

# DECLARATION OF PEACE

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## **Religious & Community Leaders Call for Nonviolent Civil Disobedience If Bush Persists in Iraq Fiasco**

### ***National Coalition Sets 30-day Deadline for Congressional Action on New Course in Iraq, Prompt Timetable for Exit***

**Announcement comes on the heels of Bush statement reaffirming continued U.S. presence in Iraq**

**Today, religious and community leaders from states as diverse as Ohio, New Mexico, Illinois and North Dakota, set a one-month clock ticking for Congress to legislate a new course on Iraq, including prompt withdrawal of US troops and support for an Iraqi-led peace process.**

**Current legislation addressing the goals of the Declaration of Peace coalition include H.R. 4232, the End the War in Iraq Act of 2005 introduced by Representative Jim McGovern (D-MA), H.ConRes. 348—Expressing the sense of Congress with respect to accomplishing the mission in Iraq introduced by Rep. Mike Thompson (D-CA) and its Senate companion resolution, S.Con.Res.93 introduced by Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA).**

The Declaration of Peace is a coalition of more than 250 groups, including the United Church of Christ (Justice and Witness Ministries), the Methodist Federation for Social Action, the Franciscan Sisters of Mary, Erie Benedictines for Peace, the Park Presidio Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, the Episcopal Peace Fellowship and Sisters of St. Francis. Iraq Veterans Against the War and Veterans for Peace, which represent men and women who served in Iraq and are calling for an end to the U.S. occupation, are also members. Through the coalition, new forces have joined with traditional peace groups such as United for Peace and Justice and the American Friends Service Committee to call for nonviolent civil disobedience if Congress fails to meet their Thursday, September 21 deadline.

The Declaration of Peace was created through discussions beginning last January between religious leaders and secular peace groups and draws almost half of its membership from religious organizations. The coalition believes that it is time for Congress to demand that the Bush Administration provide a comprehensive, concrete and rapid plan to end the war in Iraq, including a prompt timetable for withdrawal of troops, a peace process for security, reconstruction and reconciliation and the shifting of war funding to meet education, healthcare and employment needs (*full text of the goals of the Declaration of Peace below*).

The September 21 deadline was chosen because this date has been declared by the United Nations to be the International Day of Peace. If the 30-day deadline is not met, declaration signers will mobilize a

series of activities including marches, vigils and nonviolent acts of civil disobedience nationwide at Congressional district offices and in Washington, DC at the Capitol and White House.

Leading up to September 21, Declaration of Peace is focusing grassroots attention in-district to pressure Members of Congress to approve and implement a plan for peace upon their return to Washington in September.

“We have a moral duty as people of faith and citizens of conscience to not sit idly by as more American and Iraqi lives are lost. By setting a firm deadline and committing ourselves to action, we are putting our beliefs into practice,” said Father John Dear, Society of Jesus, a Catholic priest who ministers in New Mexico.

“The majority of Americans are against this war. The demand for peace is coming from Dubuque, Cleveland, Fargo and Oklahoma City, not only San Francisco, New York and Boston. The time for Congress to act is now,” said Dr. Ken Butigan, Declaration of Peace spokesperson and author of several books on religion and society.

### **Goals of the Declaration of Peace**

#### **Establishing and Completing a Comprehensive Plan to End the US War in Iraq**

The Declaration of Peace is a commitment to take nonviolent steps for a comprehensive, concrete and rapid end to the US war in Iraq, including:

- Withdrawal of US troops and all coalition forces
- Closure of US military bases
- Support for an Iraqi-led peace process, including a peace conference to shape a post-occupation transition and an international peacekeeping presence if mandated by this peace process
- Return of Iraqi control over its oil resources and the political and economic life of the nation
- Reparations and reconstruction to address the destruction caused by the US war and thirteen years of sanctions
- Establish a “peace dividend” for job creation, health care, education, housing, and other vital social needs
- Increased support for US veterans of the Iraq war, and
- No so-called “preventive” war against Iran or any other nation

This comprehensive plan must be established and activated no later than September 21, 2006, and completed no later than March 19, 2007, ending four years of war and occupation in Iraq. We will take every nonviolent step possible to meet this goal before these deadlines.

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

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