



... BRIEFLY

Presbyterian Peace Fellowship

Vol. 68 General Assembly Issue 2012

www.presbypeacefellowship.org ppfwitness@gmail.com

Trusting the Nonviolence of Jesus Christ Today

Peace is Patriotic! The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship invites you to

THE PEACE BREAKFAST

At the 220th General Assembly (2012) Pittsburgh, PA

Wed. July 4, 2012

*6:45 am at the Westin Convention Center Pittsburgh
1000 Penn Avenue, Allegheny Rooms I & II*



“Our Choice: Non-Violence or Non-Existence”

Speaker:

Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, PC(USA) Office of Public Witness

-Why Attend this 6:45 am Event on the 4th of July? See Page 3! →

Peaceseeker Awards Presented to:



Victor Makari, PC(USA) World Mission Area Coordinator for the Middle East
1990-2010

Alice Winters PC(USA) Mission Co-Worker, Colombia 1977-2011



Tickets \$22 online or by mail with PPF by June 20 (See p. 2 →)

\$24 through GA registration process -- Full Plated Breakfast

\$5 Rebate to Commissioners and Advisory Delegates wearing GA name tag at the Breakfast

Pre-paid Tickets can be picked up at the PPF Booth in the GA Exhibit Hall, or at the Breakfast.

Please remember that there is no guarantee that tickets will be left after official GA registration closes. Please make sure to purchase tickets by June 20, 2012. This event sells out!

E-mail inquiries to Shannan Vance-Ocampo at svanceocampo@yahoo.com

Welcome to General Assembly !

---from Rick Ufford-Chase, Executive Director,
Presbyterian Peace Fellowship

Greetings to those of you now preparing for the 220th General Assembly this summer in Pittsburgh --and to our PPF national community of over 3,000 Presbyterians.

Every General Assembly is different, but all offer the chance to strengthen the witness of the PC (USA) on the issues of peace and violence in the world --and to transform how we see ourselves as the church of Jesus when we all go home after the last gavel and hymn.

This newsletter invites you to our July 4th Peace Breakfast at GA. If you can only attend one special breakfast at GA, make this the one! It is a lifetime experience, and often a life-changing experience.

A new spirit is moving through the Presbyterian family, a spirit that challenges us to develop nonviolent approaches to the problems of violence and war today. As GA Commissioners, Advisory Delegates and as our PPF national community, you are entrusted with how the church will respond to that spirit on some of the most difficult issues that we face together.

For those serving on GA Committees handling peace and violence issues, please watch the mail for Peace Fellowship Briefing Papers prepared by our volunteers. For everyone, an overview of issues is offered here on pages 4-6. For questions or other needs, feel free to use our GA contact address ga@presbypeacefellowship.org

See you in Pittsburgh! Rick Ufford-Chase,
Moderator of the 216th General Assembly

BRIEFLY is the newsletter of the

Presbyterian Peace Fellowship

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A PEACEMAKER'S CALENDAR

June 20 -- Deadline to Purchase Discount Tickets for The Peace Breakfast to be held at the General Assembly on Wed. July 4. Two Ways to Purchase from PPF:

---Purchase on-line at www.presbypeacefellowship.org
or

--- Mail \$22 payable to "Presbyterian Peace Fellowship" to: PPF Breakfast

c/o Watchung Ave. Presbyterian Church

170 Watchung Ave. North Plainfield, NJ 07060

(Be sure to include your name and email/phone)

The GA ticket/registration office will continue to sell Peace Breakfast tickets for \$24, as available, at GA registration site at www.pcusa.org

Commissioners & Advisory Delegates, wear your GA nametag to the breakfast for a \$5 rebate on July 4.

