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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Former FATA Region Police Chief Proposes Peace Plan

New Website Enables Public to Define Urgent National Problems and Expert Solutions

BEDFORD, NY, January 26, 2010 – As U.S. Defense Secretary Gates returns from Pakistan, four Congressional Committees are currently reviewing a 10-point plan of action that presents fresh ideas about how to peacefully resolve conditions in the FATA region. The plan was part of a winning entry in www.ourvoiceourcountry.org's first national scholarship competition.

The FATA region plan was crafted by Hassan Abbas, a former police chief in the FATA region who now resides in the US, where he is a fellow at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and the Asia Society. After his work in the FATA region during the '90's, Abbas also served as a cabinet staffer under Musharraf, before leaving Pakistan.

Dr. Abbas was invited to post his plan at www.ourvoiceourcountry.org as the 'ProblemSolver Solution' to a 'Topic' (an urgent national problem) posted by University of Utah freshman Kelsey Price as her entry in the recent competition. "The website and idea behind the initiative is timely and worth supporting indeed," said Dr. Abbas. "ourvoiceourcountry.org is a very creative way to involve citizens and encourage them to think about critical domestic and international issues faced by the U.S."

A new scholarship competition that drew 190 entries nationally ended this month, and University of Nevada, Reno student Tammy Johnston is the winner. Ms. Johnston, also a public school teacher, proposes federally- funded 'educational enterprise zones' in which schools, housing and businesses serving and providing jobs to low-income families would be interconnected learning and support communities.

Honorable Mention recipients include: Florida Atlantic University students Christina Turn (*Ending Cycle of Poverty & Homelessness*) and Kelly Novinski (*Preserving Wetlands*), and St. Petersburg College's Catherine Smith (*U.S. Healthcare: Not Enough Bang For Your Buck*).

Panels determining winners and honorable mentions recipients have included:

- Mindy Fullilove, Columbia University professor, also a noted author/researcher
- Charles Bass, former House Republican from New Hampshire ('94-'06)
- Brian Nickerson, a public policy expert now serving as a dean at Iona College
- Jim Ramstad, former House Republican from Minnesota ('90-'08)

"This is indeed the right time for the voice of the people to be heard, the will of the people to be done, and for Americans to become an informed electorate." Walter Cronkite

To view content posted by students and the general public at the site, click [here](#)
To view videos about the competitions by winners and honorable mention recipients click www.ourvoiceourcountry.org/participate/support-videos.aspx?qtype=state&q=&q2=

www.ourvoiceourcountry.org has attracted over 140,000 visitors since June, with a total of 754 competition entries in that time, coming in from every state in America.

ourvoiceourcountry.org has gained momentum among the American public because it fills a void that has existed in America's civic engagement process. Site founder Jon Mann explains "Our national representatives have lacked a means to know, on a regular basis, The People's priority issues, and the solutions they support. At Our Voice Our Country we are building a bridge from 'Main Street' to Washington, where authentic decisions from a significant cross section of America will guide our representatives to know and follow The People's will."

Our Voice Our Country (OVOC)'s hallmarks:

- an interactive, national learning center focused on the history of 'American Popular Movements' as a springboard to active participation in our democracy now
- an unfiltered, collaborative community where any achievable solutions to urgent national problems identified by users can be presented, considered and chosen
- an outcome-based, non-partisan platform where popularly chosen priorities will clarify The People's national concerns and their most innovative, achievable solutions

The American public is passionate about OVOC. Numerous comments about its relevancy, particularly as they relate to today's heated political environment, have been posted.

- "The website is amazing...I love the concept, purpose and faith it shares with everybody."
- User comment, July, 2009
- "...a good way to hear many unspoken individuals and their ideas...an effective program that needs to continue."- User comment November, 2009
- "...a great way for ordinary people just like you and me to discuss important issues and hopefully find solutions that could benefit any and everyone." - User comment Jan. 2010

www.ourvoiceourcountry.org invites donations from the public in any amount, which will enable the site to sustain and expand its important work.

About OurVoiceOurCountry:

www.ourvoiceourcountry.org was developed with input and guidance from judges, professors, lawyers, students, senior citizens, soldiers, current and retired politicians, from Walter Cronkite, Yolanda King, Joanne Woodward, Ruby Dee, from leaders of national non-partisan organizations and dozens of blue and white collar workers of all political parties, from across the country who are passionate about strengthening our Democracy and bettering America now, and for generations to come.

The court of public opinion now has an address -- www.ourvoiceourcountry.org

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OVOC thanks the Yudelson Foundation, our scholarship competition outreach partner
Center for Civic Education's We The People program, and Fastweb.com and Zinch.com.

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