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## No Ban! No Wall! No War?

By Richard Moser  
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As I watched the corporate news on demonstrations against Trump's travel ban, I was struck by the fact that on-going wars in the Middle East were not mentioned. It was as if these refugees were fleeing Nazi Germany. No, they are fleeing the wars that we the American people have been waging against them for many years

It is a good thing to show compassion, declare our solidarity with Muslims, or to talk about our own immigrant histories, but we will fail to oppose Trump and make a real difference if we do not act against war and empire.

The corporate media avoids connecting our wars to Trump's ban because war and empire is a matter of agreement among the political elites, an elite that the corporate media is very much a part of. In a remarkable reversal of the Russian hacking story — which was broadcast constantly for weeks without evidence — the connection between war and refugees is patently obvious and glaringly absent. What are they trying to hide?

If a new anti-war movement emerged from the resistance to Trump it would have the potential to shake the entire system. So the Democrats try to focus as narrowly as they can on Trump's social and psychological pathologies while waiting to make up for their losses in the 2018 mid-term elections as the default party. The corporate media follows suit.

The anti-war movement of the Vietnam era was so powerful not just because of its compassion for others and moral condemnation of evil, but because it was a real political resistance movement that led people beyond the “liberal consensus.” The liberal consensus was a set of interlocking cultural norms and beliefs. Its basic assumption was that America was the supreme and exceptional leader of the free world. The passage beyond conventional ways of thinking and acting occurred because being anti-war demanded a deep criticism of the established order both liberal and conservative.

Remember that the Vietnam war was fought by liberals like John F. Kennedy. Kennedy’s war advisors became known as the “Best and the Brightest,” a high powered team of academic and industrial superstars that could, it turned out, calculate everything but understand nothing. Lyndon Baines Johnson escalated the conflict but was also the president that passed civil rights legislation on a scale that no other modern president has even dared. Liberal leaders like Hubert Humphrey and Edward Kennedy pursued the war as well.

Nixon won in 1968 largely because he ran to Humphrey’s left, as an anti-war candidate of sorts. He returned the war to conservative leadership but, it was a conservatism that would fit comfortably within the corporate wing of the today’s Democratic Party. Both Nixon and Hillary Clinton embraced Henry Kissinger who, seeking power like a missile seeks heat, has now gone over to Trump’s side.

It was the anti-war movement, against this basket of political icons, that crossed the threshold to a meaningful, principled opposition. Two examples will suffice to show just how deep it all went.

In April 1967 Martin Luther King rocked the civil rights movement and the nation with his first major speech opposing the war in Vietnam and linking war to racism and poverty. King crossed into revolutionary territory, stepped outside the liberal consensus, and became the leader of a movement for peace, racial equality and economic democracy. Let’s not forget that King was not a Democrat or a Republican. Leading up to the 1968 election, King supported dissenting candidates and even considered an independent run for president.

We must also recall the other truly revolutionary frontier crossed by American soldiers and veterans. In an unprecedented political movement, thousands of American soldiers and veterans opposed the very war they had fought in.

The leadership of the GI and Veteran anti-war movement were not reluctant draftees but rather gung-ho volunteers who were willing to risk life and limb to do the right thing. When the reality of combat in Vietnam dashed their high hopes they turned against war and empire. The military peace movement made history in ways no other peace movement could: soldier resistance slowed the war effort through direct action while the political resistance of the veterans challenged the symbolic and cultural foundations of the war.

The Iraq Veterans Against the War and the Veterans for Standing Rock continue this tradition. The Vietnam Veterans Against the War took the same smears and attacks Tulsi Gabbard does today for her courageous acts against war.

Endless wars have been fought by Republicans and Democrats to secure oil and produce huge profits for major corporations. No wonder the media is silent on just where all these refugees are coming from.

Nothing captures the deception better than Madeline Albright's claim that she will register as a Muslim given her bloody record of killing Muslims in Iraq. Albright agreed with New Mexican Bill Richardson, that "the price was worth it." That "price," according to former US Attorney General Ramsey Clark and other observers, was the devastation of Iraq including the deaths of up to 500,000 people.

For us protestors, maybe its that war has been normalized. We started this cycle of conflict in the Greater Middle East in 1978 when we organized the Mujahideen in Afghanistan — the same rebels that would later become Al Qaeda and fight alongside of the "moderate rebels" we currently fund in Syria. We started bombing Iraq as far back as the First Gulf War in 1990. For many Americans these wars have been fought for their entire lives.

Trump's war talk may or may not escalate beyond Obama's rush to expand US military operations in Eastern Europe and Africa and invest a trillion dollars into nuclear weapons. Trump is nonetheless challenging us to restart an anti-war movement that wages peace on many fronts: the Middle East, Iran, China, Mexico and the growing dangers of nuclear war.

Trump's reckless provocations can only be answered by the renewal of a peace movement large enough to disrupt business as usual; by a peace movement that looks to soldiers and veterans for leadership; by a peace movement that understands, as Dr. King did, the deep connections between racism, war, economic exploitation, and now we must add, climate change.

Trump's war plans, climate denial and support for big oil are a dangerous formula as it becomes increasingly clear that war and climate change are intimately connected. We will fail to oppose Trump and everything he stands for if we do not oppose war and empire.