



# COURAGE TO RESIST

*Supporting the troops who refuse to fight!*

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May 2017 National Newsletter

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## We saved her life! Chelsea Manning free May 17

*Courage to Resist is proud to have successfully served as fiscal and campaign staff manager for the Chelsea Manning Defense Fund and Support Network for nearly seven years. Those funds provided Chelsea's legal teams the resources to wage this battle. And the campaign staff and grassroots activists around the world made victory possible. It still feels unreal. We did it. Wow.*

Courage to Resist, with excerpts from the Chelsea Manning Support Network statement. April 9, 2017

President Obama commuted all but four months of the remaining prison sentence of Chelsea Manning, the former US Army Intelligence Analyst serving 35-years for releasing classified information, during the final days of his term. Chelsea's attorney, Nancy Hollander, who spoke with President Obama's counsel, confirmed that "Chelsea will walk out of Fort Leavenworth a free woman on May 17th."

A commutation cannot be reversed by a future president.

"This fantastic news goes a long way to making amends for the brutal treatment Chelsea was illegally subjected to while awaiting trial at the Quantico Marine Brig. It's tragic that

*continued on inside*



## 3rd Annual Shut Down Creech! Stop the Drone Wars

Join us April 23–April 29, 2017 at Creech Air Force Base, Indian Springs, Nevada for a 3rd national mobilization of nonviolent resistance to shut down killer drone operations in Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia and everywhere. Includes weeklong Camp Justice peace encampment.

In 2005, Creech Air Force Base secretly became the first US base in the country to carry out illegal, remotely controlled assassinations using the MQ-1 Predator drones, and in 2006, the more advanced Reaper drones were added to its arsenal.

For more information about why we protest at Creech, and up-to-date event info: [shutdowncreech.blogspot.com](http://shutdowncreech.blogspot.com)

## Help us support imprisoned war resister Army Pvt Ryan Johnson

Courage to Resist. April 9, 2017

We're reaching out to you to help imprisoned Army soldier Ryan Johnson and his wife Jenna. We're helping them get on their feet upon Ryan's expected May release from Miramar Brig in Southern California. Your support is critical to help them begin their next chapter.

Ryan Johnson hasn't gotten many easy breaks. He lost his father at the age of three. Growing up he would face years of abuse at the hands of a new stepfather. As a teen Ryan escaped into patterns of drug abuse, self-harm, and finally dropped out of high school. Now he endures the insult of military imprisonment after literal injury serving the US armed forces. This pall of unfortunate circumstances doesn't mean there isn't light in Ryan's life. He has persevered, with his compassion, kindness, and conscience intact.

Another bright spot appeared in Ryan's life when he met Jen at a concert in 2000, through a mutual friend. They bonded immediately, and they've been inseparable since. In Jen's statement to Ryan's court martial judge, she shared a

***"I am looking forward to getting out of the brig and being with my wife again. ... I'm not sorry for my beliefs and refusing to participate in an illegal war."***

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# Help us support imprisoned war resister Ryan Johnson continued

touching story. Early in their relationship, Jen was driving when Ryan turned and thanked her. "For what?" she queried. "For inspiring me to want to be a better person". Ryan had found hope. Soon after, they planned to marry, using their union as a fulcrum toward a new start for the both of them.

In spite of their thriving relationship, work options in their California valley town were sparse. The US Army was an escape route that promised deliverance for Ryan and his new wife. In 2003 Ryan Johnson and the United States Army entered an agreement. The Army never intended to honor its agreement (which his superiors confirmed), yet expected 100% unconditional compliance from Ryan.

