

# Stop the War Before It Starts: U.S. Hands Off Iraq

George Bush's non-stop rhetoric, bombing run's over Iraqi territory and a military build-up in the Gulf region, make it clear that the Bush Administration is preparing for a major war. Already in the region, there are 105,000 U.S. troops, 400 warplanes, and an invasion force awaiting orders. Bombings in the no-fly zones have stepped up.

## **War: Bad News for the Working Class and Oppressed Nationalities**

People in the United States have no interest in supporting a war on Iraq. Big oil companies, weapons manufacturers, and bought-and-paid-for politicians are gunning for Iraq, ready to throw billions of dollars into this war.

The working class faces cuts in welfare, education, healthcare, and jobs. Oppressed nations and nationalities within the U.S. are impacted by the war more than whites. Low-income African-American and Latino soldiers, who fill the volunteer army ranks, will die for nothing in Iraq. Racist attacks at home will rise, sparked by racist images of Iraqi people as terrorists. Hate crimes, racial profiling, and INS/FBI harassment of Arab, Muslim and immigrant communities, especially



will not see a General Amnesty.

Palestinians, will intensify. At home, the War On Terrorism means Mexicano and Filipino airport workers get raided and deported, police brutality cases are more difficult to win, and solidarity with peoples and struggles in the Third World are made illegal by U.S. law. Under Bush's War On Terrorism, immigrants

## **The Gulf War Never Ended**

In 1991, the U.S. dropped tons of explosives on Iraq, more than 100,000 Iraqis were killed. The nation was devastated - every road, bridge, date plantation, power plant, water or sewage facility was hit. Homes, schools, mosques, churches, hospitals, even clearly marked civilian bomb shelters were targets for American bomber pilots. Twelve years of sanctions are depriving Iraqis of food, medicine and the capacity to rebuild. Drive-by bombings in illegal no-fly zones are rarely reported in mainstream media, but continue the terror war that never ended. The United States government is responsible for the deaths of over one and a half million Iraqi people. A massive bombing campaign and a large-scale invasion will mean even greater loss of human lives.

## **Weapons as a Pretext for War**

U.S. claims of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction are outrageous. If the U.N. wants to look for weapons of mass destruction, they should start by inspecting the Pentagon, not Iraq! On campus, students should go inspect ROTC Or armed forces recruiting stations!

Many reports have established that there is no evidence of nuclear or other weapons production in Iraq. The U.S. and UN have no right to insist that weapons inspector spies be allowed into Iraq. No country, least of all the United States, would allow foreign inspectors unlimited access to government buildings, industries, and military sites. Inspections are a violation Iraq's' sovereign rights. On many occasions, inspectors have instigated conflicts that serve to justify U.S. military attacks in Iraq.

We also need to defend the right of all nations to arm themselves in their own defense. The Iraqi government has rightly identified major military threats from Israel and Turkey, both armed with billions of dollars in U.S. weaponry

## **Imperialism Means War**

While the U.S. policy of sanctions and small-scale bombings has kept Iraq out of the oil market and political scene for twelve years. This is not enough anymore. While the current Bush Administration has vast ties to the U.S. oil industry, and is hungry for open access to Iraqi oil reserves, the aim of the Bush policy in Iraq is to expand U.S. political, military and economic control in the Middle East.

At the same time, the current Palestinian Intifada has caught the attention of the world, and serves as an example of resistance to U.S. objectives in the region. Israeli brutality has made Arab neighbors less accommodating of U.S. demands. As the most outspoken ally of the Palestinian cause, Iraq has fanned the flames of Arab resistance, supported Palestinian freedom fighters, and threatened to attack Israel. In response, the U.S. wants to establish a puppet regime in Iraq.

The Middle East is key to maintaining U.S. political power - there are important resources (like oil), and the region is strategically located south of Europe and West of Asia (the homes of the U.S.'s two main global competitors). U.S. imperialists want business in the Middle East, puppets in the governments and military bases to back them up. Iraq is a barrier to those goals, and it serves an example to its' Arab neighbors. Iraq has remained resolute since 1991 - it has not become an American outpost or puppet. Iraq is an example that the U.S. can no longer afford.

Economic interests and pressure from anti-war movements have weakened many governments' support for U.S. policy against Iraq. The same is happening in the U.S. Congress, where Iraq has been made the number one pawn in the upcoming elections. Lacking support for old policies, the Bush Administration is left with only two options: Give up, or attack. The Administration has chosen to attack.

### **Stop US Occupation of Iraq**

According to the Bush Administration, "regime change" is the immediate goal of a U.S. attack on

Iraq. This is different from campaigns in 1991 and 1998, which aimed to weaken and isolate the country. The first thing we need to understand about "regime change" is that the United States has no right to dictate to Iraqi people who their leaders should be. We must uphold the right of self-determination for Iraq. It is clear that on a daily basis, the primary attack on the freedom of every Iraqi woman and man comes from U.S. sanctions, bombings and threats of war.

Next, we must understand that in order to eliminate the current Iraqi government, and install a puppet regime, the United States won't be able to bomb and run. The U.S. will need to seize Baghdad and every major city in Iraq - an operation that will risk the lives of a huge number of U.S. troops. The Iraqi government, aware of this new strategy, has promised to defend its cities. Taking the cities will take a long time, and likely result in civilian deaths on a massive scale. If the U.S. is able to seize the cities, Iraqis will continue to fight. To maintain power for an unpopular puppet government will require years of military occupation.

### **Stop the War at Home and Abroad**

This is why we must to work to stop this war before it starts. We have to build a strong movement that brings together all the communities who recognize the criminality of this war. Students, peace activists, oppressed people, community activists, Iraqis and labor activists people of conscience need to place clear demands on the U.S. government. We must oppose the murderous sanctions in all forms, we must call for an end to U.S. patrols in the illegal no-fly zones, we must support Iraqis' right to oppose inspections by foreign spies, and we must demand that the Bush Administration commit to no war with Iraq, today or in the future.



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