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## **Statement of Brooklyn For Peace on Afghan War Escalation**

**Brooklyn For Peace is both saddened and angry at the decision by President Obama to send additional U.S. troops to Afghanistan, thereby escalating the war in that already-ravaged country.**

**We are saddened** because millions of Americans who voted for Barack Obama in November 2008 with the expectation that he would reverse the eight years of George Bush's disastrous foreign policies are now faced with the prospect of seven more years of excessive reliance on military power. They rightly expected from President Obama what was promised: more negotiation, more creative diplomacy and more humanitarian aid to solve international conflicts instead of the dead-end and failed policies of endless wars and military action.

**We are angry** because this escalation will result in thousands more American and Afghan casualties, more terrible destruction to a country that has already suffered devastating war for decades and the expenditure of many more billions of dollars tragically wasted on war that could be used instead to solve the urgent problems our country faces: mounting unemployment, housing foreclosures, school and transit cutbacks and lack of decent health care.

**We must say to the President:** "Is your memory so short that you've forgotten the lesson of the Vietnam War, which demonstrated that **a nation cannot have both guns and butter?** Lyndon Johnson's War On Poverty was drowned in the enormous sums of money wasted on that tragic and senseless war. Already your plans for urgently needed domestic expenditures have fallen victim to an outsized military budget. It is simply appalling that you are now planning to spend in excess of \$100 billion to conduct the war in Afghanistan in 2010."

**This is a war that cannot be won.** The sooner the Obama Administration recognizes this, the faster we can bring our troops home - safe and alive. Efforts by foreign powers to subdue and occupy Afghanistan have always failed. And it is no surprise that the United States is entering its ninth year of war in a deteriorating position.

**This is a war that will make our country more endangered, not safer,** as the President and the Pentagon generals claim. A large U.S. military force, operating in the small and poor villages of Afghanistan, will only lead to more death, more destruction, more refugees and more innocent victims of drone bombings and shelling. That will not "win the hearts and minds" of the population but, instead, will drive Afghans into the arms of the very foes the administration seeks to defeat. Further, by sending thousands more troops to prop up the unpopular and corrupt Karzai regime the US government is signaling its disdain for the sovereignty and democratic rights of the Afghan people.

**Instead of military escalation the President should declare a final end to the failed Bush policies of relying on war to solve international problems.** Funds should be switched from military operations in Afghanistan to the construction of public works: roads, hospitals, clinics and schools. This new emphasis on providing the people of Afghanistan with humanitarian aid will go much farther than military actions ever can in increasing good will and undermining the appeal of extremists who would harm us.



**The President should use his good office to convene an international conference of regional powers** including China, Russia, Iran, Pakistan and India to help stabilize Afghanistan and the region. The Afghan people and their various representatives must play a leading role in such a conference. The United Nations should also be called upon to play its proper role in securing peace among nations and in that troubled region ... peace that can be won only if military escalation and war are rejected as solutions to the conflict

**The members of Brooklyn For Peace pledge that we will continue to protest this misguided policy of the Obama administration.** We do not believe that war and occupation are the solution to the problem of international terrorism.

**We call upon the President to reverse this foolhardy plan to escalate the war in Afghanistan and seek an early end to US military operations there.**

**We applaud and congratulate those Brooklyn Congressional Representatives (Yvette Clarke, Jerrold Nadler, Edolphus Towns and Nydia Velazquez) who courageously voted against the 2010 Defense Appropriations bill** and who have pledged to oppose funding for an escalation of troops in Afghanistan. They have demonstrated the leadership we need to bring this war to an end and to make the world a safer place.