The US Army promised Ryan a lot of things it wouldn't deliver, and delivered a lot of things it didn't promise. Ryan was promised a non-combat supply logistics career. He got a transfer to a non-supply combat unit. He was promised military healthcare. He received medical malpractice—an untreated spinal cord injury with 2 crushed vertebrae. There was also a broken jaw, nine missing teeth, and a floating bone fragment from a dental procedure gone awry. Ryan was promised honorable service to his country. He instead got orders to an illegal war, injuries be damned. With a year's worth of opiates and a duffel bag, the Army was set on sending a broken soldier to a war zone. Ryan and his wife of now 15 years were forced to make an impossible decision. The stakes were high: Ryan's well-being, that of Ryan's fellow soldiers, and his very freedom.

Ryan made the decision not to go to war; he and Jen packed their car in the wee hours and drove off base. With assistance from the GI Rights Hotline, they learned their options. They found they weren't alone in resistance. They

attended a court-martial for Navy war resister Pablo Paredes. They met other conscientious objectors. They were seeing resistance was possible.

Soon, they packed up and sought refuge in Canada. Ryan and Jen became active among a tight-knit group of

US war resisters in Toronto. They helped launch a chapter of Iraq Veterans Against the War for GI's north of the border. Ryan went on a Canadian national tour to bolster support for US resisters in the country.

The refuge Canada offered some 50,000 Vietnam-era war resisters vanished for post-9/11 resisters. The

conservative Harper government at the time moved to deport asylum-seeking US war resisters. Those deported were taken into US military custody, and all but one was sentenced to prison. This reflects a punitive US military policy toward troops taking conscientious positions against war, as illustrated by Ryan's current incarceration.

Ryan, despite circumstances is doing pretty well and keeping a positive

attitude. Upon returning to duty last year, he immediately built a close rapport with fellow soldiers. During his court martial a line of soldiers, including four non-commissioned officers, testified as witnesses to his strong character—so many in fact that the judge turned several away due to time constraints. Ryan is currently working in the brig kitchen, and is able to call Jenna every other day for 30 minutes.

Ryan recently shared, "I am looking forward to getting out of the brig and being with my wife again. Here in the brig, things have been ok, mostly just uneventful. I am sorry things didn't work out in Canada and while I apologize for the way I went about things, I'm not sorry for my beliefs and refusing to participate in an illegal war."

Ryan and Jen are both counting the days until his May release. They plan to relocate to the Denver area soon after. They will be new to the Mile High City, but they are eager to secure housing, find work, and to get connected as quickly as possible. After 15 years, taking their first steps toward a life of freedom is long overdue.

With your help today, we will help Ryan and Jenna toward their much-delayed futures. If you are able to support, please donate. If you are in the Denver area and able to offer housing, employment, or personal support for Ryan & Jenna's transition, please contact Courage to Resist.

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## Empire War Status continued from back

and support for the killer regime of Saudi Arabia. The goal of getting rid of Assad in Syria may be changing into a goal of partitioning Syria. But it will still mean continued killing and continued U.S. troops on the ground as recently witnessed in Syria as well as in Yemen. Trump seems to be getting in line with the CIA, the deep state, and the Neo-cons he previously opposed.

Never forget that the US murdered approximately thirty percent of the population of North Korea in the 1950s. It used insane amounts of bomb tonnage, cluster-bombs, and fleas carrying bubonic plague, amongst other biological diseases. Never forget that the US bombed Laos into the stone-age as

it killed three million people during the Vietnam War.

The United States has been the biggest global terrorist in the world during my lifetime. It is important to remember and reflect on all of the lies and all of the bombs and all of the wars started overtly and covertly by the United States. We must be vigilant as fake news is spread by complicit corporate media, enthusiastically, mouthing lies of the Deep State.

We must mobilize counter-recruitment campaigns in high schools and communities throughout the US. It is as important as ever for taxpayers to have the Courage to Resist paying

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## Chelsea Manning free May 17 continued

Chelsea had to spend 7-years imprisoned for releasing documents that should never have been classified in the first place, and were clearly in the public interest," stated Courage to Resist Project Director and Chelsea Manning Support Network co-founder Jeff Paterson. "All of us who worked on Chelsea's behalf are overjoyed."