Email inquiries to svanceocampo@yahoo.com

June 30-July 7 PC(USA) General Assembly
Pittsburgh, PA See presbypeacefellowship.org

Wed. July 4 The Peace Breakfast

6:45 – 8 am at the Westin Convention Center - Pittsburgh Allegheny Rooms I & II. See p. 3 →

Staying Home? June 30- July 7, watch www.presbypeacefellowship.org for GA News, Videos, Reflections

July 11-14 Ghost Ranch Annual Peacemaking Conference, Abiquiu, NM. Theme: "Restorers of Streets to Live In." After the morning group session, afternoons will be devoted to "Taking it to the Streets" with opportunity to participate in PC (USA) peace actions including Gun Violence Prevention, Becoming a Peace Church, the Respectful Dialogue Initiative, the Presbyterian Ministry at the UN & more. **ghostranch.org**

July 23-29 Ghost Ranch Peacemaking Seminars:

--"Making a Difference: from Charity to Justice"

--"Justice for Immigrants: Learning the Issues, Becoming Advocates" **ghostranch.org**

Aug. 6 & 9 Hiroshima and Nagasaki Days

Sept. 20-22 Presbyterian Peace Fellowship National Committee Annual Meeting, Stony Point, NY

Sept. 21 International Day of Peace

Oct. 7 World Communion Sunday/Peacemaking Offering

Oct. 25-29 Colombia Accompaniment Training. See p. 7.

Contact Linda Eastwood 216-502-5434

colombia@presbypeacefellowship.org

Tues. Nov. 6 Election Day

Who is the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship?

The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship was founded in 1944 as a national community of Presbyterians who hear Jesus calling us to engage the gospel of nonviolence with the world that we live in.

Unlike the paid professional lobbyists who will be active behind the scenes at the GA, we are PC(USA) members and volunteers with a small part-time staff. We raise and give our own funds, paying our own way to GA. We do not work for or represent any government or outside



lobbying group. We are, like you, seeking to be faithful to Christ on some of the most difficult issues faced by the world today.

PPF promotes active nonviolence as the best approach to inevitable human

conflict. We believe that the “just war” concept does not stem from Jesus. We also believe that wars in the modern age do not meet the criteria of “just war” any longer. Our time in history needs nonviolence, as never before, in all areas of human conflict---- from preventing gun violence to preventing nuclear war, from accompanying church leaders in Colombia to preventing the next war before it begins.



PPF Nonviolent Action, Washington DC

As you examine the difficult issues before the GA, please feel free to call on PPF for any information or help that we can give you. God bless you at GA and may your service there be a blessing to the world!



PPF April 2012 Convocation, “Peace Church Beta”

Peace Fellowship Booth 501/503

Visit booth 501/503 in the Exhibit Hall to meet with peace-makers. Talk about GA issues and learn about PPF activities. Pick up literature and resources on peace-making-- and get a t-shirt or button to take home.

Exhibit Hall Hours: Fri (6/29) 10 am - 7:30 pm; Sat (6/30) 9 am - 1 pm and 3 pm - 5 pm; Sun (7/1) 1:30 pm - 7:30 pm; Mon (7/2) 9 am - 7:30 pm; Tues (7/3) 9 am - 5 pm; Wed (7/4) 10 am - 7:30 pm.

Booth Conversations Join us at the booth for conversation with experts on a variety of topics. The topic schedule is available in the Exhibit Hall Guide, at www.presbypeacefellowship.org and at the booth.

Peace Breakfast Speaker J. Herbert Nelson

The witness of J. Herbert Nelson ranges from Twitter (“Not ready to make the church do something new? Then move out of the way.”) to his *Letter from the Capitol Hill Jail* (“We are required to put some feet on our prayers.”)

Director of the PC(USA) Office of Public Witness in Washington DC, the Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson brings fresh energy to organizing ordinary citizens for “speaking truth to power,” with a special focus on the empowerment of youth and young adults. A third generation graduate of Johnson C. Smith University and Seminary, Nelson holds a Doctor of Ministry from Louisville Presbyterian Seminary. As pastor of the Liberation Community Presbyterian Church in Memphis, TN and of the St. James Presbyterian Church in Greensboro, NC, J. Herbert Nelson worked to bring the model of community organizing to the service of faith-based social change.

Come Wed. July 4 to the Peace Breakfast at GA to hear: ***Our Choice: Non-Violence or Non-Existence***

2011 & 2012 Peaceseeeker Awards

At the July 4 Peace Breakfast, PPF will present the 2011 Peaceseeeker Award to the Rev. Dr. Victor Makari and the 2012 Peaceseeeker Award to the Rev. Dr. Alice Winters. Both Makari and Winters have devoted their ministries to the global witness of the PC(USA), Makari in the Middle East and Winters in Colombia. Each in their own way has transformed how North American Christians understand and stand with our faith partners in these regions of the world that have seen so much violence and war.

