

"Stop the Bombings, Stop Star Wars"

Speech by John Dear at October 13th, 2001 Rally Against Star Wars

Washington Square Park, New York, New York

(Over 100 rallies occurred October 13th across the country and the world, against Star Wars. 1000 people attended the NYC rally.)

Since the horrific events of September 11th, I've been working at the Family Assistance Center, helping to coordinate the chaplains who work there, and I've personally met with over 1000 relatives who lost loved ones and escorted many to Ground Zero, and consoled hundreds of firefighters and police officers, and many have said to me that in the midst of their grief and tears that they do not want anyone else killed, that war will not bring back their loved ones, that bombing raids are not bringing them comfort and healing; and that killing innocent women and children in Afghanistan only increases their sorrow, and so I come here today to say: stop the war, stop the bombing of Afghanistan, stop the Star Wars plans and pursue nonviolent ways to peace and justice for all people.

Today we say, in the name of the God of peace, as we are learning from the grieving families, that there is no security in war, nuclear weapons, bombing raids, missile shields or greed, only in nonviolence, love, justice, compassion and the God of peace; that an eye for an eye only makes the whole world blind; that violence in response to violence can only lead to further violence; that state-sanctioned terrorism will only lead to further terrorism; that war is not the will of God; that war is never justified; that war is never blessed by God; and that peaceful means are the only way to a peaceful future and the God of peace.

In the name of the God of peace, we call upon our country to stop these mad Star Wars plans to militarize space and surround the planet with nuclear weapons and missile shields that can't protect us from anything; and we say that no one is safe from nuclear weapons until they are all dismantled; that these plans are immoral, illegal and just plain impractical, and we name them a sin to be utterly condemned.

In the name of the God of peace, in the midst of our grief and tears, we call our government to stop the war and to undertake international treaties for nuclear disarmament, to dismantle every nuclear weapon and every weapon of mass destruction, and redirect those billions of dollars toward the hard work for a lasting peace through international cooperation for nonviolent alternatives, interfaith dialogue, feeding every child on the planet, lifting the sanctions on Iraq and the international debt, supporting the Palestinian people, joining the world court and international law, protecting the earth and showing compassion toward every human being on the planet.

In the name of the God of peace, we pledge become people of nonviolence, to love our enemies, to offer justice and human rights to the poor and to seek the ancient

spiritual wisdom of peace; to proclaim the coming of that new day when all nuclear weapons will be abolished, along with war itself and the death penalty and the sanctions on Iraq; when our hearts will be disarmed and we will beat our swords into plowshares; and convert our culture of violence into a culture of nonviolence.

Dear Friends, if we keep on walking with the grieving and suffering here and abroad; keep on offering compassion to the whole human race while also speaking the truth and hope of disarmament and nonviolence; keep on loving one another and loving our enemies; we will sow the seeds of peace and disarmament that will bring a harvest of peace and justice because, finally, we will be walking side by side with the God of peace.

God bless you.