

## Afghanistan: the crucial question for NATO



Afghans rally in Kabul, Afghanistan, on 30 December 2009, during a protest against the killings of 10 civilians allegedly by coalition forces in Kunar province. Photo: Cryptome.org

Without any doubt, geo-strategical and economic interests played and play an important role in the military intervention of NATO in Afghanistan. But there is much more at play in the Hindu Kush. From the point of view of the West, nothing less than the future of NATO will be decided there.

In the 1990s, NATO was transformed from a – at least on paper – defence alliance to a global intervention alliance. This process was mostly completed with the war against Yugoslavia and the decision on a new Strategic Concept in early 1999, which almost coincided. From then on NATO had to prove that it is not only willing, but also capable, of enforcing its members interests with violence far away from its original alliance territory – and not just at the periphery, such as on the Balkans.

For this, Afghanistan became – deliberately or not – the central theatre. Because such "stabilisation missions" will be the norm in the future, as the document "NATO 2020: Assured Security; Dynamic Engagement", published in May 2010, points out. The proposal for an actualisation of NATO's Strategic Concept, produced on behalf of NATO General Secretary Anders Fogh Rasmussen, explains: "In light of the complex and unpredictable security climate likely to prevail through the coming decade, it is not possible to rule out NATO's future participation in similar (although hopefully less extended) stabilisation missions."

But if NATO fails in Afghanistan, then NATO won't be able for a long time to go on

similar adventures, as German chancellor Angela Merkel stresses: "*I think I am able to say [...] that the stabilisation of Afghanistan is presently one of the major challenges of NATO and its member states. It is something like a litmus test for successful crisis management and for a NATO able to act.*" Robert Naumann, until 2007 US ambassador in Afghanistan, was even more open: "*NATO took on the fundamental commitment to win in Afghanistan. And either it will win, or it will fail as an organisation.*"

The war in Afghanistan takes place against the background of increasing conflicts with new emerging rivals (China, and to a lesser extent Russia), in which many see the outlines of a New Cold War. A defeat of NATO in Afghanistan would signify a weakening of NATO, which one cannot afford in view of these new rivalries, argues for example Kersten Kahl, president of the Federal Academy for Security Policy (Bundeskademie für Sicherheitspolitik), the training centre for the leadership of the German army: "*Whether we like it or not: linked to success or failure in the Hindu Kush are strong signals, which reach far beyond Afghanistan. [...] But there is more at stake. The Afghanistan mission [...] has turned into a serious test of the inner cohesion and with this also of the power of the North Atlantic Alliance. [...] Concretely, this means: if President Obama wants to bring the NATO mission in Afghanistan to a successful*

*continued on page 2*

### Editorial

In the run-up to the NATO summit in Lisbon, Portugal, on 19/20 November 2010, this issue of *The Broken Rifle* provides information and opinion on NATO, and on resisting NATO and the war in Afghanistan.

In his opening article, Tobias Pflüger highlights the central importance of Afghanistan for the future of NATO. While it certainly is important to resist against the war in Afghanistan just for what it is – a bloody war – this shows that the stakes for NATO are high, and our resistance to the war in Afghanistan, if we make the links to NATO, can also contribute to weaken and finally overcome NATO.

That NATO is in trouble is also one of the messages of Wilbert van der Zeijden's article on NATO new Strategic Concept, which will be passed in Lisbon. Due to quite some disagreements among NATO members it might be short, but that's probably about it. For us, to understand the cracks within NATO is important if we want to fight NATO.

Cynthia Cockburn looks at NATO from a feminist perspective, and shows that NATO fails to adhere to its stated objective of promoting and protecting women's rights – in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

A critical reflection on the movement against the war in Afghanistan and against NATO, and information on the activities against the NATO summit in Portugal, the European Antimilitarist Network and upcoming activities in Sweden in 2011 round up this issue of *The Broken Rifle*.

This issue provides the background to a call against NATO WRI will be launching in October, to give our activities against NATO some focus and framework. Please visit WRI's website for updates.

Enjoy reading – and act!

Andreas Speck

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# Come to Lisbon

## Protest against the NATO summit in Portugal

From 19 to 21 November the NATO summit will take place in Lisbon, with Obama, the best known of the leaders, present.

The stated objective of the summit is the adoption of a new Strategic Concept – the seventh this the foundation of NATO – and with it, the ratification of the actions of NATO in the last years, especially in Afghanistan and Somalia; the more precise definition of NATO's actions in the coming years, especially in relation to Iran; and to guarantee the cohesion of its member states under the strict obedience to the decisions of the Pentagon.

The instruments included in this new Strategic Concept are, among others, the growing militarisation of the member states of NATO; the strengthening of military power, in spite of the recession and the impoverishment of the people on both sides of the Atlantic; the banalisation of the use of war as a way to control resources – especially energy – and their transport routes; the contempt for public opinion, which defends peaceful means for the solution of international problems; a return to the nuclear threat; and the growing expansion of its area of interventions.

Never has the war effort undertaken by the governments of NATO countries proven to be so inadequate to the real military threats to these countries; but not

so surprising given the difficulties of the populations – unemployment, wage freeze, increased retirement age and reduced access to health and social support.

The Portuguese government has threatened all those who question NATO, its activities and its existence, as criminals and prepares a real stage of siege and the suspension of freedoms and safeguards that exist in democratic societies.

In this framework, a broad coalition of organisations not only of the NATO countries decided to converge in Lisbon during the NATO summit to express their protest in front of this house of warlords, despite the threat of the Portuguese government, which simply echoes the words of command from Washington and Brussels.

During the NATO summit the following will take place in Lisbon:

- a counter-summit, where dangers and disadvantages of NATO actions, and more, the danger inherent in the



During the visit of the NATO Military Committee to Afghanistan in October 2009. © liepkeplancke@hotmail.com  
avddfoto@mindef.nl

existence of NATO, will be exposed;

- A demonstration open to all who want to peacefully demonstrate the need for the abolition of NATO, and for a world without wars and military threats;
- Civil disobedience actions to promote the cause of peace and local awareness for the war policy conducted by NATO, particularly in Afghanistan.

All to Lisbon, to demand an end to NATO  
All to Lisbon, to demonstrate the rejection of militarism

All to Lisbon, to fight for the withdrawal of NATO from Afghanistan

All to Lisbon, to demand a world of peace and renunciation of States to resort to war.

*Continued from page 1*

end by putting a lot of effort by the USA behind it, then it is only sensible to support him with an appropriate contribution. If this did not happen, then we would not only

endanger the new US foreign policy, which we want so much, but we would also erode the relevance of the alliance. This we cannot afford when we view the changes in the global order of power, and future risks."

