

December 2009

A New Year's Message from IAC founder Ramsey Clark

Dear friends,

Many of us relearned something obvious over the past year: elections offer only an opportunity to avoid tragedy, further exploitation and, at best, stagnation with a bad outcome or with a good outcome, a better chance for peace, the end of militarism, progress toward economic and social justice and a world of cooperation, not competition. Most often, our two-party national elections offer a slight difference, if any, on critical issues.

2008 broke the race barrier—a great victory for equality, only to be quickly subdued by the dominant powers in the United States—personal and corporate wealth, the plutocracy and its vast military apparatus which consumes more than half the federal budget and exceeds military expenditures of all other countries combined.

At this critical time in world history, we dare not let the plutocracy prevail, with its control of the media, the Congress, government bureaucracies, and its sophisticated use of misinformation and fear.

Real change takes more—the right priorities, constant vigilance, effective organizing, mass mobilization and unrelenting perseverance. **This is the International Action's Center's role; it is known nationally and worldwide.** IAC stands in solidarity with all harmed by imperialist aggression. Its bold, independent voice does not waver, compromise or concede.

In January, during Israel's assault on Gaza, the IAC helped motivate people to protest nationally in solidarity with the Palestinians. IAC spread a petition worldwide; it called for ending the slaughter and lifting the blockade of Gaza. More than 500,000 messages were sent. In July, the IAC joined Viva Palestina—an aid caravan organized by British MP George Galloway, Ron Kovic, Cynthia McKinney and Charles Barron—to deliver desperately needed aid to Gaza, as the IAC did in Iraq from 1991 to 2003. Its significance rang loud and clear in Gaza, where solidarity was greatly needed and appreciated.

Last summer, the dangerous refrain of “weapons of mass destruction” was heard again—this time aimed at Iran. The IAC worked hard to turn the tide and talk common sense, helping to blunt the government's pro-war propaganda, at least temporarily. This vital work set the stage for now, when the vitriol against Iran has begun again. Vigilance and ever-greater mobilization will be critical.

IAC recently sent a fact-finding delegation to Honduras, where the U.S. stood by while generals trained at the School of the Americas joined oligarchs in a coup. The importance of continuing vigilance and mass mobilization cannot be overstated here. The Honduran resisters have said, “They fear us because we are fearless.” They are confident because they have strong and well-informed supporters, including those who depend on the IAC for the truth and act accordingly.

The great progress in Latin America—Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Ecuador—following in the footsteps of incomparable Cuba, with Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay moving to break the chains of the nearly two-century stranglehold of the Monroe Doctrine are at work in Honduras. The tide must not turn!

Here, in the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, a crime no less of concentrated wealth, the IAC helped to forge a Bail Out the People Movement. Together we have conducted a steady, systematic organizing effort, with a march on Wall Street, People's Summits in New York and

Detroit to counter the big business planners in Detroit and the “G-20” in Pittsburgh. The next step is **a national campaign for jobs**, like the campaign that won the Works Progress Administration and Civilian Conservation Corps 75 years ago. There is no way of knowing for sure where the struggle will lead. Around the world and here at home, the dangers are immense. U.S. drone missiles rain down on Pakistani villages, killing civilians, as U.S. and NATO missiles increasingly destroy children, women and men in Afghanistan—where tens of thousands more U.S. troops are being sent.

The military budget is growing at a gargantuan rate—the highest in U.S. history—diverting massive funds and depriving millions here of health care, housing, and education, as infrastructures deteriorate. The U.S. will remain the greatest threat to world peace until we force a greater than 50 percent cut in this funding.

The spiraling economic meltdown means millions of people have lost their jobs and homes in the face of massive cutbacks in vital social programs—with no end in sight—and more power in the plutocracy when it’s over. Yet trillions of dollars in “bailouts” are given to financial institutions, whose executives reward themselves with huge bonuses.

However, there is reason for hope. There is growing opposition to the wars abroad, to the crushing economic situation, and to the witch-hunts against immigrants especially Latinos, Arabs and Muslims,

Our communications capacity and organizing must grow on every front. Real change depends on an informed people, effective mobilizing and strong, independent and decisive actions.

The IAC is well situated and long-experienced as a key organizing force to play a major role in this period. The IAC has been a principled, consistent, determined independent voice and mobilizer against U.S. wars, sanctions and military interventions for 18 years, since the first Gulf War. This organization of activists has courageously led protests, meetings and forums across the country, opposing U.S. aggression against Iraq, Iran, Cuba, Haiti, Venezuela, Palestine, Somalia, Pakistan, Lebanon, Sudan, Honduras, Bolivia, Panama and Korea.

IAC organizers have produced essential 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 political action and educational videos, while building an alternative media network.

The IAC has vigorously engaged in struggles against racism, bigotry, and injustice—from standing with Hurricane Katrina and Rita survivors in their still unmet quest for justice, to supporting immigrants’ rights, opposing the death penalty, and challenging military recruitment, war crimes and crimes against humanity. We must never abandon the difficult struggles that require unrelenting solidarity and support. More is required of us as mosques are seized here, secret detentions and torture continue, imams are arrested, an imam is murdered in Detroit, and the heroic civil rights lawyer Lynne Stewart is imprisoned with a poisonous appellate court opinion, after a two-year delay.

Today, in this crucial time of expanding U.S. wars abroad, and economic crisis at home, the IAC, fiercely committed to a **Peoples’ Agenda**, has helped launch a national campaign for peace, calling for U.S. troops out of Afghanistan, Iraq, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Colombia—and elsewhere—while calling for jobs, healthcare and housing.

The IAC looks forward to a new year of struggle against war and political, social and economic injustice! We need your strong support!

Our New Year’s Resolution for 2010 must be to organize together tirelessly to end U.S. occupations abroad, and to stop new wars and incessant provocations against Islam and countries worldwide. We must work to promote international friendship and respect for humankind and oppose the policies of domination, globalization and war.

We invite you to be with us every step of the way in the new year of activism with the IAC and to support its vital work.

Together we must help reverse the tide that threatens all of humanity.