



Tools for Democracy

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Freedom:

The following statement has been signed by over 150 organizations:

In Defense of Freedom:

1. On September 11, 2001 thousands of people lost their lives in a brutal assault on the American people and the American form of government. We mourn the loss of these innocent lives and insist that those who perpetrated these acts be held accountable.
2. This tragedy requires all Americans to examine carefully the steps our country may now take to reduce the risk of future terrorist attacks.
3. We need to consider proposals calmly and deliberately with a determination not to erode the liberties and freedoms that are at the core of the American way of life.
4. We need to ensure that actions by our government uphold the principles of a democratic society, accountable government and international law, and that all decisions are taken in a manner consistent with the Constitution.
5. We can, as we have in the past, in times of war and of peace, reconcile the requirements of security with the demands of liberty.
6. We should resist the temptation to enact proposals in the mistaken belief that anything that may be called anti-terrorist will necessarily provide greater security.
7. We should resist efforts to target people because of their race, religion, ethnic background or appearance, including immigrants in general, Arab Americans and Muslims.
8. We affirm the right of peaceful dissent, protected by the First Amendment, now, when it is most at risk.
9. We should applaud our political leaders in the days ahead who have the courage to say

Organizations

[In Defense of Freedom Coalition](#)

[American Civil Liberties Union](#)

[Electronic Privacy Information Center](#)

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that our freedoms should not be limited.

10. We must have faith in our democratic system and our Constitution, and in our ability to protect at the same time both the freedom and the security of all Americans.

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Peace:

Military Spending

The sheer amount of money pumped into the U.S. military budget is staggering. Few citizens would argue that all of these resources are necessary, particularly to the detriment of other budget items, such as health care and education. Consider these facts published by the [Center for Defense Information](#):

- "At \$325 billion, the U.S. military budget request for FY'02 is nearly six times larger than that of Russia, the second largest spender.
- It is more than twenty-two times as large as the combined spending of the seven countries traditionally identified by the Pentagon as our most likely adversaries (Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan and Syria).
- It is more than the combined spending of the next twelve nations.
- The United States and its close allies spend more than the rest of the world combined, accounting for roughly two-thirds of all military spending. Together they spend over thirty seven times more than the seven rogue states.
- The seven potential "enemies," Russia and China together spend \$116 billion, less than one-half (36%) the U.S. military budget.
- Global military spending has declined from \$1.2 trillion in 1985 to \$809 billion in 1999. During that time the U.S. share of total military spending rose

Organizations

[Center for Defense Information \(CDI\)](#)

[National Priorities Project](#)

[Center for Strategic and Budget Assessments](#)

Resources

[CDI - US Military Spending](#)

- site includes a military spending clock, comparisons between U.S. and world military expenditures, documentation on military budget requests, press releases, congressional military budget information

[National Priorities Project - Military Spending Documents](#)

[Move Our Money](#)

- highly visual site with graphic information on defense spending

Action / Campaigns

[Move Our Money - Action](#)

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from 31% to 36% in Fiscal Year
1999."

- Center for Defense Information [\[source\]](#)

For more information on this and other issues,
visit the [Center for Defense Information](#) on
the Internet.

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Peace:

National Missile Defense

The proposed National Missile Defense (NMD) system has given a new dimension to already bloated military spending. The system has many logistical flaws and the threat of so-called 'rogue' states used to justify the system has been exaggerated. The true reason for NMD is clear: it represents an unprecedented windfall for the military-industrial complex. The [Union of Concerned Scientists \(UCS\)](#) has studied this issue in depth and offers this brief analysis:

"The United States is currently developing a national missile defense system (NMD) designed to protect US territory from attack by long-range (strategic) ballistic missiles.

Despite strong Congressional pressure to deploy the system, President Clinton decided in September 2000 to defer the deployment decision to the next president.

Unfortunately, George W. Bush has advocated an even larger and more expensive NMD system.

