

# Documentary presents debates on war in Afghanistan

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Opposition to the Afghanistan conflict is growing, according to several public opinion polls.

The Six O'Clock series tapped into that opposition by presenting "Rethinking Afghanistan," Monday, March 15 at the HUB Ohio Room.

Indiana resident Anne Kolsar presented "Rethink Afghanistan," a documentary by Robert Greenwald, and held a panel discussion with Francine Porter of CODEPINK Pittsburgh and Pete Shell of the Thomas Merton Center Anti-War Committee, which is in Pittsburgh.

"You need to be aware that there's always more than one way to look at things," Kolsar advised at the beginning of her presentation.

The documentary outlined the downsides to the United States' presence in Afghanistan. The film included insight and opinions of international leaders, U.S. Democratic leaders and citizens of the affected Middle Eastern countries.

This war is three times more expensive than any war in history, costing about \$775,000 per U.S. troop being sent to the Middle East, according to Barbara Starr, CNN's Pentagon correspondent.

Commentary from MSNBC was also included in the film, which reported the "hidden costs" of the war. It included veterans' health care, social costs, disability costs and medical expenses related to injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder.

The documentary also argued the idea that women in Afghanistan have been liberated by our presence and said that it is a misperception. Although there are women in parliament now, women's rights have not been improved, according to the documentary. Afghanistan constitutes that women have two equal rights under law, which are to obey their husbands and to pray — but not in the mosque, as it's reserved for men.

"This film is very timely, as this weekend is the seventh anniversary of U.S.'s occupation in Iraq," Porter said.

Audience members responded to the film and discussion with questions of their own, which were divided on the controversial topic.

"The movie was so one-sided against the war that it lost credibility," said Casey Contres (sophomore, journalism and political science). "The film contained a lot of statistics with little attribution."

CODEPINK Pittsburgh is a women-initiated grassroots peace and social justice movement working to end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and to stop future wars from happening, according to Porter. The movement includes more than 300 members.

The Thomas Merton Center Anti-War Committee organizes peace marches to protest war, according to Shell.