

7. August. 2006

Dennis Kucinich  
US House of Representatives  
14400 Detroit Ave  
Cleveland, OH 44107  
Sent via FAX 216-228-6465

RE: Request to Introduce Legislation Renaming Department of Defense to Department of War.

Dear Representative Kucinich,

Thank you for your continued Congressional leadership in promoting the creation of a US Department of Peace. Such a measure, if enacted, will augment current problem-solving measures, providing practical, nonviolent solutions to the problems of domestic and international conflict.

This letter requests your action on an opposite institution. On August 7, 1789, the US Congress created the US Department of War. The first Secretary of War was General Henry Knox. The Department of War was an agency of the federal government from 1789 until 1947. Knox was the first of 58 Secretaries of War. During this time, the United States military conducted military wars, invasions and occupations of dozens of Native American lands and scores of sovereign nations. The name of the agency of the US government planning, executing, and evaluating these wars, invasions and occupations accurately reflected its purpose of war making and war fighting – the Department of War.

In 1947, the Department of War was renamed the Department of Defense. The name given to the head of this agency was renamed the Secretary of Defense. Yet the purpose of the agency didn't change – war making and war fighting. The US military continued to wage wars against sovereign nations on foreign soils – Korea, Vietnam, China, Laos, Cambodia, Grenada, Panama, Bosnia, Serbia, Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Iraq again, etc. A majority of US military troops are stationed beyond US borders. More than one-half of the US military budget is earmarked for the purchase of weapons designed to initiate war, for weapons that are currently used abroad, and for US military bases located in 80 or more foreign nations.

On behalf of the Northeast Ohio AFSC, we call on you on this day, the 217th anniversary of the beginning of the US War Department, to introduce federal legislation which:

- Renames the Department of Defense to the Department of War – as it once was.
- Renames the Secretary of Defense to the Secretary of War – as it once was.
- Renames any and all expenditures allocated for this Department as the War Budget.

It's imperative that US citizens clearly understand the functions and purposes of this Department. Labeling war making and war fighting as “defense” is misleading. Citizens have the right to know how what their tax dollars are being used for. In this case, “war” is far more accurate and precise description than “defense” given current and past military policies dating back to 1947. Thus, names, labels and descriptions should reflect this.

Feel free to contact us if you wish to discuss this request further.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Greg Coleridge  
Director  
Economic Justice & Empowerment Program

Dana Williams  
Co-Clerk  
Economic Justice & Empowerment Program

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The AFSC is a Quaker-related social action organization committed to social justice, peace, and humanitarian service. Its work is based on the Religious Society of Friends (Quaker) belief in the worth of every person, and faith in the power of love to overcome violence and injustice. Founded in 1917 to provide conscientious objectors with an opportunity to aid civilian victims during World War I, today the AFSC has programs throughout the world that focus on issues related to peace-building and demilitarization, economic and social justice, and youth.