



Veterans For Peace Chapter 11
Corrie-Mizo Chapter
846 Front Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

May 12, 2008

Dear Mayor Coonerty, Vice-Mayor Matthews and Santa Cruz City Council Members Ed Porter, Emily Reilly, Mike Rotkin, Tony Madrigal and Lynn Robinson,

At our recent Veterans For Peace meeting, there was unanimous agreement to request that the City Council seek authorization from the Governor of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger, to fly US flags in California, at half-staff, in mourning of the deaths caused by the US invasions and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Over 4,000 US soldiers, have died in Iraq. Thousands more are maimed and disfigured for life. Many thousands of soldiers are suffering psychologically, traumatized with PTSD from exposure to the horrors of war. The overwhelmed Veterans Administration cannot treat the number of returning soldiers requesting mental health care, and suicides among Veterans who are not getting the help they need have skyrocketed.

Fellow Santa Cruz county residents are currently deployed, dying and sustaining serious physical and psychological harm in these occupations. Some are serving repeated tours. Flying the US Flag at half-staff indicates the level of concern for the sacrifices being made by local residents serving in the military. It is without a doubt a local issue, as well as a national issue.

There have been over 1.2 million Iraqi civilians killed, many of whom were women and children. Millions more have fled as impoverished, homeless refugees from an illegal US invasion and occupation based on deliberate lies.

We mourn their deaths, the deaths of our soldiers and the massive human suffering. Lowering the flag to half-staff respects the passing of the members of the Armed Forces of the United States. This sign of respect has been sadly missing.

The unanimous request from our veteran patriots is that our US flags in Santa Cruz be continually flown at half-staff, as long as members of the Armed Forces are dying in Iraq or Afghanistan. Please ask Governor Schwarzenegger to issue the required proclamation, as this falls within his jurisdiction.

The courtesy of a reply would be much appreciated.

We plan on conducting our own public flag-lowering ceremony at the Veterans Memorial building on Flag Day, Saturday June 14th at 12:00 pm . The press will be invited. We would appreciate our city council representatives' presence and support at this simple yet powerfully symbolic ceremony.

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