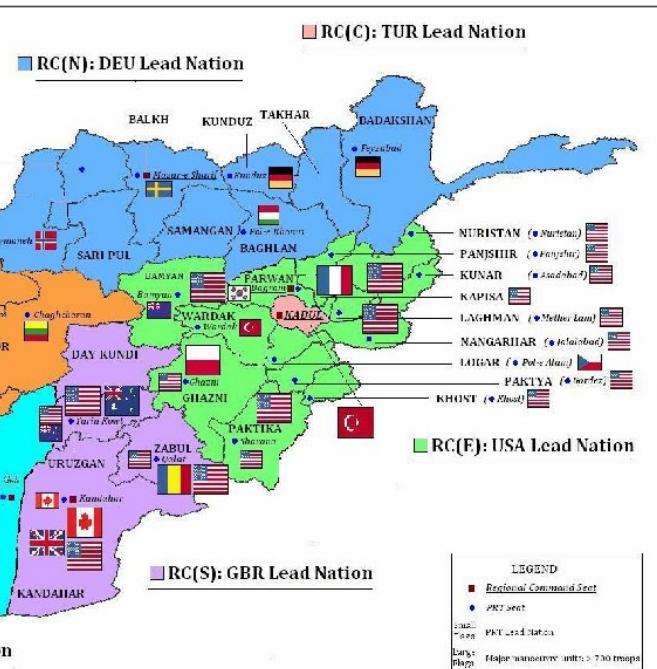
Also, the US Secret Services in their

sensational report "Global Trends 2025" from November 2008, predict – for the first time – not only a significant loss of power for the USA (and Europe), but also fierce conflicts with China and Russia. In this report there is a very illuminating sentence, which displays the great significance of the war in Afghanistan. The Secret Service report includes a fictitious letter to the NATO General Secretary by the Head of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which is partly seen as an anti-NATO military alliance of Russia, China, and some central Asian states, dated forward to the year 2015, which reads: "Fifteen to 20 years ago, I would never have imagined the SCO to be NATO's equal—if not [...] an even somewhat more important international organization. I think it is fair to say it began when you pulled out of Afghanistan without accomplishing your mission of pacifying the Taliban."

The Afghanistan mission is therefore not a "deplorable exception", it is an expression and litmus test of the ambition of the powers of the West to enforce their dominance, if necessary by force – and for this NATO is their instrument of choice. Not least for this reason the war has to be "won" – it's make or break – and it is of no significance what this means for the people of Afghanistan.

Tobias Pflüger

ISAF troops in Afghanistan. Source: NATO





# NATO's short and crisp Strategic Concept

At the 2009 Strasbourg-Kehl summit, NATO members agreed to produce a new Strategic Concept for the alliance. The Strategic Concept (SC) is usually the guiding policy document for NATO for the coming decade. In November, at the NATO summit in Lisbon, NATO countries hope to agree on a document that is "short and crisp". The main content will to a large extent repeat the 1999 SC, but it will be shorter overall. Insiders expect a document of 12 pages max. Unlike previous Concepts, this one is written to "sell" the vision of NATO to the populations of the member states, while at the same time it aims to get across the right message to non-NATO countries: that NATO is still a relevant, strong, unified, agile, 21st century multifunctional alliance,... but also a friendly and helpful neighbour.

Listening to NATO representatives of the different countries, much of the text will be agreed on by the 28 members without too much trouble. NATO Reform, Open Door Policy, Partnerships, Comprehensive Approach, reaffirmation of Article V, Cyber Defence, all those cause little debate, if any. At the same time though, the aim to make the document a public show of alliance unity means that several debates currently ongoing in NATO HQ will need to be resolved before Lisbon, or marginalised in the writing process. Here's a collection of contentious issues.

## Money

The main limitation faced by NATO, in all its current planning and strategising, is money, and a lack thereof. The recession already led to defence budget cuts in many of the member states,

and the effects of those cuts will be felt in Brussels too. Next to that, the protracted occupation of Afghanistan is starting to drain the enthusiasm in some capitals for plans that involve new expenses. As a result, the intent to first set the policy and then work out the budgets has evolved into a reality in which budget restraints increasingly determine the policies.

## Off Balance

Against that background, several discussions arise on priority-setting for the alliance. First and foremost, many countries indicate they want NATO to rethink the balance between "out-of-area" missions and the more old-school collective defence missions. Opinions on this topic are diverse. Some argue that there is no real difference between the two – when it comes to military strategising and planning. Afghanistan, they argue, is an out-of-area mission that started as a collective defence mission. Others argue that, in the end, the debate is not really about "less out-of-area", but about more visibility of collective defence, to reassure the Central and Eastern European allies. Yet others go so far as to say that there needs to be a real resetting of the balance, in favour of collective defence, and downscaling NATO's out-of-area objectives. For some countries, their participation in the Afghanistan mission has started to affect national defence planning and procurement. Ammunition used must be restocked. Materiel lost, damaged or used-up must be replaced. But also, some of the countries that have not participated in the occupation of Afghanistan argue for a stronger focus on NATO's original core task: the common defence of the treaty territory. By now, there



Polish troops during a patrol in Ghazni Province. Photo: ISAF Public Affairs

## War tax resistance: Inland Revenue threatens WRI

The Inland Revenue is threatening War Resisters' International with the seizure of assets because the pacifist organisation is withholding a proportion of income tax due to its conscientious objection to paying for war.

War Resisters' International has been withholding tax – usually about 7% of income tax, roughly the proportion of the military budget – since the tax year 2002/03. In its regular letters to the Inland Revenue, the organisation states:

*"We ... dispute that the debt ... constitutes a legal debt, as it is a result of a law which violates basic human rights, as implemented by the Human Rights Act."* In addition, the organisation refers to the tradition of civil disobedience, as practised by Henry David Thoreau, Mohandas K Gandhi, or Martin Luther King.

The present dispute is about outstanding taxes for the tax years 2007/08, 2008/09, and 2009/10. In its threatening letter to War Resisters' International, the Inland Revenue does not at all mention human rights aspects, and does not engage with the issues raised by War Resisters' International. The letter simply reads:

*"Our records show ... that you have failed to pay this tax on time. You must therefore pay the full amount due immediately ... If you fail to do so we will assume you are unwilling to comply and will take distract action which involves seizing your assets for sale at public auction."*

In its reply from 10 September, WRI writes: *"Again we want to stress that we would very much appreciate discussing this matter with one of your representatives, preferably outside court – and maybe in a public discussion? However, if this matter cannot be resolved outside a court, then we will be prepared to present our arguments in court."*

WRI stresses the human rights of its employees to conscientious objection to paying for war. We demand from the Inland Revenue to engage with our legal and moral arguments.



## No to War – No to NATO

Activist Conference,  
Lisbon, 16/17 October  
**2010**

The No to War – No to NATO Activist Conference will be embedded in the conference of the Portuguese organisation "CULTURA". The CULTURA conference will take place at ISCTE (Instituto Superior de Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa) of the University of Lisbon. The location of the Action Conference will be announced shortly. The following conference schedule is a combined schedule of the two events.