Born in Egypt and ordained by the Delta Presbytery of the Synod of the Nile as a “minister in mission to the United States,” Makari leaves a faithful legacy of four mission networks within the PC(USA) focused on Israel-Palestine, Iraq, Syria-Lebanon and Egypt.

Mission Co-Worker and educator Alice Winters trained generations of Colombian lay leaders, including women, in Bible study, literacy and preaching. She helped to initiate the Colombia Accompaniment Program, a legacy of Presbyterian nonviolent presence in Colombia.

The Peaceseeeker Award was created in 1970 to honor Presbyterians who chart our way on the path of peace.

Peacemaking at the General Assembly

Peacemaking Overtures and Reports Coming to the Pittsburgh GA by Marilyn White, Austin, TX
For more information or to help on these issues, contact ga@presbypeacefellowship.org

What if the church opposed a war before it started?

Greater Atlanta Presbytery has sent an overture to support diplomatic means to resolve the tensions developing between the United States and Iran and to oppose preemptive military action by any nation against Iran. The PC(USA) failed to oppose wars in Iraq and Afghanistan for years after they started. Here is an opportunity for prophetic leadership in the time before a decision for war is made. The overture could be strengthened by recognizing Iran's rights and responsibilities as a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act and by encouraging the U.S. and Iran to reestablish diplomatic relations.

Becoming a Peace Church

The remarkable action of the last General Assembly to establish a discernment process to "seek clarity as to God's call to the church to embrace nonviolence as its fundamental response to the challenges of violence, terror, and war" has born fruit in an interim report. "Encountering the Gospel of Peace Anew: An Invitation to Discernment and Witness" invites the entire church to participate in a well-designed study process, providing feedback to the Peace Discernment Steering Team as they develop proposals for the 2014 General Assembly.

Since most of the peacemaking overtures have been directed to the Middle East committee, the GA Peacemaking and International Issues Committee should be able to make consideration of this report a priority. PPF is already deeply involved in this discernment process and looks forward to responding to the invitation from GA to engage our membership in this essential work. Commissioners are urged to read the full report and bring ideas about involving their own congregations in the discernment process.

The Peacemaking and International Issues Committee will also respond to a well-written and comprehensive overture from Atlanta that reminds us of the need to maintain our historical support for the United Nations as an instrument of peacemaking and peacebuilding.

This committee has also been assigned a report from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), "For Human Rights and Civic Freedom: Movements for Democratic Change in the Arab World." It calls for honoring "the courageous witness of millions of Tunisians, Egyptians, Libyans, Syrians, Yemenis, Bahrainis, Palestinians, and others who are seeking a major transition to democracy—sometimes despite violence and distortions—lifting up in particular commitment to peaceful change based in shared moral conviction and spiritual discipline." In other words, the church will recognize and endorse the peaceful and democratic movements known as the "Arab Spring." Among the many important statements in this document are the ones regarding military intervention and responding to terrorism:

Grieving the last decade of war and distraction from economic and ecological realities, the General Assembly affirms the need for extensive public debate and greater transparency on decisions to use military force. The assembly affirms the national and international legal processes of the War Powers Act and the United Nations Security Council to ensure that military intervention of any kind is undertaken as a "last resort" and reflects a high consensus among democratic nations that it may serve a "just peace." The practices of undeclared war, including cyber attack, targeted killing by drone aircraft and other means, covert infiltration and "false flag" operations (that set up others for blame), expand government power, and threaten civil liberties as well as the national sovereignty of other nations. This recognizes that General Assemblies have supported humanitarian military intervention to prevent genocide (as in 1998), while favoring non-military intervention insofar as possible.

Threats of terrorism should be addressed primarily as matters of international policing and as part of the civilian criminal justice system, given the dangers of military overreaction, indefinite counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations, and possible abuse of due process. The denial of due process to anyone, anywhere, makes everyone, everywhere, vulnerable to abuses in the name of national security.

These statements somewhat mitigate PPF concerns about previous GA statements on military intervention and terrorism, which weakened respect for traditional legal processes and even the "last resort" requirement for military action. We would, of course, go further in claiming the special role of the church to advocate only for nonviolent and diplomatic solutions to international conflicts.

