



**The Interfaith Alliance**  
LONG ISLAND CHAPTER  
[www.interfaithalliance-li.org](http://www.interfaithalliance-li.org)



Dear Colleague,

As you know, President Obama, in a historic speech at the United States Military Academy at West Point this past fall, has indicated his intention to send 30,000 additional troops to Afghanistan in an attempt to shore up the Karzai government and defeat the forces of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. If you are like me, you were impressed by the elegance of the President's words and the thoughtfulness behind them and may even have been tempted to give the policy "a chance." But you may also have looked at the earnest young faces of our West Point cadets and wondered how many would be required to give their lives for this ill-defined mission to shore up a government that is without the support of its people. You may have wondered how we can continue to justify expending such enormous resources when there are such crushing problems at home. You may have wondered, as I have, how many lives were enough to convince our President of what so many of his predecessors have ultimately had to face: that liberty cannot be imposed at the point of a gun and that the hard truth is that just as it was for the United States, the struggle toward democracy is, and must be, a self generated struggle. No matter how lofty our intentions, we cannot make another nation in our image by force of arms, but rather, consistent with our values as a nation, we must allow them to make their own way.

If there is any mission to which we as religious leaders are called, it is to be the "voice crying in the wilderness," calling our people and our leaders to heed the moral imperative to peace and reconciliation. In that spirit, Rabbi Arthur Waskow of the Shalom Center has issued a national call to our President and members of Congress to bring about a swift end to the war in Afghanistan. I am urging you to support and sign on to that call. We cannot bomb Afghanistan into democracy or promote peace and human rights at gunpoint. The only way to peace is through peace. If we do not exercise our prophetic role as we stand at the verge of this misguided escalation, who will? If we do not do it now, when will we? Please join us by signing on to this declaration and saying no to more bloodshed. All of God's people need peace.

To sign on to Call to Swiftly End War in Afghanistan, please reply to LI Alliance at [longislandpeace@gmail.com](mailto:longislandpeace@gmail.com) or send to 38 Old Country Road, Garden City NY 11530.

Peace to You,

**The Rev. Mark J. Lukens, OCC**  
Pastor- Bethany Congregational Church  
Chair, The Interfaith Alliance-  
Long Island Chapter

Salaam,

**Habeeb Ahmed**  
Chairman of the Board  
Islamic Center of Long Island

Peace,

**S. Jeanne Clark, O.P.**  
Coordinator  
Pax Christi Long Island