What proponents of the system choose to ignore is the fact that the system under development will not work, since it can be defeated by simple countermeasures.

Furthermore, missile defenses will pose significant problems for future progress in arms control -- especially deep nuclear reductions. The security costs of deployment will far outweigh the security benefits."

- Union of Concerned Scientists [\[source\]](#)

For more information on this and other issues, visit the [Union of Concerned Scientists](#) on the Internet.

Organizations

[Center for Defense Information \(CDI\)](#)

[National Priorities Project](#)

[Carnegie Endowment for International Peace \(CEIP\)](#)

[Union of Concerned Scientists](#)

[Greenpeace](#)

[Peace Action](#)

Resources

[Greenpeace - Stop Star Wars](#)

[CDI - Why should you/we care?](#)

[CDI - NMD - What Does It All Mean?](#)

[National Priorities Project - NMD taxes that would be paid per state](#)

[CEIP - Missile Defense](#)

[CEIP - Missile Defense Reader](#)

[Union of Concerned Scientists - Missile Defense](#)

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Peace:

Tibet and China

The plight of the Tibetan people is one of the great human rights tragedies of recent history. The Chinese government has brutally oppressed the people of Tibet and engaged in a conscious campaign to wipe out traditional Tibetan culture.

Unfortunately, the political reality does not currently allow for an independent Tibet state, but the people of Tibet must be given autonomy over their domestic affairs. In addition, the horrific human rights abuses and widespread limitations on free speech, assembly, and movement must end.

Tibet existed as an independent, sovereign nation for hundreds of years prior to the Chinese occupation in 1950. For centuries, Tibet held a strategic position at the nexus of the great historic powers of Asia: India, Mongolia, and China. Tibet had complex linguistic, economic, political, and cultural interactions with each of these surrounding nations, but there is a clear consensus among historians that Tibet was, for many years, an independent nation-state.

The International Committee of Jurists declared in 1960 that "acts of genocide were committed" by the Chinese against the Tibetan people. Only a handful of the over 6,000 monasteries in Tibet have escaped Chinese occupation unscathed. Thousands of Tibetans have been killed, raped, or tortured by Chinese forces in the last half century. Tibet's natural resources have been unsustainably ravaged to fuel the economy of the Chinese mainland. The transfer of millions of Han Chinese has diluted the cultural influence of Tibetans in their own land. Western multinational corporations continue to fund and encourage the destruction of Tibet.

The Dalai Lama, the political and spiritual leader of Tibet, has called for Tibetan autonomy over domestic affairs. The global community must demand justice for the Tibetans. Unfortunately, bowing to the

Organizations

[International Campaign for Tibet](#)

[The Milarepa Fund](#)

[Students for a Free Tibet \(SFT\)](#)

[Free Tibet Campaign](#)

Resources

[Free Tibet Campaign - What You Need To Know About The Chinese Occupation Of Tibet](#)

[Students for a Free Tibet - Ten Things You Can Do](#)

Action / Campaigns

[International Campaign for Tibet - Free the Panchen Lama](#)

[International Campaign for Tibet - Free Ngawang Choephel](#)

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financial interests of predatory transnational corporations, the United States has recently given up its best bargaining chip by ending the annual review of China's human rights record.

The affronts to human dignity must end. The Chinese Government must:

End the systematic suppression of free speech, free assembly, free press, and freedom of religion in Tibet.

Immediately end the use of torture, arbitrary arrest, and prison labor in Tibet.

Reevaluate environmentally destructive resource-extraction and public-works projects in Tibet.

End the horrific practice of forced abortions and forced sterilizations on Tibetan women.

Slow the transfer of low-income Han Chinese from Eastern China.

Immediately release all political prisoners, in particular, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11-year-old Tibetan lama who has been held as a political prisoner in China since the age of six.

The international community must take a stand against the continued abuses in Tibet. We should:

Call for and offer to mediate immediate negotiations between the Chinese government and the Tibetan Government-In-Exile.