Israel-Palestine and Divestment

Divestment: Middle East Peacemaking issues will be considered in a separate committee from other international concerns. After many years of corporate engagement efforts, the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment is recommending that “Caterpillar, Hewlett-Packard, and Motorola Solutions be placed on the General Assembly Divestment List until such time as they have ceased profiting from non-peaceful pursuits in Israel-Palestine.” After years of attempts to have discussions with these companies about their support for Israeli military operations in the West Bank and Gaza, MRTI has concluded that they are unwilling to either negotiate or change their policies. This leaves the PC(USA), through the voice of this GA, with the responsibility of deciding this question: **Should the church continue to profit from the worst abuses of the occupation?** The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship supports all of the divestment and other actions called for in this report.



(left, Israeli Defense Forces Caterpillar D9R Armored Bulldozer photo by Math Knight 2008

Boycotts: Palestinian Christians sent an urgent appeal to fellow Christians around the world in the form of the *Kairos* document that called for active nonviolence to help resolve the decades-long conflict in the Middle East. The 2010 General Assembly responded only by recommending that Presbyterians read and study the document. The *Kairos* document pled for economic solidarity in the form of boycotts, divestment, and sanctions—a plea that has gone unanswered by Presbyterians. An overture on “Responding to the Call from Palestinian Christians for Economic Solidarity” asks for very modest first

steps: examining the ways in which our economic power as consumers and investors may be complicit with the occupation and beginning to consider using the tool of boycotts. While this would be a positive but cautious start to exploring church-endorsed boycotts, commissioners will also have the option of taking more decisive steps with an overture from San Francisco calling for boycotts of AHAVA Dead Sea Laboratories Beauty Products and of all date products of Hadiklaim, the Israel Date Growers Cooperative, Ltd., often marketed by the brand names: King Solomon Dates and Jordan River.

Another modest but meaningful step the G.A. could make is to simply acknowledge that “Israel’s Law and Practices Constitute Apartheid Against Palestinian People,” as called for in an overture from the Presbytery of Muskingum Valley and three other presbyteries.

Confronting Violence in the Day Care Center

The Social Justice Issues committee will consider several items dealing with economic justice, including a very comprehensive report from ACSWP. Of interest to those of us promoting nonviolence in all walks of life is an overture from Grace Presbytery in opposition to corporal punishment. We can also lend our support for “A Resolution on Racism, Incarceration, and Restoration” from the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, which asks that a new study be prepared and shared with the church for action at every level showing the connection between “the war on drugs” and incarceration as a way of social management.

If We Need a Peacemaking Program, Shouldn’t We Fund It?

The General Assembly Mission Council is asking General Assembly to restructure all of the special offerings in significant ways. Perhaps most importantly, the proposal would eliminate the Peacemaking Offering, and

replace it with a World Communion Offering. Half would remain with congregations and presbyteries, and the rest would be “allocated bi-annually by the GAMC for global witness and outreach beyond the United States.”

How will peacemaking be funded? The revised One Great Hour of Sharing Offering (OGHS) will now fund “ministries of justice, peace, development and compassion as determined bi-annually by the General Assembly Mission Council.” Not only will the three agencies currently benefiting from OGHS lose their designated percentages of this offering and begin sharing revenues with the Peacemaking Program, but none of the four programs will be specifically named as recipients of the offering. This leaves no established means of funding for the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, or Self-Development of People. The percentages for each ministry and the church entity doing the work will be decided by the GAMC.

While PPF has often wished the Peacemaking Program were a stronger presence in the church, removing its funding is NOT a step in the right direction. A special offering for World Mission is not a bad idea but let's not sacrifice the Peacemaking Program to make it happen.

Silencing the Prophetic Witness of General Assembly

The Committee to Review Biennial Assemblies is recommending a significant change to the General Assembly overture process that, if approved by the 220th General Assembly (2012) and then the presbyteries, would drastically limit access to the GA docket. Overtures would not be presented to the Assembly unless concurrences were first obtained from ten percent of the presbyteries. There are 173 presbyteries, so any overture would need approval from 18 presbyteries. A similar requirement would limit Commissioners' Resolutions. They would need the signatures of commissioners from ten percent of the presbyteries.

