

# **PALM SUNDAY**

## **Rally for Peace**

**April 5, 2009**

**Parramatta, 2.00 pm**

**Develop Afghanistan**

**Peace through Dialogue!**

**No more troops to Afghanistan**

**Employment not War!**

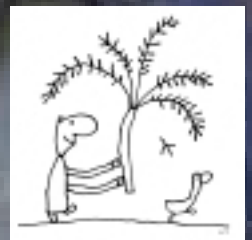
**Amphitheatre at Parramatta Town Hall**

**2.00pm - Multi-Faith Prayers for Peace**

**Fr Pat Mullins, priest at Mt Druitt;**

**Exodus Choir**

**2.30pm - Rally - Dr Sue Wareham, Medical Association for Prevention of War  
Sally McManus, Australian Services Union**



**Sponsored by NSW Ecumenical Council  
Organised by Sydney Peace & Justice Coalition**

**[www.nswpeace.org](http://www.nswpeace.org)**

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# No more Australian troops to Afghanistan!

## Peace through Dialogue!

**Prime Minister Rudd is poised to send up to 5,000 more soldiers to fight in Afghanistan. The Obama Administration is delaying a formal request while public opinion is being gauged in Australia. Over 50 per cent of Australians now oppose the war in Afghanistan. The government needs to answer many questions before possibly increasing its military role there.**

The war in Afghanistan is part of a much larger region greatly destabilised by the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the subsequent horrific war there. It is also destabilised by the convulsion of the Government of Pakistan, also due largely to the huge mistakes of the Bush administration. China, Russia, Iran and India, as well as Pakistan, are neighbours of Afghanistan. All of them, with different interests, will try to influence events in Afghanistan. It appears that the Obama administration is now willing to talk to them about Afghanistan.

### Questions that must be answered:

1. If an increase of Australian forces in Oruzgan Province is to replace the Dutch forces withdrawing in 2010, shouldn't the Prime Minister tell us why the Dutch troops are going, before replacing them?
2. If European members of NATO are unwilling to increase the number of combat troops in Afghanistan, why should Australia do so?
3. Isn't it true that the Karzai government is negotiating with parts of the Taliban, as is the UK and UN, because they recognize that the war is not working and that a political solution is required?
4. Since neither the British Army nor the Soviet Army could prevail in Afghanistan, shouldn't the Prime Minister recognize that the US and Australian forces cannot prevail in this military conflict either? Isn't it more responsible to refuse to go in deeper, to withdraw military forces and promote a political solution?
5. Isn't the war in Afghanistan degrading Australia's credibility as a genuine part of the international community, upholding international law, because Australian soldiers are killing civilians including women and children, only to support the general concept of the US Alliance?
6. Since the Bush gang - and the incoming Obama administration - could not define a credible, justifiable strategy for the Afghanistan War, how can Australia justify it? It is no longer credible to claim that the war is to capture Osama bin Laden because of the terror attacks in the USA way back on Sept 11, 2001.
7. While the Taliban is a reactionary political movement which commits atrocities against civilians, isn't the US aerial bombing - particularly of wedding and funeral processions - killing even more civilians?
8. Isn't it true that the Taliban are thriving because European Christian troops are taking control of their country? Doesn't the high civilian casualties only make the Taliban stronger, and destabilise Pakistan and India?
9. Isn't it accurate to see the Afghan government of President Hamid Karzai as a coalition of warlords who also engage in repression, discriminate against women, and are now the world leaders in heroin exports?
10. Wasn't the Howard policy in Afghanistan part of his subservience to the George W Bush version of US interests? Shouldn't Australia have an independent approach to foreign policy, even within the US Alliance, especially in the Afghanistan War where Australian soldiers are being killed and wounded?
11. Won't the outcome in Afghanistan be similar to Viet Nam - another cohort of young Australian men and women with their lives brutalized for nothing, and brutalised communities who call Oruzgan Province 'home'?
12. Isn't Australia's Afghanistan War commitment now costing \$575 million per year? Wouldn't this be better spent on essential public services, the uplift of Aboriginal communities, and on a peaceful Afghanistan?

### Sydney Peace & Justice Coalition

**Sponsored by:** UnionsNSW, Construction Forestry Mining & Energy Union NSW, Aust Manufacturing Workers Union NSW, NSW Teachers Fed, Australian Services Union, Pax Christi, MSC - Peace & Justice, Quakers Peace & Justice, Women's International League for Peace & Freedom, People for Nuclear Disarmament NSW, Progressive Labour Party, Labor for Refugees, Communist Party of Australia (Marxist Leninist), Evatt Foundation, SEARCH Foundation.

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