Fireside Chat: Creating Security for All Communities

Watch the recording here

Panelists: Fireside chat with Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis, Co-Founder, Poor People’s Campaign. Nancy Parrish, Executive Director, WAND led the discussion.

Problem: True freedom also means human security – freedom from poverty; freedom from famine and hunger; freedom from infectious disease; freedom from environmental degradation resource depletion, pollution, and natural disasters; freedom from domestic terrorism and violence; and freedom from political repression and human rights abuses. Since 1998, Congress has appropriated well over half of the discretionary budget to the Department of Defense, nuclear weapons programs, and war. The dollars that fund crucial investments in programs like Head Start, food safety, veterans’ benefits, environmental protection, repairing roads and bridges and much more have been cut over the years while funding for the Pentagon continues to increase. With more resources for domestic priorities we could fully fund these initiatives and create critical infrastructure for women and families such as affordable childcare and paid family leave. The ability to care for the least among us is critical – the goal of national security cannot be fully met without ensuring that the 372 million people living in the U.S. are secure in their home and health.

Based on the conversation, the following policy recommendations were suggested:

- **End or limit the DoD 1033 Program in your state/community.** Our local police departments have equipment they aren’t trained to use, and develop a mentality that they’re at war with the people of their town, all while the events occurring in the community would most often NOT be benefitted by the presence of military equipment.
- **Push Congress to cut the defense budget by 10%.** Don’t just talk about cutting the military budget, connect the money saved to social uplift programs that can be created or expanded instead.
- **Elevate the importance of human security.** Rhetoric around national security and freedom and liberty is contradictory to the meaning of human security. Framing things around human security and then defining what that looks like is essential. Before the outbreak of COVID-19, we had huge disparities present in poverty, homelessness, healthcare, and more. The pandemic has only exacerbated these disparities. Our goal should be turning away from war and supporting human needs.
- **Build relationships with peace and security organizations.** Individuals committed to peace and justice have been siloed off from other issues. We cannot address social, economic, and security topics separately - discussing peace includes police brutality, voting rights, healthcare, infrastructure, and more. We have an opportunity to show that these issues are interconnected.

Women Legislators’ Lobby
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• **Introduce or support resolutions supporting the Third Reconstruction.** US Representatives Barbara Lee (D-CA-13) and Pramila Jayapal (D-WA-07) introduced the “Third Reconstruction: Fully addressing poverty and low wages from the bottom up” in the House in May 2021. Similar resolutions at the state level will bolster efforts to address poverty, unemployment, expand health care, protect the right to vote, and address climate change.