

Dear Friends,

I am not required at this point to re-register with selective service. Nor do I ever expect to ever be called up in a draft if it were reinstated due to a war that the U.S. was involved in or chose to become involved in or started on its own volition. Nonetheless, one never knows what future legal requirements might be instated in the future. Thus, I desire that my present thoughts are documented so that they might serve as a record of my beliefs.

I want it known that I would not engage in or fight in any war for any country, nor for that matter for any entity, group, or so called noble idea. My experiences as a full-time volunteer in Belfast and Croatia during times of civil unrest only served to solidify my belief that contributing to a cycle of violence is counterproductive. I saw whole societies torn apart by conflict and generations that only knew retaliation and bitterness that would not easily dissipate. One side's violence in a conflict is consistently justified by the violence inflicted on it by the other. Very few sides in a conflict (whether its an individual, group, ethnic group or country) ever analyze what they have done beyond blanket statements of justification. No country or group has been above this. None.

Would I perhaps be willing to serve in a non-combat role in the military if that was an option? In short: No, I would not. Doing so, in my belief, legitimizes the military action that a country is engaging in and I am not willing to do that. Whether I was working in a position that supplied materials or arms to those on the front line or had some job that appeared non-militaristic in nature, it would still represent the first step that reinforces the soldier firing the weapon. My working in such a position would free up someone else to go fight and potentially kill in the place of me. Thus, although I may not be the one who committed the act, the result would be the same.

One can argue the concept of a "Just War" to me to no avail, because even if one feels he/she can pinpoint a "Just War" in history through well-constructed arguments, it does not follow that any individual need be compelled to fight in that war. I was not put on this earth to take another person's life. Taking another person's life, even if deemed an enemy by the country that I am a citizen of, would be something that I could not morally live with. It is as simple as that.

NOTE: The 1970 Welsh vs. U.S. Supreme Court decision, which defined objectors as "all those whose consciences, spurred by deeply held moral, ethical or religious beliefs, would give them no rest or peace if they allowed themselves to become part of an instrument of war" does a great job of encapsulating my thoughts.

Sincerely,

John Hite