Resolution against “America’s Forever Wars”

Whereas, the United States government wages endless wars under the pretext of the “war on terror”—described in a New York Times editorial of October 23, 2017 as “America’s Forever Wars,”¹ and

Whereas, the primary agenda of these wars is to further the interests of U.S. corporations² and the ruling elite with the consequence of lower investments in public services like health care, education and environmental protection, and

Whereas, the United States historically has pursued a foreign policy motivated by the aim of controlling resources, markets and labor, starting with territorial expansion (Manifest Destiny, the dispossession of indigenous populations and the seizure of Mexican lands); through the annexation of Pacific and Caribbean islands; to the military occupation of countries like Haiti and Nicaragua, a policy which the U.S. continued in Afghanistan and Iraq; and to the arming of friendly authoritarian regimes like Pinochet in Chile and Suharto in Indonesia, which continues today with regimes like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the Philippines; and

Whereas, imperialist wars have historically depended on racism, from the genocide in the Americas and the African slave trade, through the wars for control of key areas in Indochina and Latin America, to today’s mass bombing and displacement of populations in the Middle East;³ and

Whereas, U.S. workers, aware of the harms war causes to our fellow-workers at home and abroad, have in the past opposed it and helped force the U.S. to withdraw, as in the movement against the war in Vietnam; and

¹ This Times editorial also points to the far-flung U.S. empire of military bases, with troops deployed “in at least 172 countries and territories.”
² International financial institutions like the WTO and trade pacts like NAFTA, the IMF, the World Bank facilitate super-exploitation of reserves of low-wage labor; and unequal exchange of resources and commodities. Military force backs up current economic and political forms of big-power coercion, as in the U.S., NATO and allied attacks on Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, with their rich resources. Both allies and rivals of the U.S. are building up their militaries for the ‘Great Game.’ See David Harvey (The New Imperialism), Samir Amin, John Smith, Jayati Ghosh, Michael Klare, Utsa Patnaik, Alfred McCoy and many other scholars. McCoy’s 2017 book In the Shadows of the American Century explores this new landscape of domination in a multipolar world. The duty of workers everywhere is to oppose imperialist domination and the wars that enforce it.
³ For the use of racist ideology to justify imperialism and sometimes win workers to support it, see the work of W.E.B. Du Bois, Mahmoud Mamdani, and Gerald Horne.
Whereas, more recently U.S. unions, in spite of the pressures on unions to support these wars, have taken antiwar actions such as the AFT vote at its 2006 convention for immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq, and the AFL-CIO 2017 convention resolution on war and militarism; and

Whereas, there is an urgent need to prevent an impending global war between the major powers by stopping the "resource wars" now being played out across the world to control supplies of oil and strategic minerals, wars that could be started at flash points like the Korean peninsula, the Middle East, the South China Sea, and the European borders of Russia; therefore, be it

Resolved, that NYSUT condemn “America’s forever wars” on the pretext of a “war on terror,” and be it further

Resolved, that as a union of educators, NYSUT raise awareness on the domestic costs of the nation’s wars impacting investments in labor and public services, and fostering racial divisiveness; and be it further

Resolved, that NYSUT support antiwar groups in exposing and by opposing the policy behind these endless wars, through curricula, teach-ins, articles, conferences, protests, rallies, sit-ins and other forms of action.

4 https://aflcio.org/resolutions/resolution-50-war-not-answer
5 Michael Klare’s term, since become standard, notably for the oil wars justified by the Carter Doctrine of U.S. intervention to protect oil interests. Carter’s advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski laid out this strategy in The Grand Chessboard.
6 See John Pilger’s documentary The Coming War with China and articles by U.S. strategic planners. Rather than supporting the “patriotic gore” of one’s “own side” in such a conflict, workers in all countries will gain by uniting to oppose global war.