### Saturday, 16/10

10.00-13.00: Participating in the CULTURA Event against NATO

14.00-21.00: Start of the Activist Conference of the ICC/PAGAN

14.00-15.30: Overview Lecture: NATO and EU, Willy Meyer

Where We Stand – Where We Want to Go: Actions during the Counter Summit

Information and Discussion

16.00-20.00: Working Groups:

- Counter Summit Mobilisation (Tobias Pflüger, Vitor Lima)

- Civil Disobedience (Andreas Speck, NN Portugal)

- Media Work (Ricardo Robles, Arielle Denis, Kristine Karch)

- Square of Peace (NN Portugal)

### Sunday, 17/10

10.00-13.00: Participating in the CULTURA Event

13.00-16.00: Activist Conference

13.00-14.30: Information Meeting of the ICC: Where Do We Stand with the Preparation of Anti-Nato Actions

Introduction: Reiner Braun, Ricardo Robles

15.00-16.00: Reports and Decisions

prepared by Reiner Braun, Arielle Denis, NN CND, NN Portugal

16.30-18.30: Participation in the Final Event of the CULTURA Conference:

Beyond NATO, Francisco Louçã, Tarik Ali, Ignacio Ramonet, Gilbert Achcar

For further information about and to apply to participate in the Activist Conference, please contact us at:

Kongress@IALANA.de

seems to be little debate on the need to reemphasise collective defence as the core responsibility of NATO. The open question is to what extent that will result in a scaling down of the out-of-area capabilities and intentions of NATO, and how it all should be framed in the SC.

### Good Russian, bad Russian

A second hot topic is the relationship between NATO and Russia. This paper is too short to reflect the full range of views within NATO and all aspects of it. But while all allies are quick to proclaim that NATO "neither poses a military threat to Russia, nor considers Russia a military threat to the Alliance" [1], the interpretations of that pre-agreed line differ country by country. Some countries openly suggest a route that would eventually lead to Russian membership. On the other side of the spectrum are those that regard Russia as the biggest potential threat to NATO security. The likely outcome of that clash of visions is a middle way such as that proposed by the May 2010 Report of the Group of Experts, which suggests a "focus[...] on opportunities for pragmatic collaboration in pursuit of such shared interests" [2]. Short indeed; not so crisp

### Old glue

Another debate that is unlikely to be finished before November is the one on the new designs for NATO's extended deterrence. All agree that "As long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO should continue to maintain secure and reliable nuclear forces" [3]. The debate is on what those secure and reliable nuclear forces look like. More specifically, the debate is about the policy of nuclear sharing and the continued presence of US sub-strategic nuclear weapons on European territory. Most experts – and military planners – by now agree that this whole class of nukes is redundant, if not militarily useless. Of the five nations hosting the 200 or so US B61 nuclear freefall bombs, three have indicated they'd prefer to phase them out. That hasn't happened yet, because nuclear sharing has long been considered "the glue that holds the alliance together". Through nuclear sharing, European member states showed their willingness to share the moral responsibility and the financial burden of maintaining a Cold War deterrence posture. At the same time, nuclear sharing was regarded at the time as a reassurance by the US towards Europe of the indivisibility of the alliance. And it seems NATO has not yet managed to find another system of burden sharing that would similarly reassure the member states sufficiently – a new glue if you will, one that would at the same time serve a relevant military purpose.

To change NATO's nuclear policy a consensus decision is needed. Belgian, Dutch, German, Norwegian and Slovenian calls to rethink NATO's nuclear policy have been met with Baltic reluctance. Moreover, by discussing it as a (political) policy issue, instead of a (military) posture issue, France is included in the consensus decision making. And France is notoriously hard to convince of any change to existing nuclear policy. For Germany, and to a lesser extent for Belgium and the Netherlands, a "no change" in the status-quo will be hard to explain

back home. There is speculation that a compromise may be in the making that accommodates both sides to the debate. In one scenario, the B61 bombs would be relocated in one central location (probably Aviano, Italy). This way, NATO is still held together by the same old glue, while the domestic public relations problems of the Western European countries are solved.

### Missile Defence

A couple months ago, NATO HQ launched the plan for Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defence [4]. A rather cryptic, if not internally contradictory name. The first word seems to be added to convince us that, really, this time it works! It seemed for a while that getting consensus on the plan would be a no-brainer. But in talking to the national delegations at NATO, it turns out that several are reluctant to accept the system at face value. Doubts about the technical feasibility of the proposed system prevail, and some – France most notably – are reluctant to get caught up in an "open-ended funding programme". And then there's the issue of the involvement of Russia in these plans. Not to antagonise Russia, the plan invited Russia to join efforts to create a joined NATO-Russian Missile Defence system. But the level of Russian participation is a cause for concern for many NATO member states. So, for the moment, the future of missile defence is undecided.

### In chambers

In the past, NATO Strategic Concepts were presented as cornerstone documents laying out the parameters for policy decisions for years to come. In contrast, the new NATO SC is to be a document of more limited scope, aiming to present to the public a likeable and reliable alliance. The desire to stress the unity in the alliance pushes NATO to exclude those subject on which the debate is still ongoing. Such a strategy would make the text even shorter of course, but also less durable. If it turns out only the surface is "crisp" it may not be too brittle to hide rising tensions underneath.

Wilbert van der Zeijden

### Notes

- [1] NATO 2020 – Assured Security, Dynamic Engagement, Group of Experts, May 17, 2010, p. 10
- [2] NATO 2020 – Assured Security, Dynamic Engagement, Group of Experts, May 17, 2010, p. 10
- [3] NATO 2020 – Assured Security, Dynamic Engagement, Group of Experts, May 17, 2010, p. 11
- [4] [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_49635.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49635.htm)



# Women-against-NATO

## Making a Feminist Case

In April 2009, as part of the mobilization against the NATO Summit in Strasbourg, No-to-NATO organized a two-day counter-conference, in the course of which some forty women from NATO member states held a workshop on 'a feminist case against NATO'.<sup>[1]</sup> Some of us have continued to work together by e-mail, and we hope to mark the forthcoming NATO Summit in Lisbon, Portugal, this November, with women's protest actions.

