

## *A New Year's Message from IAC founder Ramsey Clark*

*Dear friends,*

We are at a crucial historic juncture.

We cannot sit back and expect that change will just happen now. In order to make real change, people must be mobilized and organized. Otherwise, all of the hopes for a new direction can be quickly diverted.

The International Action Center (IAC) is unique. Its role is recognized worldwide and here in the U.S. This is because the IAC provides—for activists and political movements—a bold, independent voice that is so needed today.

Flouting the mandate of the people of the U.S. who want the troops withdrawn and this horrific war ended, the U.S. government has just imposed a new "Status of Forces" Agreement on Iraq which would keep tens of thousands of U.S. troops and mercenaries there for the next three years (at the cost of \$12 billion a month)!

While the entire Bush program has been repudiated, the atrocities and illegal imprisonment continue at Guantanamo. U.S. missiles rain down on villages in Pakistan, killing civilians, and they, together with NATO weapons, increasingly hit children, women and men in Afghanistan—where tens of thousands of U.S. troops could likely be sent. Bellicosity continues towards Iran and other nations in the Middle East. NATO is expanding which raises the danger of new confrontations with Russia in Georgia, the Ukraine, the Balkans, Eastern Europe and elsewhere.

The military budget continues to grow at a gargantuan rate, far surpassing that of any in U.S. history, diverting massive funds and depriving millions here of needed health care, housing, and education, while infrastructures deteriorate, and thousands hard-hit by hurricane disasters have been abandoned by the government.

The spiraling economic meltdown means millions of people are losing their jobs and homes while states implement massive and harsh cutbacks in vital social programs. Yet trillions of dollars in "bailouts" are handed over to the banks, insurance companies and other financial institutions of wealth.

But there is reason for hope—there is opposition to the wars abroad, to the violations of civil liberties and basic rights abroad and at home, including the terrible witch hunt on immigrants, and to the sweeping economic attacks on poor and working people as the policy-driven greater concentration of wealth and growth of poverty intensifies. And millions of people feel hope because of the historic election of an African-American man.

**It is critical that organizing grows on every front. In order to make real change, it takes mobilizing and strong, independent and decisive actions.**

**The International Action Center (IAC) is well-situated and long-experienced to be a major organizing force in this period.** The IAC has been a consistent, determined and independent voice and major mobilizing center against U.S. wars, sanctions and military interventions for 17 years, since the first Gulf War. This principled organization of activists has courageously held protests, meetings and forums across the country, opposing U.S. aggression against Iraq, Iran, Cuba, Haiti, Venezuela, Palestine, Somalia, Pakistan, Lebanon, Sudan, Bolivia, Panama and Korea.

IAC organizers have produced many books—translated into several languages—for the public, scholars, and anti-war protesters here and worldwide, while providing a center and resources for a new generation of activists. The People's Video Network has produced many politically-educational videos, while building an alternative media network.

The IAC has taken on struggles against racism, bigotry, injustice and more—from standing with Hurricanes Katrina and Rita survivors in their still unmet quest for justice, to supporting immigrants' rights, opposing the death penalty and challenging military recruitment.

And now, in this crucial time of economic crisis and hardship, the IAC, which is fiercely committed to a Peoples' Agenda, has helped launch and organize campaigns against home foreclosures and evictions, utility shut-offs, mass transit rate increases, and for healthcare.

The IAC looks forward to a new year of struggle against war and political, social and economic injustice!

Our New Year's Resolution for 2009 must be to organize together tirelessly to end the occupation of Iraq, to stop a new war against Iran or any nation, and to stop incessant provocations against Islam, Venezuela, Russia, Bolivia, Cuba and others. We must work to promote international friendship and respect for humankind and to oppose the policies of domination, globalization and war.

We invite you to join in the new year of activism with the IAC and to support its vital work.

*You can make a difference!*