The Support Network was founded in the weeks following Chelsea's arrest in Iraq in May 2010. We covered 100% of the legal fees associated with her pretrial hearing, court martial trial, and raised a significant amount toward the legal costs of her appeal. Many days during her trial, the courtroom was packed with supporters wearing "truth" shirts.

"Over the last few years, I've come to know Chelsea as a deeply intelligent, sensitive woman who doesn't deserve to spend decades in prison. I often feared that any more time behind bars would be devastating for Chelsea, or potentially even lethal, especially with President-Elect Trump taking office. Soon, she'll have a chance to live the life she's been denied for almost seven years," said Rainey Reitman, co-founder of the Chelsea Manning Support Network.

In addition to fundraising, the organization worked to raise awareness of Chelsea's case. We held hundreds of rallies around the world, from San Francisco to London. Chelsea's supporters became regular participants in yearly pride parades over the last



Supporters wearing "truth" shirts line up to enter the courtroom during the trial at Fort Meade, MD.

several years. In addition, we placed billboards in Los Angeles and Kansas City, ran a full-page *New York Times* ad, and helped generate over one million petition signatures in support of Chelsea's release.

"In conversations Chelsea and I had while she was imprisoned, I learned that she's not only driven by principles, but that she believes in the foundations of America's government. She dreamed about attending graduate school, and helping to research ways that government could use technology to improve transparency and public participation. Whatever she chooses to do now, the world is better for having a bright young person free to pursue a meaningful life," noted former campaign manager Emma Cape.

"I believe that the support for Chelsea demonstrated that whistleblowers who oppose injustice will not face powerful government

retribution alone," declared Rainey Reitman. "Today's victory is a victory for all those who stood with Chelsea."

Now that Chelsea is able to speak out publicly, and will soon be free, it's appropriate that her message take center stage. The Chelsea Manning Support Network has come to an end so that Chelsea can better amplify her own voice and message, letting that take center stage in advocacy efforts going forward.

Chelsea's attorney, Chase Strangio, has created the official Chelsea Manning Welcome Home Fund to support her in the months after her release from prison. The fund has raised nearly \$110,000 to help Chelsea kick-start her new life.

For everyone who dared to dream we could save Chelsea's life, and did something towards that goal, you made this happen.

Finally, special thanks to:

David Coombs, Daniel Ellsberg, Rainey Reitman, Jeff Paterson, Gerry Condon, Bob Meola, Kevin Zeese, Emma Cape, Trevor Timm, Alexa O'Brien, Evan Greer, Chase Strangio, Nancy Hollander, David Solnit, Michael Thurman, Charlotte Sheasby-Coleman, Logan Price, Jonathan Smucker, Owen Wiltshire, Nathan Fuller, Melissa Keith, Farah Muhsin, Gary Virginia, Leez, Martin MacKerel, Michael Moore, Glenn Greenwald, Kevin Gosztola, Clark Stoeckley, Denver Nicks, Mike Gogulski, and Charlie Savage, as well as Courage to Resist, Alliance for Global Justice, Demand Progress, Fight for the Future, ACLU, EFF, Veterans for Peace, Iraq Veterans Against the War, Get Up Street Theater, Copepink, Freedom of the Press Foundation, and Amnesty International.

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## Empire War Status continued from left

war taxes and for young people to resist the lies of military recruiters and for enlisted military personnel, and officers, to question authority, and to have the Courage to Resist the perpetual illegal and immoral wars of the United States. Military personnel must consider deserting from all branches of the military.

The 2012 NDAA makes declaring martial law easy for any President. That is another reason troops should consider desertion.

Trump wants a larger military and new nuclear weapons. He wants to raise the US military budget by an amount as large as the entire Russian military budget.