What is our 'feminist case' against NATO? In many ways it's the same case we make against militarism and war in general. That's to say, we note the adverse ways they impact on women, and the damaging gender roles, active and passive, into which they draw both sexes. We point up the fact that gender relations, as we know and live them, are relations of power and inequality, founded in violence. They involve the social construction of masculinity as combative. Proper manhood requires a readiness to use force in defence of 'honour', while femininity is associated with passivity and victimhood. Women who want to escape the feminine stereotype have little choice but to

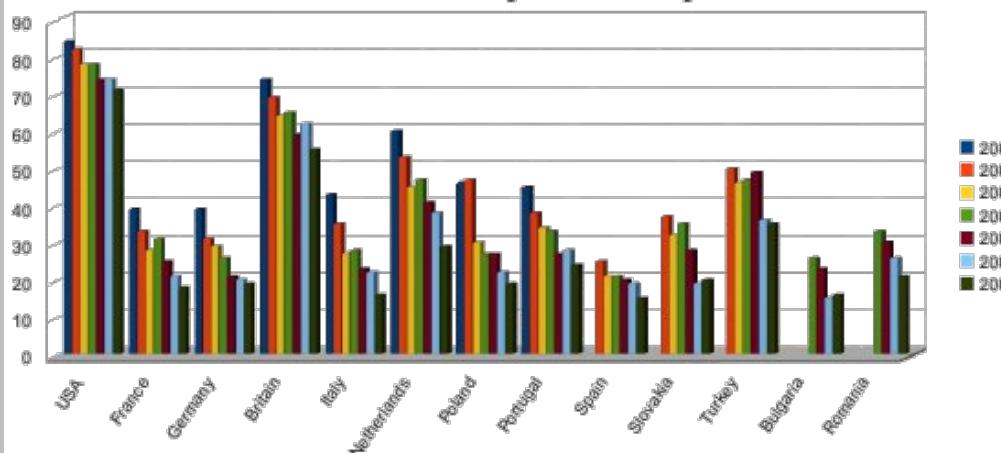


imitate the masculine model. This dichotomous gender culture is one of the long-term, underlying, causes of war, because it predisposes our societies to see taking up arms

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## Is war necessary to obtain justice?

War is necessary to obtain justice



The German Marshall Fund of the United States annually does a survey on important "transatlantic trends", which can make an interesting read. One of the questions asked is: "Please tell me to what extent do you agree with the following: Under some conditions, war is necessary to obtain justice." (Q29.2). The answers are quite revealing (see graphic).

Is it a surprise that in the USA and Britain more than 50% agree with this statement (USA in 2009: 37% "strongly agree" and 34% "agree somewhat"; Britain in 2009: 20% "strongly agree" and 35% "agree somewhat")? It is interesting that in these two countries, which are most responsible for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, a high proportion of the population agrees that war is sometimes necessary – higher than in Turkey, a country with a very visible tradition of militarism. Most of the European countries trail far behind – 18% in France, 19% in Germany, 16% in Italy, 29% in the Netherlands, 19% in Poland, etc.

The good news however is that in most countries the figures have consistently gone down – including in the USA and Britain, but even more so in France, Germany, Italy, or Poland.

Source: Transatlantic Trends: Topline data 2009,  
[http://www.gmfus.org/trends/doc/2009\\_English\\_Top.pdf](http://www.gmfus.org/trends/doc/2009_English_Top.pdf)



NEIN zu NATO No to NATO  
 NON à L'OTAN Non à la guerre

**NO to the new  
 NATO-Strategy!**  
 Active for Global Peace,  
 Disarmament and the  
 End of NATO  
 Counter-summit  
 Location: To Be Determined

19/11/2010 - Friday  
 11.00-11.15: Welcome  
 Vitor Lima (PAGAN) confirmed  
 Reiner Braun (ICC) confirmed  
 11.15-13.00: Lectures  
 1. NATO's War in Afghanistan (Malalai Joya, Afghanistan) (TBC)  
 2. The New NATO Strategy and Global Crisis (Vitor Lima, PAGAN, Portugal) confirmed  
 3. Nuclear Weapons in the New NATO-Strategy (Joseph Gerson, AFSC, USA) confirmed  
 4. NATO and Latin America (Eduardo Melero, UAM, Spain) confirmed  
 5. Missile Defense Systems in Eastern Europe / Russia (Jana Glivicka, No Bases, CR) confirmed

14.00-16.30: Workshop Block I – Analytical Workshops  
 17.00-19.00: Workshop Block II – Political and Social Alternatives

21.00-23.00: Public Event:  
 Panel Discussion  
 NO to War – NO to NATO

23.00 Peace Party

20/11/2010 – Saturday

International Anti-NATO Demonstration

21/11/2010 – Sunday

10.00-10.30: Introduction Lecture: Lessons Learnt Portugal and NATO  
 10.30-15.00: Peace Assembly How to continue acting for a world without war and NATO

Watch out for updates at  
<http://no-to-nato.org>



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as a normal and acceptable way of dealing with political conflicts. Consequently, feminist activists call for the transformation of gender relations as a necessary element of the movement to end war.

So how does this apply in the struggle against NATO? It's important to stress that, for sure, all the women on our 'Women Against NATO' e-list are making exactly the same base-line case as all other opponents of NATO. Briefly, that NATO is a Cold War instrument that should have been closed down when the Warsaw Pact folded; that it is primarily a vehicle for the economic and military interests of the USA and to a lesser extent those of the post-colonial Western European states; and that its current strategy of enlargement and its increasingly 'expeditionary' mode make it a growing threat to peace on a global scale. Furthermore, NATO's existence flouts international law and United Nations principles; it chimes with increasing militarization of the European Union; and it locks member states into the nuclear weapons and MDI systems on which the USA continues to insist.

However, beyond this general critique of NATO, we perceive the alliance in gendered terms. NATO is a massive military alliance of nation states. Nira Yuval-Davis and other feminist theorists have shown how the concept of 'nation' is gendered, how nationalism and patriarchy are interlocked, and how nations and nationalists use and exploit 'women'. NATO is the product of Cold War thinking that saw the globe as divided into two 'blocs' of nation states, champions of rival ideologies. Some feminist contributions to the Strasbourg workshop talked about the 'patriarchal logic' of blocs, a brotherhood of nations in arms seeking out fantasy enemies long after the Cold War has ended.

Secondly, women have been making a feminist case against NATO's military bases, installations and production facilities in our countries. Although, for the most part, these belong to the national armed forces of member states, they are in effect part and parcel of NATO resources in Europe. Several women wrote workshop papers about the damaging effect of military installations on the lives of women in neighbouring communities. They described women's non-violent direct action outside the razor wire and security checkpoints, protesting against the toxic pollution, the danger of radiation, the noise and blighted areas entailed by the military use of land. Women also protest against sexual exploitation and violence against women by military personnel. In Bosnia and Kosovo, UN and NATO-led forces not only generated a massive sex industry, but individual soldiers – along with NATO contractors and UN police – were actively involved in the trafficking process, receiving trafficked



Vigil of Women in Black during the anti-NATO demonstration in Strasbourg in April 2009.

women and girls at borders, smuggling them into military bases and acting as pimps. Although NATO adopted, in 2004, a Policy Against Human Trafficking, no suspected NATO traffickers have been prosecuted.[2]

Third, the persistence of the 'NATO system' after the collapse of the Soviet Union has prevented each European country cashing in 'the peace dividend' by reducing its armed forces and humanizing its international posture. It has required them to sustain a high degree of militarization that masculinizes and deforms everyday life. It has, what's more, fostered the militarization of the European Union, so that an economic alliance we joined as a guarantor of cooperation and harmony is turning into yet another war-fighting machine. It has been argued that the EU is converting to this 'hard' image in response to the chiding of US policy-makers that Europe is a feminine, soft, civilian power. European leaders want to play 'with the big boys'.[3] A commitment to contribute to a European force as well as to NATO calls for high military expenditures in EU member states. Feminists argue that this drains funds from the education, health and housing services badly needed by women, the sex that still carries a very high proportion of the burden of domestic life and care.