Renegotiate trade agreements between the United States and China to include provisions that protect workers' rights, human rights and the environment.

Demand that US corporations doing business in Tibet consult with the Tibetan Government-In-Exile's development guidelines to insure cultural and environmental sustainability.

Demand the release of political prisoners including Gedhun Choekyi Nyima.

Enforce the US ban on goods made by prison labor.

The plight of the Tibetans is a human tragedy. The Tibetan people have set an extraordinary example in their organized, non-violent resistance to tyranny. The United States and the world community would do well to follow their example.

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Peace:

Land Mines

Land mines are a cruel and indiscriminate weapon, killing and maiming civilians, including many children, for years or decades after hostilities have ceased. Over 20,000 people around the world are killed or maimed by land mines each year.

Land mines are dangerous to American troops: 34% of American casualties in the Gulf War were caused by land mines. Land mines, in many cases American land mines, caused large numbers of casualties for American troops in Vietnam and Korea as well.

Land mines are not necessary for our defense. Many military experts, including Gen. Norman Schwartzkopf and Gen. Robert G. Gard, have joined the consensus of human rights activists who support this treaty, arguing that the prohibition of landmines would not in any way threaten national security. Our future military strength rests in mobility and superior technology; these low-tech, indiscriminate weapons can be safely eliminated.

We should:

- Sign the 1997 Mine Ban treaty and press the Senate to ratify it.
- Declare an immediate moratorium on the production, export and placement of anti-personnel land mines, including mixed anti-personnel and anti-tank mines.
- Increase technical and material aid to efforts to remove land mines that are killing and maiming innocents around the world.

Peace:

Nuclear Disarmament

The Cold War has been over for eleven years, but the United States and Russia are still engaged in a tense standoff that has the potential to lead to global destruction. Both countries are on high alert and maintain "launch on warning" policies, and many experts believe that the danger of accidental nuclear war is greater now than at any time during the past, and will increase as Russia's military infrastructure continues to deteriorate. In a January 1995 "misunderstanding", President Yeltsin's nuclear suitcase was activated, and he was given four minutes to decide whether to attack the United States. It is imperative that we avoid further close brushes with unimaginable catastrophe by canceling high-alert status immediately. This can safely be done unilaterally, because of submarine-based weapons. There are over 3,000 nuclear warheads on American submarines. Enough are at sea and on alert at any time to assure sufficient retaliation capacity even after a massive first strike.

There is no possible moral justification for using or threatening to use nuclear weapons, except as a deterrent to nuclear threats. Nonetheless, the United States (along with Russia) has refused to adopt a no-first-use policy. More broadly, as the first country to use nuclear weapons, and the perennial leader in new technologies for these horrifying weapons of mass destruction, the United States has a moral obligation to take the lead in working for their elimination. The 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty gives us a legal obligation to work for elimination, as well.

We should:

- Take all nuclear missiles off 'hair-trigger' high-alert status, and urge the Russian President to do the same.
- Adopt a no-first-use policy, and urge other nuclear powers to do the same.
- Immediately end all nuclear test explosions, make the ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) one of my top legislative priorities, and halt all research into improving existing types or designing new types of nuclear weapons. The U.S. has all the nuclear weapons that it will ever need. Further research can only destabilize our position.
- Prohibit the deployment of land-based U.S. nuclear weapons outside the United States.
- Push for the ratification of the START II treaty and the ABM treaty amendments, which Russia has already ratified, work for a unilateral reduction to 1500 warheads

within a year, urging Russia to follow suit, and begin negotiating a START III agreement that will bring warhead levels below 1,000. There is no risk to this unilateral reduction, as our deterrent capability would remain ample.

- Begin talks with all nuclear nations to develop a framework and a final date for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

- Work towards a global ban on the production of weapons-usable fissile materials, which should be the cornerstone of a nuclear-terror prevention policy.

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