

# TEN REASONS TO OPPOSE WAR AGAINST IRAQ

**1. Iraq does not pose an imminent threat to the U.S.** The International Institute for Strategic Studies, based in London, concluded in a report issued in September 2002 that, "Iraq does not possess facilities to produce fissile material in sufficient amounts for nuclear weapons" and that "it would require several years and extensive foreign assistance to build such fissile material production facilities." A security analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies estimates, "Iraq's present holdings of delivery systems and chemical and biological weapons seem most likely to be so limited in technology and operational lethality that they do not constrain U.S. freedom of action or do much to intimidate Iraq's neighbors." Most terrorism experts agree that links between Hussein's government and al Qaeda are murky at best, and Iraq has not been implicated in the September 11 attacks. (*San Francisco Chronicle*, Oct. 12, 2002)

**2. An attack on Iraq could put the U.S. at risk.** In an letter delivered to Congress, CIA Director George Tenet cautioned, "Should Hussein conclude that a U.S.-led attack could no longer be deterred, he probably would become much less constrained in adopting terrorist actions" (*The Guardian*, Oct. 8, 2002). Arab leaders have warned they will not be able to curb the anti-American sentiment that an attack on Iraq would ignite. Any attack would further destabilize a Middle East already inflamed by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

**3. A preemptive attack is unjustified and illegal.** What was Iraq's act of aggression against us that justifies war? There has been no attack on the U.S., no Iraqi threat of war, no Iraqi connection to September 11. The Charter of the United Nations prohibits pre-emptive strikes. War against Iraq would make the U.S. an international outlaw.

**4. A preemptive attack would set a dangerous precedent.** Following the lead of the U.S., other countries will assert the right to attack one another preemptively in reaction to perceived threats. Who will be next? India against Pakistan? China against Taiwan?

**5. When it comes to invading Iraq, the U.S. has few allies.** Only Great Britain's Tony Blair has offered support for a U.S. attack on Iraq, and his approval has been met by widespread opposition from the British public (An estimated 350,000 people demonstrated against war in London on October 6). An invasion of Iraq would isolate the U.S. from the rest of the world, cement its image as an arrogant bully, and shatter the principles of international cooperation and mutual defense that are key to U.S. and global security.

**6. With no allies, war will be overwhelmingly costly to U.S. taxpayers.** The first war in Iraq (1991) cost \$65 billion, most of which was paid by coalition partners. It's unlikely other countries will pick up the tab again. The war to topple Saddam Hussein may cost \$100 billion or more. To invade Iraq may require 250,000 troops and an additional 75,000 or more for follow-on peacekeeping, at a cost of \$15-20 billion per year. (Friends Committee on National Legislation, [www.fcni.org](http://www.fcni.org))

**7. War in Iraq risks a humanitarian disaster.** Preliminary Pentagon estimates say an invasion of Iraq could lead to the deaths of 10,000 innocent civilians. It will not be easy for U.S. forces to capture Baghdad, a metropolitan area of several million people. Military targets are scattered throughout civilian areas. Those fighting in Iraq will do so on a toxic battlefield filled with depleted uranium and other potentially lethal substances, just as happen in the Gulf War. (Over a half-million veterans from that conflict have submitted claims for service-connected disabilities. [National Gulf War Resource Center, [www.ngwrc.org](http://www.ngwrc.org)])

**8. There is no guarantee war will lead to a better regime in Iraq.** First, there is no alternative political leadership that has legitimacy among the diverse groups of Kurds, Shi'ite, Sunni, and other religious and ethnic groups inside Iraq or among the exile community. Second, Saddam's heirs-apparent, to the extent he has any, are as involved as he is in violating the human and political rights of the Iraqi people. Third, looking out from Baghdad, any new leader will see military threats from Iran in the east and Israel in the west, threats they believe they must counter.

**9. The U.S. has a dismal record on picking allies and installing democracies in other countries.** This is especially true if the intervention has been virtually unilateral--witness Iran (1953), Chile (1973), Afghanistan (1980s), Nicaragua (1980s), Iraq (1980s), Grenada (1983), Panama (1989), Somalia (1993), and Haiti (1994). The jury remains out on the U.S.-Northern Alliance operation in Afghanistan (2001-2002) that toppled the Taliban. Even the use of non-coercive means to influence regime change has proven uncertain. Four days before June 2002 elections in Bolivia, the U.S. ambassador warned the populace against supporting the Socialist candidate. Popular support for the Socialist increased by 198 percent. And when President Bush recently called on Palestinians to reject Yasser Arafat in the January 2003 elections or face dire economic consequences, Arafat's waning popularity predictably revived.

## **10. PEACEFUL ALTERNATIVES STILL EXIST!**

- **RESUME WEAPONS INSPECTIONS** During the first round of weapons inspections in the 1990s, UNSCOM officials destroyed far more Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and production facilities, including almost all of Iraq's nuclear weapons facilities, than were destroyed during all the bombing during the Gulf War. (U.N. weapons inspectors were withdrawn, not kicked out by Iraq, in December 1998.) The resumption of rigorous UN weapons inspections--without undue interference from either the Iraqi or U.S. governments--is the essential next step. And in exchange for compliance with weapons dismantlement...
- **END THE SANCTIONS** Twelve years of economic sanctions against Iraq have not removed Saddam Hussein, but destroyed a society, caused the death of thousands, and made the U.S. a scapegoat for a disaster that is not all its doing. Dropping sanctions would make Saddam Hussein accountable to his own people, and a well-nourished, educated and self-sufficient Iraqi people would be better able to determine their own destiny.
- **SECURE PEACE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND PALESTINE** As long as this conflict continues, it will be the cause of deep anti-U.S. sentiment throughout the Arab world. Focusing on Iraq is a terrible distraction from it, not to mention from constructive efforts to counter terrorism.
- **REDUCE DEPENDENCY ON OIL** Oil is always a driving factor behind U.S. military intervention and violent conflicts in the Persian Gulf region. Developing environmentally sound energy alternatives and transportation policies is critical to everyone's future.
- **DISARM OURSELVES** The U.S. should ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and lead the world to peacefully eliminate existing stockpiles of weapons in Britain, France, Russia, Israel, India, Pakistan, Iran, North Korea—and here!
- **INVEST IN PEACE** The Bush administration has spent over \$150 million to “market” the idea of going to war against Iraq (New York Times, Sept. 27, 2002). Our defense budget is over \$300 billion a year. If we demanded that our government spend as over much money on peace as it does on war, don't you think another solution could be produced?

Information in this flier is adapted from [www.fcni.org](http://www.fcni.org) and [www.globalexchange.org](http://www.globalexchange.org)

**Wage peace, not war!** Visit our website at [www.kciraqtaskforce.org](http://www.kciraqtaskforce.org)

for vigil times, action suggestions, and links to resources.

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