

Veterans For Peace: The Permanent War Is Killing Us, Time for Solidarity

By [Margaret Flowers](#)

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Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

I became a physician because I care about people's health. Specifically, I became a pediatrician because children are our future and I wanted to be part of the community that gives each child tools for a healthy, productive and fulfilling life.

Sadly, I discovered during my pediatric practice that the health environment in this country, unlike every other industrialized nation, is heavily corporatized and so places tremendous barriers to care. This makes high quality care difficult for physicians to provide and patients to receive. Now I advocate full-time for a national health program, Medicare for all, so that every person living in the United States will have access to the same standard of high quality medical care.

Each of us has an issue that we care deeply about. Each of us works in our own way to create change. We call our members of Congress, send emails, educate others about our issue, attend rallies and fundraisers. Yet despite this, the social wellbeing of our nation continues to deteriorate. Our resources are used to build bases and weapons of war while at home education, access to health care and jobs are declining and incarceration rates, homicide rates and stress levels are soaring.

Our current state of permanent war is killing us. There are the consequences of sending our people out to kill and the psychological harm which may lead to violence at home. There are the injuries from which many of our military members will never fully recover and the resulting costs to them and to their families, including bankruptcy and foreclosure from medical bills.

There is the squandering of our youth who, unable to afford college or to find a job, are lured by the promises of recruiters and see no other option but to join the military. Imagine if instead of spending one million dollars a year to send one soldier to Afghanistan we spent the money to provide twenty people with an education or jobs at home. Imagine if that person were employed not to kill but to create, to improve conditions at home.

I'm certain you could find many other ways that issues of peace and social and economic justice are interrelated. The point is that it is time to stand together in solidarity and to demand the social changes that we require. Those who are most affected are the ones with the greatest moral authority to speak out and we must stand behind them in their actions.

This is why I will stand behind the veterans on December 16th at the White House and will

join them in their action. They know the ravages of war. And they are laying the path that we must take of non-violent resistance, actions increasing in size and frequency.

All of the signs point to tougher times ahead, economically and also the consequences we will face because of our actions. History tells us that we can expect that as Power feels threatened, our civil liberties will be further stolen from us and some will be treated harshly and unjustly for speaking out such as Bradley Manning and Julian Assange are experiencing at present. The propaganda and attacks against those who dare to speak out will increase.

However, in these times, it is more important than ever that we do speak out. To be silent is to be complicit. We must not be complicit. We must stand together strongly on the side of justice so that one day justice will prevail.

Visit Veterans for Peace, <http://www.veteransforpeace.org>.

Margaret Flowers is a pediatrician from Baltimore who volunteers as Congressional Fellow for Physicians for a National Health Program and sits on the board of Healthcare-Now.

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