Finally, feminist antimilitarists make a case against NATO as a perpetrator of wars. The effects of war are dramatically gendered. There is a growing trend to civilian casualties, disproportionately women and their dependants. Women are the majority of the displaced and refugees, trying to maintain their families in impossible circumstances. Thousands are widowed, deprived of a viable existence. Sexual violence redoubles in and after war. We see all this in NATO's war in Afghanistan.

Improbable as it may seem, NATO prides itself on 'mainstreaming' gender

into its structures and activities. 'NATO and its Partners', they say on their website, 'are promoting the role of women within NATO-led operations and missions' and increasing the knowledge and skills available on 'gender and diversity'. Last year the Strategic Commands received guidelines for the integration into the NATO Command Structure of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on 'Women, Peace and Security'. There is a NATO Office on Gender Perspectives, and gender advisers have been appointed. An implementation report is to be published in time for the Lisbon Summit.[4]

Given the implications for women of NATO's campaign Afghanistan, the Alliance's self-professed gender sensitivity can only deepen feminist cynicism about 'gender mainstreaming'. Here is an alliance of powerful Western states exploiting the notion of 'liberating Afghan women from oppression by the Taliban' as one of its devious justifications for invading the country. Women's insecurity is multiplied in the chaos and brutality of a decade of armed conflict. Then the intruders announce plans to make their escape by negotiating the re-entry to power of – the Taliban. Afghan women certainly have a feminist case against NATO. So do women in NATO member states.

Cynthia Cockburn  
Women in Black, London

### Notes

- [1] A report of the workshop can be seen at <http://www.wloe.org/The-workshop.555.0.html>
- [2] Sian Jones 'NATO and the Trafficking of Women'. The Broken Rifle No 81, February 2009
- [3] Stephanie Anderson 'From "soft" power to "hard" power: the militarization of the European Union as an attempt to shed its "feminine" identity.' Paper presented to the 49th International Sociological Association annual convention, San Francisco, 26.3.08. [http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p251752\\_index.html](http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p251752_index.html).
- [4] From [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_56984.htm#Roles](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_56984.htm#Roles) accessed 18.08.10.



# Against the war in Afghanistan – and/or against NATO?

## Reflections on strategic issues for the antimilitarist movement

In most NATO countries public opinion is either divided over, or in favour of, the withdrawal of NATO troops from Afghanistan. Only in very few countries can NATO count on support for its war (see illustration 1). However, neither does this turn into a massive mobilisation against the war in Afghanistan, nor does it – for now – translate into opposition to the organisation fighting this war – NATO (see illustration 2). So are we successful? The troops are still in Afghanistan, so we surely must be doing something wrong.

### A strategic framework

To look at this question I am using Bill Moyer's Movement Action Plan [1] as a framework. The plan includes two important aspects: a concept of eight stages of successful social movements, and of four roles of activists within these movements.

A social movement – if successful – moves from normal times (stage 1), through proving the failure of official institutions (stage 2) to ripening conditions (stage 3), which will lead to the take off of the movement (stage 4). It is probably fair to say that this is often the first time the movement is recognised as such by the general public, or the mass media. This is followed – often in parallel – by a perception of failure within the movement (stage 5), and the winning of majority public

opinion (stage 6), which eventually might lead to success (stage 7), and a continuation and extension of the struggle (stage 8). In each stage the movement faces different challenges, and has different strategic, medium-term objectives which it needs to reach to advance.

The other aspect of the MAP are the four roles of activism. Any movement needs the right balance at the right time of all four roles – the rebel, the reformer, the citizen, and the social change agent.

However, it is important not to see the Movement Action Plan as a kind of recipe for movement success. It is a useful – albeit limited – model for understanding our movement, and for giving hints what might now be important, but it is not a recipe for success.

For any social movement – and for any analysis of a social movement – it is extremely important to be clear of the objective. As Bill Moyer points out, social movements are composed of many sub-goals and sub-movements, which are each in their own MAP stage.

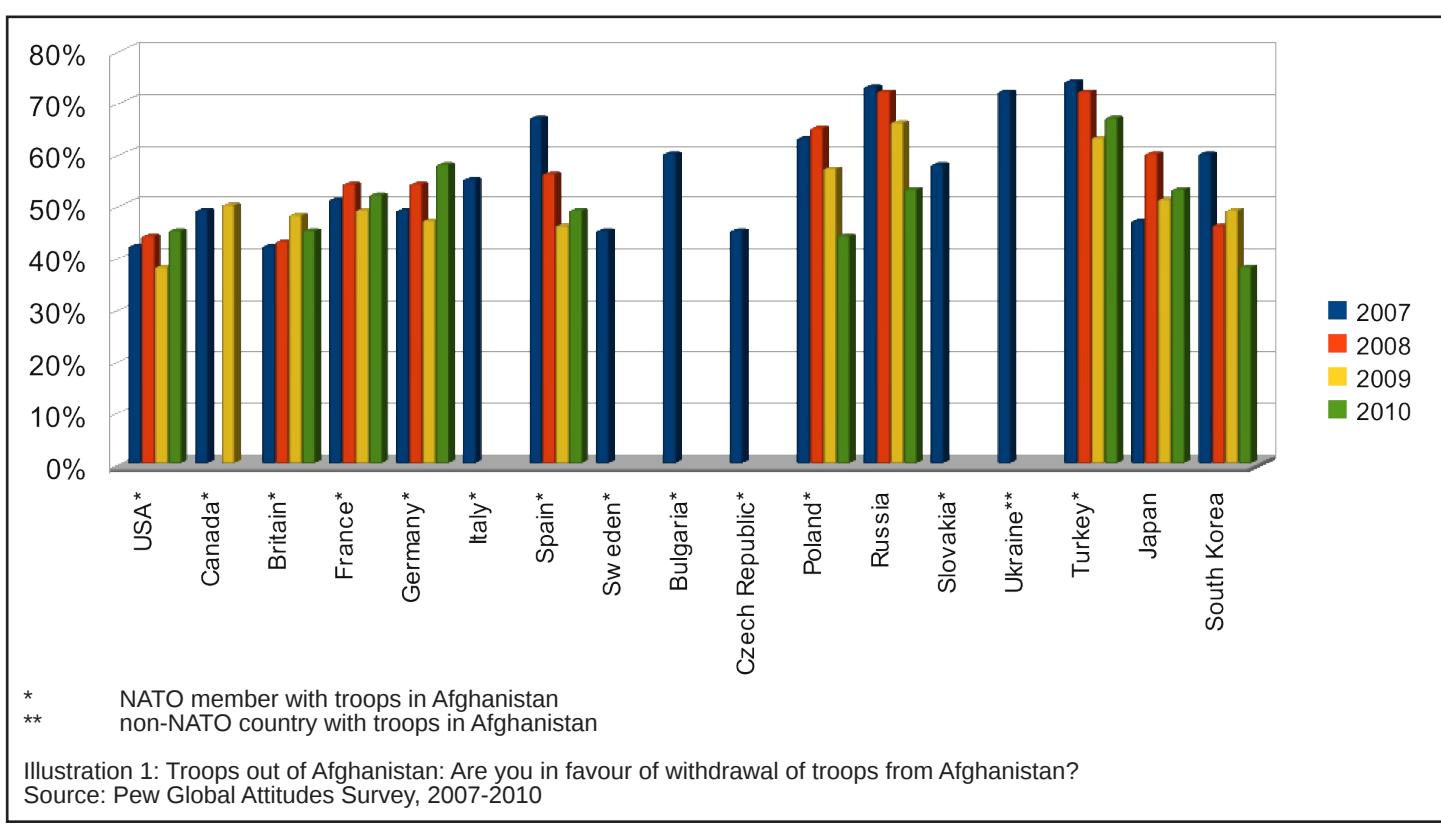
As a WRI staff member and antimilitarist, my perspective here is the movement against NATO, and in this I see the war in Afghanistan as a major crime NATO is presently committing. [2] However, let's have a look at both.