When people talk about joining The Resistance, these days, don't be fooled. Are they Neo-liberal/con members of the Democratic Party resisting Trump, but fine with the war-mongering, war economy and war culture of the US Empire? Real Resistance has always been and must be Resistance to war, war culture, war economy, and Empire. Courage to Resist must permeate our society. We must teach it to our children. We can't let our friends, family, neighbors, or strangers be fooled by fake news from the merchants of death. It's time for real mass resistance to the terrorism of the USA perpetrated by its military and by its repressive fascist measures at home.

# Empire War Status

Op-ed by Bob Meola, Courage to Resist.  
April 6, 2017

A lot of people miss Barack Obama because he smiled nicely while he dropped 26,000 bombs on seven nations, last year. He was much more pleasant than the guy currently occupying the White House. He was, seemingly, so nice that most Americans looked the other way while he prosecuted more whistleblowers than all other Presidents, combined, ever, ran seven wars, and deported more than two million people. He signed the 2012 NDAA and left that tool of fascism to Trump. When neo-liberal Democrats are in power, liberals get comfortable with wars and feel no need to protest them. Hillary Clinton, the candidate of the CIA, pushed Obama to

take out Gaddafi, in Libya, against the advice of the Pentagon. The U.S. armed Isis in Syria to take out Assad. Hillary said she would declare a no-fly-zone in Syria, thus risking war with Russia, who was invited to aid Syria in its battle against terrorists. She wanted to risk nuclear World War III, before the "Russia!" talk begun by the Democratic National Committee to distract people from its interference in the 2016 Presidential Primaries, when it rigged them against

***"Trump wants to expand the military. He wants newer, bigger, and "better" nuclear weapons. He wants to raise the US military budget by an amount that is as big as the entire Russian military budget..."***

Bernie Sanders and asked the media to "elevate" Trump.

The Democratic Party and their corporate media propagandists are reviving the cold war and flirting with war with Russia. Americans are eating Russia Did It propaganda daily. It is the U.S. that has interfered with 81 foreign elections and overthrown approximately five dozen governments since World War II.

Secretary of State Clinton and her Neo-con Assistant Secretary of State, Victoria Nuland, toppled the government of Ukraine. The new government in Ukraine is filled with Neo-Nazis. Crimea was illegally annexed to Ukraine in 1991. Most people in Crimea speak Russian and identify as Russian. Independent poll watchers declared that 83% of the people of Crimea legitimately voted to be annexed by Russia. It is NATO, backed by the U.S. that has been the aggressor in backing Ukraine. Russia was not the problem. Yet the Obama administration foolishly risked war with Russia.

NATO is a force for western

aggression. After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, there was no reason for NATO to exist. Russia was promised that NATO would not advance toward Russia in Eastern Europe. Yet NATO slaughtered people, committed ethnic cleansing, used cluster bombs, depleted uranium, and chemical weapons and one third of its bombing victims were children in Kosovo, and in Bosnia and U.S. mercenaries committed war crimes and backed Neo-Nazis in Croatia when Yugoslavia was destroyed.

NATO was used to support illegal aggression in Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria. General Wesley Clark told us that the Pentagon had a plan to take out seven countries in five years. The plan included Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and Iran.

Hillary Clinton was the candidate of the CIA. She would have enabled any and all of its dangerous moves around the world. Donald Trump did not want war with Russia or Syria. But that may be changing. The Neo-cons of the Democrat and Republican parties have created a new cold war with Russia. They want to complete their regime change in Syria by taking out Bashar Al Assad. CIA propagandists have always fed the mainstream media the fake news that has become gospel in the U.S. The "Russia!" lies are becoming a cyber-Gulf of Tonkin and the new WMD excuse for U.S. aggression against Russia. Russians understandably fear a nuclear first strike by the United States. The U.S. has moved its airbases closer to Russian borders and surrounded Russia, China, and Korea with military bases and nuclear weapons.

Trump is being pressured into continuing the Bush/Obama legacy of murderous drone strikes. He is continuing the illegal bombing of Yemen

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