

U.S. Military Targets Kids' Minds Domestically, Targets Middle East Kids With Weapons

Contributed by Jan Lundberg
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The movement to stop the military from recruiting children brings its challenge to the Federal Court. The Justice Department filed a suit against Arcata and Eureka in California, against the overwhelming support of the voters.

We can step back from the U.S society that we normally take for granted, provided we're not completely immersed in televised entertainment or other distraction. One of the things we may notice, or if it hits home by virtue of a family member's becoming a military casualty in Iraq or Afghanistan, is that the nation is way overboard on "Defense." As this is unquestioned, branches of the Pentagon have brazenly been recruiting children. A movement has sprung up to stop this, and its first big test is in Federal Court on June 9 (details below).

The excuse for child-recruiting (ages 14-17) is tough to dispel when the economic factor in people's fears is constantly exploited. It starts with the assumption that "education" means compulsory, institutionalized regimentation for the sake of becoming "productive citizens" who, most of us discover, have to go work for a boss or bureaucracy -- if we're "lucky." There we usually produce something meaningless or questionable, or we serve consumers meaninglessly. The health of the planet and the worker be damned along with human potential.

Some of us realize that these patterns are tied up in profligate energy waste that will end, along with much of society's present structure, upon the completion of petrocollapse that has begun. Meanwhile, the opposing of egregious practices should be encouraged, even if the delusion of democracy and the continuity of the Empire go unquestioned.

The child-recruitment issue was on the radio/TV show Democracy Now on April 18 of this year, when host Amy Goodman had guests helping her delve into the details of the case:

Goodman reported,

"Two Northern California towns are finding themselves in a showdown with the Pentagon over a ban on recruiting minors for the military. Last November, residents of Eureka and Arcata passed a ballot initiative known as the Youth Protection Act. The measure bars the U.S. government from trying to enlist youths under the age of eighteen in any branch of the U.S. armed forces. [In Arcata, it passed by 73 percent margin, and in Eureka, by 57 percent.]

"But just days after the laws went into effect, the Justice Department filed a suit seeking to overturn them. The Justice Department's civil action says the initiatives are invalid because they conflict with federal law. Both towns are refusing to cave. They've hired lawyers, filed counter-claims challenging the federal government's action."

Guest Sharon Adams, with the Stop Recruiting Kids coalition, board member of the National Lawyers Guild Bay Area Chapter, illuminated the finer points that the case hinges on:

"The Supremacy Clause is an article in the Constitution that says that the laws of the United States are the supreme law of the land, but it also includes in there the treaties that the United States has signed. So, one of our arguments is that there's a protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. That's a treaty that the United States has signed. And in that treaty, it specifically discusses recruiting. And it specifically says, as far as the United States is concerned, that the United States will not recruit under the age of seventeen. And what we

see over and over is that they are actually recruiting under the age of seventeen."

Once again we find that the U.S. government is doing something illegal. Just as disappointing, to the naive especially, is to face that the defense of child recruitment for the military is being carried out by the Obama regime and its velvet glove that conceals the same old fist, it seems. What happened to ending the War? How many more children and other innocents have to be killed by drone missiles, raids by troops, etc.? Don't the violent, indiscriminate U.S. actions in other countries come back to haunt us, or is it "only" a matter of the Empire's fouling its own nest (Earth)?

Here's a recent press release from Communities For Justice and Peace, a Humboldt County (Eureka, county seat), California activist group:

Stop recruiting Kids Measures in court Tuesday!

1:00 pm, Oakland Federal Courthouse

1301 Clay St.

A showdown kind of decision is about to go down in an Oakland courtroom on June 9th when the judge either allows these measures to go forward for trial or outright dismisses our case.

Do we, as citizens of Eureka and Arcata have the right to protect our young against military recruitment as we so overwhelmingly voted for in November. Will the federal government and Department of Defense be given the authority by this court's decision to strike it down? This is what we face in this upcoming Tuesday decision!

The United States filed a complaint (lawsuit) on Dec. 23, 2008 seeking invalidation of these ordinances under the Supremacy clause of the federal Constitution. We and our team of lawyers feel strongly that our measures are fully within Constitutional law.

Months of efforts by a few, may have gotten these measures on the ballot, but this is quickly becoming a matter for the entire community's involvement. This essentially affects everyone's electoral rights and autonomy.

This 'first ever' city effort to assert such a position has caught the attention of many people nationwide, watching and considering similar efforts in their own communities. It has aroused greater attention among national organizations working against war, torture and military recruitment of our young.

Bay area supporters of World Can't Wait and others in the Justice and Peace movement are planning to vigil with us outside the court. The impact of all this will be aired in interviews and other media coverage.

In this crucial moment, all are encouraged to come forward with their thoughts and ideas for how best to proceed. "Yes" we'll be working on appeals if necessary and making greater outreach efforts far and wide over what's at stake!

Right now you're encouraged to spread the word for joining in support and packing the court, the more of our young who are impacted by this the better, "yes" and being part of our noon time vigil, on the steps of the courthouse! The word is out and much thanks!

June 9th

Oakland Federal Courthouse

* Car pooling being worked on for those wanting a ride to Oakland from Arcata /Eureka:

call 1-707-442-7465

Stop Recruiting Kids Coalition

stoprecruitingkids.org
Humboldt County Ca.

1-707-442-8733

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The Associated Press

"The US Marine Corps is wooing public school districts across the country, expanding a network of military academies that has grown steadily despite criticism that it's a recruiting ploy."

washingtonpost.com

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Amy Goodman's show transcript on Stop Recruiting Kids, on Aljazeera:

aljazeera.com