In practice, these new rules will require each presbytery drafting an overture to convince many other presbyteries to debate and vote on it. Will presbyteries add docket time to consider a flood of business items from outside their boundaries, or will many worthy items never reach the G.A.?

The concerns that Presbyterian Peace Fellowship (PPF) members take to their sessions and then to their presbyteries are often important peace and justice issues that have not yet caught the attention of the wider church. How will the session of a small church concerned about Colombia or Iran or an emerging environmental issue get an overture all the way to General Assembly? They can certainly use their existing relationships and access to their own presbyteries to get it passed there. But where are the resources and the access to take it to 18 presbyteries?

There are other proposals in the report to help focus and streamline the General Assembly process, including rules that move more business to the consent agenda. The G.A. should not set rules that limit the democratic processes that give small groups with big concerns some reasonable access to the docket.

Missing from Proposed GA Actions: Reviving the Witness of the Church on Nuclear Weapons

While a Commissioner's Resolution is best used rarely and for late-breaking circumstances, the status of the US nuclear weapons budget and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty merit watching for late-breaking developments that may warrant a Commissioner's Resolution at GA.

Please contact ga@presbypeacefellowship.org to follow this concern.

1. The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, signed by the US but which the Senate failed to ratify in 1999, has now been signed by 183 nations and ratified by 157. Ratifications by eight more nations, including the US, are required for the treaty to go into force. The President has considered reviving ratification hearings on the CTBT, which provides a verifiable ban on all nuclear explosions.
2. Nuclear Weapons Spending: recent documents show that the Dept. of Defense is thwarted by the Dept. of Energy's unwillingness to cut nuclear weapons budgets to reflect the end of the Cold War (US nuclear weapons are funded in the DoE budget). The SANE Act (Smarter Approach to Nuclear Expenditures Act, HR 3974) could initiate a summer 2012 vote to cut nuclear weapons spending by \$100 billion over the next decade to reflect the end of the Cold War and the urgent need to reduce government spending where possible. At the same time, other bills may emerge to maintain or increase current US spending on nuclear weapons in ways that deepen nuclear pork spending and increase the risk of nuclear war.

Colombia Accompaniment: Report from a Delegation and the Opportunity to Serve

Colombia's statistics of violence – over 5 million displaced from their land, over 50,000 “disappeared” – can seem overwhelming. But they have human faces: a pastor who has seen his brother murdered but who refuses to hate, a widowed mother left destitute when her land was stolen but who has managed to get all her kids through school, or a father who has seen his three sons killed and has never regained hope for his own future. These were some of the people we met in February when PPFers Shannan Vance-Ocampo and Linda Eastwood led a group of seven delegates to Colombia.

With amazing “in-country” support from Mamie Broadhurst (PCUSA mission co-worker in Colombia,) we traveled first to rural Urabá (N.W. Colombia) and then to Bogota. Our goal was to learn more about the witness of non-violence in the midst of Colombia's conflict. For our several days in rural Urabá (N.W. Colombia), we split into small groups hosted in homes in different communities which were chosen because in each of them most of the church members, and the pastors, had suffered violent displacement. Some of our richest experiences came from playing with host-family kids or sharing stories – both happy and horrific – over kitchen tables.

By the time we visited with church groups and peace Non-Governmental Organizations in Bogota, those statistics on violence, displacement and non-violent resistance were no longer just statistics; they were the faces of the friends we had made in Urabá (photo below). These human connections energize us to advocate back in the United States for a Colombia policy that is less militarized and less driven by commercial interests at the expense of human rights. (PPF later hosted three Colombian pastors at Ecumenical Advocacy Days and on “the hill” in Washington DC with that message.)

Are these “human connections” that you might make? Our Accompaniment Program in Colombia provides our partners there with a pastoral and protective presence and equips members of the PC(USA) to help change the policies that contribute to violence. If you – or someone you know – could give a month to serve as

accompanier, then plan to come to the upcoming training / discernment session, October 25-29, at the Stony Point Center, New York. We, and our partners in Colombia, look forward to working with you. Visit our web-site at <http://www.presbypeacefellowship.org/colombia/accompaniment> and then contact Accompaniment Coordinator Linda Eastwood at colombia@presbypeacefellowship.org



Peacemakers in San Antonio Call on City Council to Support Dept. of Peace

For over a year the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship has been developing a pilot program in San Antonio, Texas. The program is called: *On Getting One's City Council to Endorse Legislation Calling for the Establishment of a Department of Peace (H.R. 808)*.