### Where are we at: Afghanistan

As mentioned in the introduction, the war in Afghanistan is deeply unpopular in most NATO countries, and indeed globally. In most NATO countries more than 45% of the population are in favour of a withdrawal of NATO troops from Afghanistan [3], according to polls published by the Pew Global Attitudes Project, a project shared by former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and former US Ambassador to the United Nations John Danforth.[4] Other polls for individual countries report much higher opposition to the war – for example, a Daily Telegraph/YouGov poll from August 2009 showed 62% opposition to the war in Britain.[5]

However, public mobilisation against the war is low – at least if we look at major actions or demonstrations. And in the past the war in Afghanistan has been overshadowed by the war in Iraq, to which opposition was and is even higher.

Looking at the movement against the war in Afghanistan, it clearly has achieved at least phases 1–3 of the Movement Action Plan. The conditions for a movement are ripe for a long time: the problem has clearly been recognised, and public opinion is even more opposed to the war than could be expected. However, it is also fair to say that the movement has failed to use the conditions, to take it





further. This for several reasons:

- \* The Iraq-war might have taken up the energy of many activists, and led to burn-out and disempowerment. Consequently, there is a lack of “rebels” within the anti-Afghanistan war movement, which could launch nonviolent action campaigns to dramatise the problem. And without this crucial role, the movement is stuck.
- \* A lack of an alternative vision for Afghanistan, which could add credibility to the demand for withdrawal from Afghanistan, and counter the propaganda that NATO is in Afghanistan to fight for women's rights. Such an alternative vision can only be developed in close co-operation with Afghan civil society and peace movement organisations, which exist, but are not being listened to (with few exceptions) [6].
- \* A failure to put the issue on the public agenda: the leaked CIA report quotes polls which indicate that few people see the war – although they might be opposed to it – as an important issue: “Only a fraction (0.1-1.3 percent) of French and German respondents identified ‘Afghanistan’ as the most urgent issue facing their nation in an open-ended question, [...]. These publics ranked ‘stabilizing Afghanistan’ as among the lowest priorities for US and European leaders.” [7] As Felix Kolb points out in his book “Protest and Opportunities”, a favourable public opinion might still be irrelevant if salience is low [8]. This means we as a movement are failing to show how the war affects all segments of society, but also that we can make a difference.

I see a need in two main areas:

- \* local organising to root the movement against the war in all sectors of society, and to bring across an alternative perspective. As Bill Moyers would put it: the basic purpose of the movement in this stage is to educate, convert, and involve all segments of the population. And
- \* nonviolent direct action campaigns, which used intelligently can help to keep the issue on the public agenda, reduce apathy, and counter the alternative strategies of our governments and NATO.

However, the public has somehow overtaken the movement, and quietly opposition to the war in Afghanistan has risen to levels which almost indicate a success of the movement. But as the movement did not build up its own strength, we are not able to capitalise on it, and to really push for withdrawal from Afghanistan. As the CIA put it in a leaked memorandum: governments can count on apathy, and therefore ignore public opinion. To make sure this remains so, the memorandum suggested ways to

manipulate public opinion especially in Germany and France. [9]

Even in response to a mostly apathetic public opposition, but also to the military failure of NATO in Afghanistan, NATO and most governments involved are changing their strategy: dates for withdrawal from Afghanistan are set (we will see how realistic they are), and the building up of the Afghan army and police has been stepped up considerably. We can see a replay of the response to the opposition to the war in Iraq: parts of Afghanistan are handed over to Afghan security forces, which is presented to the public as a first step towards withdrawal from Afghanistan. However, neither has a withdrawal from Iraq really happened, nor can we take the dates being mentioned for withdrawal from Afghanistan seriously.

For the movement to get into the next stage, there is a need to take opportunities. A movement take-off is often a response to something that happens – opportunities being taken. This could have been the bombing of the tankers in Kunduz for the German movement. In other countries there might have been other opportunities, which have not been taken.

But movements can also create the take-off themselves. An idea could be to organise major events on 8 October 2011, the tenth anniversary of the intervention in Afghanistan, which are slightly different. What about human chains instead of the usual demonstrations? In Britain for example from Brize Norton (the main transport hub to and from Afghanistan via High Wycombe (RAF Strike Command) and PJHQ Northwood to Whitehall (about 100km), thus linking important military bases and headquarters with the seat of government. Similar human chains in

other European (and non-European) countries could create a global human chain of 1000km – a challenge, but a challenge which could lead to its own dynamic which could trigger the take-off of an anti-Afghanistan war movement.

