exercise our constitutional right to end the wars.... Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States makes it Congress' responsibility to determine whether or not we go to war or stay at war. Consistent with Article 1, Section 8, these privileged resolutions will invoke the War Powers Act of 1973."

Please contact Representatives Betty Sutton, Marcia Fudge and Steve LaTourette and urge them to support these resolutions.

Congress listens to the Voters,

**IF**

enough of us speak out.

Whether it concerns the economy, the health system, or the challenges of Israel/Palestine, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan or Pakistan, please speak your mind!

### CONGRESSIONAL CONTACTS



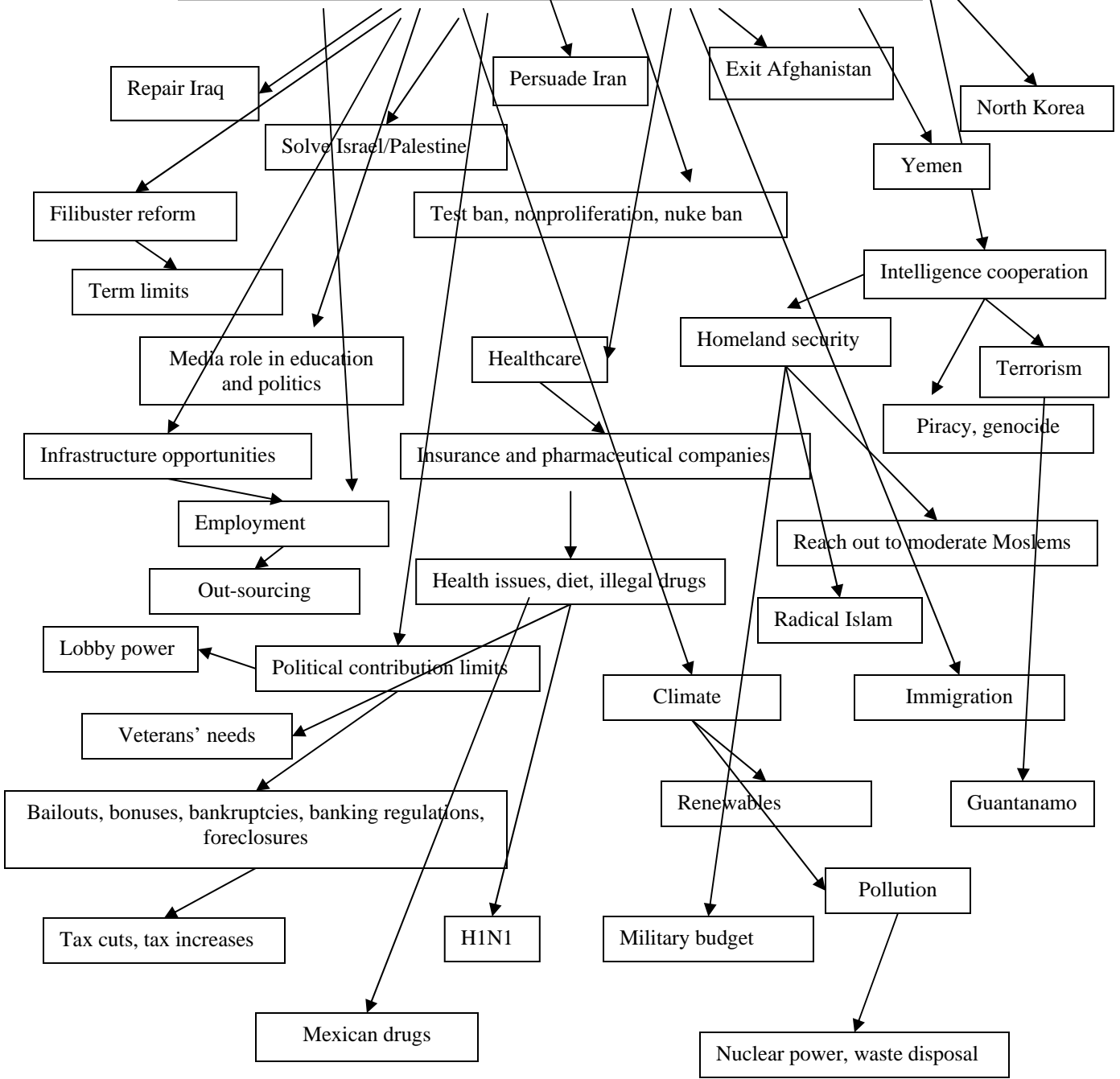
### MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD WHERE IT COUNTS

One easy number: **Congressional Switchboard** at 202-224-3121 (9-5 EDT)

- Sen. Sherrod Brown:** <http://brown.senate.gov/> 202-224-2315, 216-522-7272, 1301 E. 9th St., Suite 1710, Cleve. 44114
- Sen. George Voinovich:** <http://voinovich.senate.gov/> 202-224-3353, 216-522-7095, 1240 E. 9th St., Rm. 2955, Cleveland 44114
- Rep. Marcia Fudge:** Cong. Dist 11 <http://www.house.gov/fudge/> 202-225-7032 fax 202-224-5301, 216-522-4900, 4834 Richmond Rd., Suite 150, Warrensville Heights 44128
- Rep. Steve LaTourette:** Cong. Dist. 14 <http://www.house.gov/latourette/> 202-225-5731, 440-352-3939, 1 Victoria Place, Rm. 320, Painesville 44077
- Rep. Dennis Kucinich:** Cong. Dist. 10 <http://kucinich.house.gov/> 202-225-5871, 216-228-8850, 14400 Detroit Ave., Lakewood 44107
- Rep. Betty Sutton:** Cong. Dist.13 <http://sutton.house.gov/> 202-225-3401, 330-865-8450, 11655 West Market St., Rm. 435, Akron 44313; 440-245-5350
- Plain Dealer:** The Editor, The Plain Dealer, 1801 Superior Rd., Cleveland OH 44114  
[letters@plaind.com](mailto:letters@plaind.com)

To send **easy pre-written email messages** on key issues and legislation, go to [www.peace-action.org](http://www.peace-action.org), or to Friends Committee on National Legislation, [www.capwiz.com/fconl/home](http://www.capwiz.com/fconl/home)

# A day in the life of the American President



What would you add?  
Where would you start?

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*We have to work for it*

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