

# 'No' to War in Iraq

*In response to the Chancellor's call for positive engagement on world issues, we write to voice our opposition to war against Iraq. We are historians, specialists on international politics, humanists, and social scientists with expertise in Western and non-Western societies and cultures. We believe such a war is indefensible on moral and legal grounds. It will have terrible consequences for public safety and the economy here in the U.S., and even more tragic outcomes abroad.*

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## Why War?

- ♦ The Bush Administration has consistently failed to demonstrate that Saddam Hussein is a critical threat to the U.S. and the world. The U.S. enacts a double standard, supporting anti-democratic regimes throughout the region, and the Administration's own estimates put Iraq behind Pakistan, India, North Korea, and other hotspots in the development and delivery capability of various types of weapons of mass destruction. Moreover, the CIA states that the Iraqi government is not likely to strike the U.S. unless it believes a U.S. attack is imminent (The World Today, 10/11/02).

- ♦ War would interrupt a successful UN inspection process. Evidence shows that the UN inspection program in Iraq resulted in considerable disarmament from 1992 to 1998. Many experts believe that Iraq's nuclear, chemical, and biological capabilities are still lower today than in 1991 because of inspections. Both nuclear and chemical/biological experts on inspections are confident they can move disarmament forward through inspections, even if imperfect.

## National Insecurity and Global Disorder

- ♦ The new, so-called "Bush Doctrine" that attempts to justify preventive war against any adversary is an extremely dangerous foreign policy precedent. No previous administration has ignored history and international law so blatantly as to promulgate such a destabilizing doctrine.

- ♦ Anti-American sentiment on the ground in many parts of the world (including the Middle East, Indonesia, Jammu and Kashmir) is at explosive levels, as the tragic bombing in Bali demonstrates. We ignore this sentiment to our peril. This war and the accompanying doctrine leave us no moral or legal justification to protest preventive war by India or Pakistan, Israel or its adversaries, or China against Taiwan.

## Consequences

- ♦ A war against Iraq will cause hardship for service families and take the lives of young American men and women as well as innocent Iraqi civilians, most of whom do not support Saddam Hussein. The street-to-street fighting now forecast by our military cannot be waged without bloodshed on both sides, adding to the anguish of a people still suffering medical consequences from depleted uranium shells used in the Persian Gulf War (SFChronicle, 10/10/02).

- ♦ The estimated economic costs of this war are huge. The Administration acknowledges a base price of between \$100 and \$200 billion, without calculating the costs of reconstruction. In the Persian Gulf War the first Bush Administration traded favors to obtain financial and military support from wealthy allies including Saudi Arabia, Germany, and Japan. In contrast, the justifiable opposition of most of the world to this war means that the current Administration is attempting to negotiate enormous concessions simply to get our allies to be quiet. The costs of this war will fall on the American people, especially the poor and working-class. The costs to U.S.

social service programs, education, and health care are unacceptable.

- ♦ When we invaded Afghanistan we promised its people that we would ensure its rebuilding, but we are far from attaining this goal. Attacking Iraq would divert resources from reconstruction in Afghanistan, not to mention from the Administration's stated goal of incapacitating the instigators of the 9/11 attacks. The Administration has failed to explain how, especially given our flagging economy, we would pay for this venture. Instead, it is making profligate promises to occupy and reconstruct Iraq, promises which even Bush supporters like Henry Kissinger oppose (NYTimes, 10/11/02).

The American people are rightly skeptical of an administration whose war-mongering comes in the midst of its officials' well-known desire to control the world's second-largest oil reserves. Whether this Administration wants war against Iraq because of its oil interests, its anger that Saddam Hussein was not deposed in 1991, its need to deflect attention from corporate scandals, or a sincere belief that Saddam Hussein poses a future threat, its current course of action betrays an imperial arrogance in wielding U.S. power. Statements from right-wing pundits and even Administration officials making a favorable comparison between the U.S. and the Roman Empire demonstrate a chilling neglect of brutal historical realities.

Despite the congressional vote in favor of a resolution granting the Bush administration the power to use force against Iraq even without the sanction of the United Nations, a significant minority in both the House and the Senate, a number of high-ranking military officials, past administration officials of both major parties, and substantial numbers of citizens are uneasy about such a war. We applaud the thousands of people throughout the U.S. and the hundreds of thousands around the world who have demonstrated peacefully against this war.

We believe that the Administration's course of action is unconscionable, and we write in the hope that there is still time to turn the tide in favor of peace. We support the graduate students' Teach-In on Iraq: Wednesday, October 23rd, 3-5 p.m. in the Cross Cultural Center, and urge all members of the UCI/Orange County community to engage in education and positive debate about this most serious of public issues

**-- UCI Faculty for Peace and Justice  
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*The following is a list of groups through which to learn more and express opposition: Americans Against War with Iraq ([www.aawi.org](http://www.aawi.org)); Business Leaders for Sensible Priorities; MoveOn ([www.moveon.org](http://www.moveon.org)); Not in Our Name ([lanotinourname@hotmail.com](mailto:lanotinourname@hotmail.com)); People for the American Way; OC 911 Peace Coalition (714-637-8647); Professors for Peace (<http://www.action-tank.org/pfp/>); True Majority ([www.truemajority.com](http://www.truemajority.com)); [uci-peace-justice@uci.edu](mailto:uci-peace-justice@uci.edu)*

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