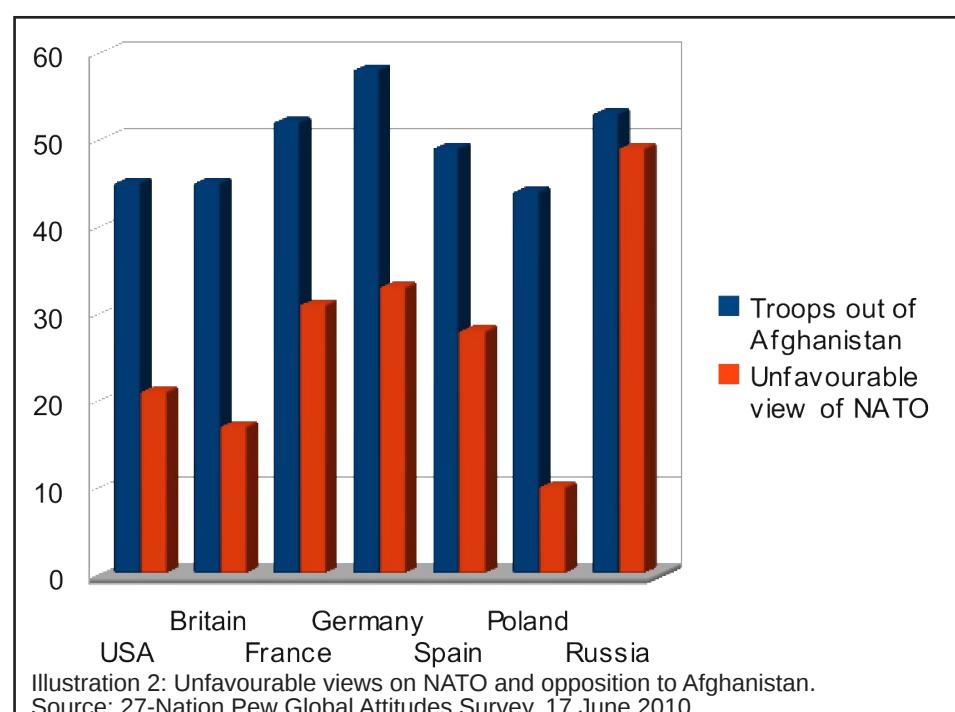
For such an event to be successful – and more importantly, for a movement to be successful – it is important that the different groups and organisations within the movement work together, and accept their differences. Even though we – as war resisters – prefer nonviolent direct action, NVDA alone will not build a movement or end the war. The same applies to other “roles” within the movement: we need the reformers talking to the government, we need the rebels (that might be us), the involvement of citizens, and the organisers and social change agents. Only by working together and respecting the role each one of us has to play can we be successful.

### Where are we at: NATO

NATO is a completely different matter. Public opinion against NATO is still pretty low – 21% in the USA, 17% in Britain, around 30% in France, Germany, and Spain, and only 10% in Poland. [10] The low figure for Poland is probably representative of many of the Eastern European new NATO countries, which see NATO much more as a guarantor of “freedom and democracy”. [11]

It is difficult to look at the movement against NATO on a European scale – differences between the countries are very significant. The following therefore cannot be more than a rough outline.

The official reason for NATO's existence is to provide stability and security for its member states. And NATO presents itself as a success story in this





regard – despite its failure in Afghanistan. As a movement against NATO, it is therefore an important objective to show clearly that NATO as an institution is failing to provide security, that NATO is part of the problem, and not part of the solution.

Renate Wanie of the German Werkstatt für gewaltfreie Aktion Baden (Workshop for Nonviolent Action Baden) wrote already in 2009 that “education about NATO’s war policy and the myth of the defence alliance” has to be one of five important objectives of the peace movement after the NATO protests in Strasbourg in April 2009 [12].

For us as war resisters with a focus on nonviolent direct action, there is a specific task at the present stage of the anti-NATO movement: “to create small, nonviolent demonstrations and campaigns that can serve as prototype models and a training ground for the take-off stages”. [13] However, it is important that this does not happen in isolation from the rest of the movement, but serves to strengthen it.

Last years actions at the NATO summit in Strasbourg could have moved the movement forward, but an opportunity was lost due to the violence that overshadowed the entire protest.<sup>14</sup> To prevent violence at protests – whether it is provoked by the police or committed by parts of the movements that believe in violence – is crucial for any social movement that wants to be successful, as violence leads to alienation, and ultimately harms the movement.

Nevertheless, we are making some progress, and the powers that are can feel it. As the Madeline Albright report “NATO 2020: Assured Security; Dynamic Engagement” stresses, “NATO populations should be reminded that the alliance serves their interests through the security it provides”.<sup>[15]</sup> This is a consequence of growing scepticism about the need and usefulness of NATO – something we need to build on.

### Our role in the movements

As war resisters – as antimilitarists and pacifists – we have a specific role to play in the movements against the war in Afghanistan and against NATO. Although within WRI we have a variety of political perspectives and approaches, what unites us is a principled stand against war and militarism, and in favour of nonviolence. Both are crucial within both movements.

As pacifists, we will remain the minority in the anti-war movement. But our insights into the need for nonviolence, and our experience with nonviolent action, is highly important, as especially the events from the NATO summit in Strasbourg in April 2009 show.



U.S. Army Sgt. Owens provides "security" during a patrol near Khogyani District in support of Afghan elections in Nangahar province, Afghanistan, 18 September 2010. Photo: isafmedia

In the coming years, we should continue to work with the national and international coalitions against the war in Afghanistan, and against NATO, and to push for more democratic forms of organising, and creative nonviolent action. As Bill Moyer puts it: “participatory democracy is a key means for resolving today’s awesome societal problems and for establishing a just and sustainable world for everyone”.<sup>16</sup> This requires empowered citizens, and our movements are the place where empowerment is to take place. But this requires much more democracy and grassroots organisation within our movements, and less hierarchical and “professional” anti-war organising.

Questions of war and peace are too important to leave them to NATO, or to governments and politicians. Let’s do it!

Andreas Speck  
September 2010

### Notes

- 1 Bill Moyer et al, Doing Democracy. The MAP Model for Organizing Social Movements, New Society Publishers, Gabriola Island, 2001. A brief description of the MAP can be found at <http://wri-irg.org/wiki/index.php/The+Movement+Action+Plan>
- 2 On the relevance of Afghanistan for NATO see the article of Tobias Pflüger in this issue of The Broken Rifle
- 3 Pew Global, Pew Global Attitudes Surveys (different issues) 2007-2010, <http://pewglobal.org>
- 4 See <http://pewglobal.org/about/>, accessed 9 September 2010
- 5 The Daily Telegraph, Two thirds want British troops home from Afghanistan, 29 August 2009, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/6106201/Two-thirds-want-British-troops-home-from-Afghanistan.html>, accessed 9 September 2010
- 6 Ross Eventon, Transnational Institute: Afghan Voices and Our Victories, September 2010, unpublished, but a good read.
- 7 CIA Red Cell, 11 March 2010
- 8 Felix Kolb, Protest and Opportunities. The Political Outcomes of Social Movements. Frankfurt/New York



# War starts here

– about Northern Sweden as a training ground for war



The vast unpopulated areas in Northern Sweden are increasingly used for war preparation and trainings. North European Aerospace Testrange (NEAT) is Europe's largest overland test range and consists of an area 360 by 100 km of restricted air space and 1,650 sq km of restricted land area (expandable to 3,000sq km). It is a cooperation of the Swedish organisations FMV (the Swedish Defence Material Administration) and SSC (the Swedish Space Corporation). NEAT is used as a training area for bomb dropping, for testing drones and AMRAAM (Advanced Medium Range Air to Air Missile), which could be carried by drones, and for other weapon testing and war exercises. This summer the U.S. Air Force used the area for a bomb dropping exercise and last summer NATO used it for their largest air exercise that year.