A big step was taken in this process the evening of March 14, 2012. Forty-two area residents attended the “Citizens to be Heard” open-forum session of the Alamo City's City Council – almost all clad in “Ask me about the Department of Peace” T-shirts on the front and with the pertinent website www.thepeacealliance.org on the back.



They were there to support three presentations being made to the City Council on the significance of the H.R. 808 legislation and why San Antonio should support a US Department of Peace at the cabinet level. Two ministers spoke, including the Rev. Gusti Newquist, interim pastor of Madison Square Presbyterian Church in downtown San Antonio, and a retired military officer, also a Presbyterian, Ken Sheppard.

Following the presentations, a delegation visited with Councilmember Bernal Diego on the steps needed to get on the “official” agenda of the Council. Phineas Washer of PPF's National Committee is steering the project under PPF's auspices. For more information on this event and next steps, contact him at pwasher@earthlink.net or 26511 Jules Court, Spring, TX, 77386.

Note from the PC(USA)

Peacemaking Program: From nonviolent communication skills to

conflict resolution techniques to cultural relationship building, the Department of Peace would employ proven and effective strategies for diminishing violence in our country and the world. The 214th General Assembly (2002) called for “the creation of a U.S. Department of Peace at the cabinet level, in order to provide focused government efforts to promote peacemaking.”

RESOURCES

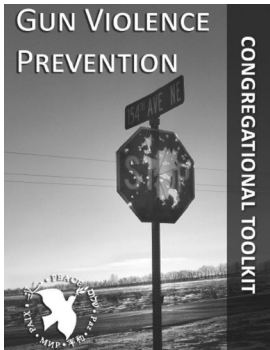
Global Military Spending Exceeds \$1.7 Trillion in 2011

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) released its report on 2011 military spending, showing that nations worldwide spent at least \$1.7 trillion. The United States spent more than any other nation, with military expenditures of \$711 billion (about \$2 billion per day). The next highest spender was China (\$143 billion), followed by Russia (\$72 billion). "Military spending: How much does the military cost each country?" *The Guardian*, April 17, 2012.

Presbyterian Peace Fellowship Toolkit on Gun Violence Prevention

---by Maggie Leonard, Atlanta, GA

PPF offers a free on-line toolkit to help congregations engage the issue of Gun Violence in their local communities. The toolkit includes a Bible study, stances of PC(USA) on gun violence prevention, national gun violence statistics, ideas for engaging gun shops that sell weapons illegally and additional resources to spur conversation and lift up gun violence prevention in worship. Download the toolkit at presbypeacefellowship.org



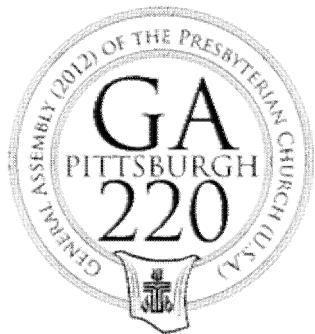
Only after I began working on this issue, did I allow myself to realize how my life has been affected by gun violence. In my short 28 years, I've had one young family member killed in an accidental shooting, a cousin's husband and two congregation members from my home church commit suicide and I've ministered as a chaplain to a family who lost a three year old girl after she was shot at point blank. I serve a congregation that feels the sting of violence on the streets all too often. Being able to talk about gun violence is a pastoral concern---sadly, one that is not easily broached in any context, especially the church.

PPF hopes that our toolkit will help congregations to see the gun violence in our midst, as well as to hear God's call to concretely address it in our home communities. Please contact me with questions and let us know if you plan to use the toolkit. maggie@presbypeacefellowship.org

WORTH READING for background info on the Greater Atlanta Presbytery Overture opposing an attack on Iran: Search Google on-line for this overlooked commentary: **"Whatever Happened to Talking About a War Before Launching It?"** March 2012, by Haviland Smith, CIA Chief of Counter Terrorism Staff (ret.). Calls for a national discussion of the questionable merits of US foreign intervention as a way to curb terrorism or achieve other goals.

**Presbyterian Peace Fellowship
17 Cricketown Road
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General Assembly Issue

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GA Peace Issues Overview

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