

OPPOSITION TO THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN

WHEREAS, President Bush initiated the war against Afghanistan in 2001 as part of “the war on terror,” claiming that occupation by the US and its allies would destroy Al-Qaeda bases and remove the threat of terrorism; and President Bush initiated the war in Iraq in 2003, claiming that Iraq harbored weapons of mass destruction and had been involved in the murderous September 11 attacks; and

WHEREAS, the AFT at its 2008 Convention joined millions of people around the world—as well as the overwhelming majority of the US labor movement—in rejecting the false pretenses on which the United States had waged war in Iraq and calling for an immediate end to the war in Iraq; the resolution passed by the AFT stated that “the ‘war on terror’ is an ideological construct that obscures the real reasons for the war—which include control over wealth and resources”; and

WHEREAS, the war and occupation of Afghanistan, like the war in Iraq, is not a war of defense and not a war in the interest of working people; and

WHEREAS, the war and occupation of Afghanistan has demonstrably not removed the threat of terrorism by Al-Qaeda or other groups; Al-Qaeda has largely left Afghanistan, but continues to operate elsewhere;

WHEREAS, the war in Afghanistan has dragged on for more than eight years, with casualties escalating every year: 994 Americans dead and 6,037 wounded (*Department of Defense, 5/25/10*), and more than 20,000 Afghani civilians dead, many from U.S. airstrikes and unmanned drone attacks, and many more have been maimed or driven into refugee camps; and

WHEREAS, since 2001 U.S. taxpayers have spent \$299 billion on the war in Afghanistan (*National Priorities Project, May 27, 2010*), including the share for Afghanistan of the \$137 billion appropriation for the 2010 fiscal year for the wars in both Iraq and Afghanistan—spending at a time when the money was desperately needed for domestic purposes, including the creation of jobs, education, health care for all, housing relief in the foreclosure crisis, and full veterans’ benefits; and

WHEREAS, the U.S.-backed government of Hamid Karzai promulgated the “Shiite Personal Status Law,” restricting—not expanding—the rights of women, and the United Nations Higher Commissioner for Human Rights condemned this law as sanctioning marital rape; and

WHEREAS, the voice of the labor movement needs to be heard in the national debate on Afghanistan, even—perhaps especially—when it is in disagreement with a president overwhelmingly supported by labor:

RESOLVED, that the American Federation of Teachers urge the United States government not to extend and expand the war in Afghanistan, even for a period of months, but rather

to begin immediately the withdrawal of all troops, mercenaries, contractors and weapons from Afghanistan; and be it further

Resolved, that the AFT undertake an educational campaign on these issues among its membership and seek to involve its members in the political work necessary to bring about an end to the war; and be it further

Resolved, that the AFT continue to call for full support for returning troops, including but not limited to adequate healthcare, including mental health and job training, placement in jobs paying a living wage and access to education and student financial aid; and be it further

Resolved, that the AFT call for the reallocation of the funds that would otherwise be directed to the war in Afghanistan to the urgently needed social programs and job creation for working people in this country, and to expenditures for infrastructure and social programs for the Afghani people to facilitate not only peace, but peace with justice.