## Ofov actions against US bomb training

During two weeks in early August this summer, 20 fighter aircrafts and 250

soldiers from the U.S. Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) came to Northern Sweden to practise bomb dropping and to do a joint air exercise with the Swedish Air Force. Antimilitaristic direct action network Ofov organised an action camp to highlight the fact that Northern Sweden is used as a training and preparation area for war and to disturb the bombing exercise.

In the city of Luleå, Ofov held speeches, performed street theatre and visualised alternatives to military exercises. Direct actions took place at the military airport F21 outside of Luleå, where Ofov activists protested at the entrance as smaller actiongroups went into the airport where bombplanes arrived. Groups of Ofov activists also entered on to the area of Vidsel which is used for bomb training, where the activists went into the area to prevent the bomb training with their presence on the ground.

To view pictures from the action camp and the actions visit Ofov at Flickr.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/ofog>

Read more about Ofov's direct actions at <http://www.ofog.org/war-starts-here-action-camp-against-us-air-force-bomb-exercise-northern-sweden>



The location of NEAT and the Missile Test Range Vidsel in the north of Sweden. Source: <http://www.neat.se>, map imported into Marble Desktop Globe.

## Welcome to an International action camp in 2011

Sweden, widely known for its neutrality and as a 'voice of peace', has managed well in hiding the truth: increasing participation in war on all levels and silencing voices that differ. People in Sweden need to wake up, and we are the wake-up-call. We won't be fooled or passified and we can set an example. Together we're able to show people in European countries that these are not internal but international matters that we need to deal with all of us. We can not leave it up to our governments and those in power to make the decisions, they are the ones who wage war and prepare for it.

The military exercise areas in Northern Sweden are used permanently all the year around for weapon testing, bomb dropping exercises, drones testing and training, and other kinds of military exercises. Wars fought in Afghanistan and Iraq, among other places, are prepared and trained for here, which means we have a possibility to stop them here! Therefore we meet next summer in Northern Sweden for an international action camp against the war exercise areas. The camp will include a seminar on NATO and US military bases and a mass action against the area of NEAT.



Action during the ofog action camp in August 2010. Photo: ofog



We are very much looking forward to see you all next summer. This is a great chance to make a direct impact on the largest training ground for war in Europe and also an opportunity to meet as organisations and activists to exchange experiences and knowledge and to coordinate our resistance and solidate our future plans.

For more information contact Ofog:  
info(at)ofog.org,  
+46 (0)733 815361  
[www.ofog.org](http://www.ofog.org)  
Website on next summer's action camp:  
[www.warstartshere.com](http://www.warstartshere.com)

Official website NEAT: [www.neat.se](http://www.neat.se)  
Info about Missile Test Range Vidsel (official website):  
<http://www.fmv.se/WmTemplates/Page.aspx?id=224>



## WRI Council 2011 in Luleå, Sweden

Mark the dates: the WRI Council meeting 2011 will take place during the time of the action camp at the camp itself in Luleå in the north of Sweden. At present, the dates penciled in for the Council are 19-21 July 2011, followed by a seminar organised by/with ofog, and then training and action...

More information on the WRI Council meeting, and also on the seminar, will be available closer to the time. But please keep the dates free...

Please contact the WRI office for more information:  
War Resisters' International  
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A European Antimilitarist Network  
Nonviolent direct action against militarism all over Europe

The European Antimilitarist Network is not a fixed entity, but a flexible network of antimilitarist groups, based on the principle of nonviolent direct action. It includes, but is not limited to, groups formally affiliated to War Resisters' International. As a network, it aims to keep an information flow going between actions, and also to take decisions jointly on the focus for the coming months/year(s).

The following groups presently form the core of the network: War Resisters' International (International), Vredesactie/Bombspotting (Belgium), alternativa antimilitarista-moc (Spain), Ofog – för en kärnvapenfri värld (Sweden), Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft-Vereinigte KriegsdienstgegnerInnen (Germany), Gewaltfreie Aktion Atomwaffen abschaffen (Germany), Aseistakieltyjäliitto (AKL – Finland), Transnational Institute (TNI – Netherlands), Trident Ploughshares (Britain), Gruppe für eine Schweiz ohne Armee (GsoA – Switzerland).

The wars in Iraq or Afghanistan, the military operations in the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, or the European Union military interventions in Congo and Sudan would not have been possible without the use of military infrastructure in Europe. This military infrastructure – military bases, headquarters, satellite centres, ports, and even civilian airports used by the military – form the backbone for wars and interventions.

The network is convinced that actions of civil disobedience and nonviolent direct actions have an important role to play to stop war, as they throw some spanners into the works of the war machine. It is important to make the step from protesting against war to resisting war!

The increasingly transnational structure of military interventions requires to coordinate resistance activities better.

**Contacts:**  
international [at] bombspotting  
[dot] be  
info [at] wri-irg [dot] org



## Women Conscientious Objectors — An Anthology

Conscientious objectors are generally seen as male — as are soldiers. This book breaks with this assumption. Women conscientiously object to military service and militarism. Not only in countries which conscript women — such as Eritrea and Israel — but also in countries without conscription of women. In doing so, they redefine antimilitarism from a feminist perspective, opposing not only militarism, but also a form of antimilitarism that creates the male conscientious objector as the 'hero' of antimilitarist struggle.

This anthology includes contributions by women conscientious objectors and activists from Britain, Colombia, Eritrea, Israel, Paraguay, South Korea, Turkey, and the USA, plus documents and statements.

*"For what we see here is women, at different moments, in one country after another, creating for themselves the concept, analysis and practice of a distinctive feminist antimilitarism."*

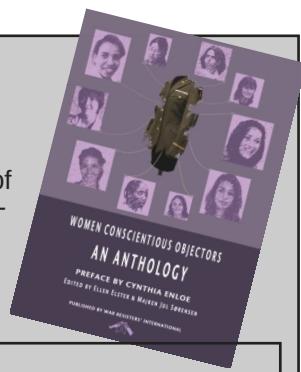
Cynthia Cockburn, Women in Black London

*"Their radical retheorising of militarism with a feminist perspective reminds us of the centrality of women in processes of militarisation, as well as their power to turn militarisation processes on their head and to contribute to radical reimaginings of a world where violence, war, patriarchy, sexism, heterosexism, and other forms of dominations are not taken for granted."*

Ayse Gul Altinay, Sabanci University, Turkey

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## The Broken Rifle

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